

Source #2. Lewis Cass, Governor and Superintendent of Indian affairs

Lewis Cass, governor of Michigan Territory (between 1813 and 1831) and Superintendent of Indian affairs, who wanted to civilize the Indians
Below is his essay in the January 1830 issue of the North American Review.
59 pages in length, it was the first extended pro-removal document to appear in the popular press.

A. How would you describe the progress made by the Cherokees?

“.....we believe, the great body of the people are in a state of helpless and hopeless poverty. With the same improvidence [recklessness] and habitual indolence [laziness], they have less game [animals to hunt] for subsistence [food], and less peltry [furs] for sale. We doubt whether there is, upon the face of the globe, a more wretched race than the Cherokees.....

B. Why have the Cherokees not progressed and become civilized?

“..... the moral evils introduced by them (the Cherokees), are sufficient to account for the diminution [decline] and deterioration [inferior state] of the Indians.....
As civilization shed her light upon them, why were they blind to its beams?
Hungry or naked, why did they neglect those arts by which food and clothing could be procured [obtained]? (*The Cherokees don't know how to grow food and make clothes*)
Existing for two centuries in contact with a civilized people (the white people), they have resisted, and successfully too, every effort to meliorate [make better] their situation, or to introduce among them the most common arts of life.”

C. Why have the Cherokees not progressed and become civilized?

“Their moral and their intellectual condition have been equally stationary [have not changed]. And in the whole circle of their existence it would be difficult to point to a single advantage which they have derived from their acquaintance with the Europeans. (*The Cherokees do not know right from wrong and are not smart*)
.....It is not to be attributed to [caused by]the indifference or neglect of the whites, we have already shown. There must then be an inherent [built in]difficulty, arising from the institutions, character, and condition of the Indians themselves.” (*The Cherokees are naturally inferior*)

D. Why should the Cherokees give up their form of government?

“What has a Cherokee to fear from the operation of the laws of Georgia? If he has advanced in knowledge and improvement...he will find these laws more just, better than the regulations which the chiefs have established and are enforcing.
..... If these Indians are too ignorant and barbarous to submit to the state laws....., they are too ignorant and barbarous to establish and maintain a government which shall protect its own citizens, and preserve the necessary relations.....with its neighbors....” (*The U.S. government is better for the Cherokees*)

“A region is open to them, where they and their descendants can be secured in the enjoyment of every privilege which they may be capable of estimating and enjoying.” (*The Cherokees will like the land out west*)