

DR. WILLIAM BUTLER AND GEORGE BUTLER,
CHEROKEE AGENTS

By Carolyn Thomas Foreman

Colonel James McKissick, a native of Tennessee who had resided in Benton County, Arkansas for a number of years, was appointed by President Polk to succeed Governor Pierce M. Butler as Cherokee agent.¹ Colonel McKissick died at the Cherokee Agency January 13, 1848, surrounded by his family, and his remains were interred in Fayetteville, Arkansas beside those of Governor Archibald Yell.

The Cherokee Advocate suggested Marcellus Du Val, at that time Seminole sub-agent, and former clerk to Governor Butler, as Cherokee agent. On January 24, 1848, the newspaper stated that a petition signed by as many as had the opportunity had been sent to Washington asking for the appointment of Du Val. Colonel Gustavus Loomis, stationed at Fort Gibson, was acting Cherokee agent after the death of McKissick.²

The president appointed Richard C. S. Brown from near Fort Smith as the agent. He took the position in March, 1848, and served until the following year when he was removed. On June 6, robbers broke into the Agent's house to get possession of \$18,000 which was due to be paid to the Indians. The bandits struck the Agent with an axe, but his neighbors heard the disturbance, went to his rescue, and frightened the robbers away.³

In the first Arkansas constitutional convention January 4 to 13, 1836, Crawford County was represented by R. S. C. (*Sic*) Brown and in the First State Legislature Crawford was represented by Brown in the Senate.⁴

"Judge Brown was a remarkable man in many respects, while his education was limited he had a great deal of common sense. His eccentricities were many and novel. He was regarded as an honorable and upright man holding the confidence and esteem of the people. . . . In 1840 he was elected judge of the Seventh Circuit' in which position he served the people for six years with little knowledge of law as a science but a great honesty of purpose. While Judge he always called himself 'My Honor' either on or off the bench; . . . In 1847 President Polk appointed him agent to the Cherokees which duties he honestly and conscientiously performed. He was removed in 1849 and was succeeded by William Butler of South Carolina. . . . No record of his death has been found."

¹ Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "Pierce Mason Butler," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXX, No. 1 (Spring, 1952), pp. 6-28.

² *Cherokee Advocate*, January 17, 1848, 2, col. 2; Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes* (Norman, 1934), pp. 391, 396.

³ *Ibid.*, 402.

⁴ Clara B. Eno, *History of Crawford County, Arkansas* (Van Buren, (n.d.)), pp. 197-98.

Copies of Executive Nominations for the Department of the Interior indicate that William Butler was nominated as agent to the Cherokees on August 29, 1850. Y. O. Ose, in a letter of March 8, 1849 to President Taylor, stated that William Butler was a brother of Senator A. P. Butler and of "the gallant Pierce Butler who fell so gloriously at Chirubusco (*sic*) and a member of a family distinguished for valor and patriotism since the first days of the Revolution."

Dr. William Butler was also recommended by Hon. Waddy Thompson, Representative in Congress from South Carolina; J. L. Pettigrew of Charleston, and General W. G. Belknap, Commandant of Fort Gibson.⁵

Dr. William Butler

Dr. William Butler, third son of General William Butler, was born February 1, 1790. After graduating from South Carolina College, he served as a surgeon in the United States Navy and was on duty during the battle of New Orleans. He resigned from the Navy to practice his profession in South Carolina, his native state.

Dr. Butler served in the Twenty-seventh Congress of the United States as a Whig, from March 31, 1841, to March 3, 1843. He was appointed Cherokee agent on May 30, 1849. With his large family, he arrived at the agency December 7, 1849, after a journey of two months overland, the rivers being too low for boats to navigate.⁶

During the period Brown was Cherokee agent a census was taken, but only four men were employed to take the census though the Treaty of 1846 specified that five should do the work. When William Butler superseded Brown he declared the census was irregular and ordered another taken. He issued a call for a council of Old Settlers to be held August 5, at the mouth of Illinois River. At that time the census taker was selected and the census was made on the following basis: "All those Cherokees west of the Mississippi, who emigrated prior to the Treaty of 1835, and who were alive at the ratification of the treaty the 17th of August, 1846, will be entitled to per capita money, and the money will be paid directly to the persons entitled to it, if alive, if dead, to their legal representatives."⁷

The committee met August 26, but adjourned the next day, having decided that it would be impossible to account for all persons who had died since 1846 and, at the same time, account for children born to Old Settlers since that period. It was decided to await instructions from Washington.⁸

⁵ National Archives, January 4, 1952.

⁶ Theodore D. Jervay, "The Butlers of South Carolina," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, Charleston, Vol. IV, No. 4, (October, 1903), 300, 301.

⁷ *Cherokee Advocate*, July 23, 1850.

⁸ Morris L. Wardell, *A Political History of the Cherokee Nation* (Norman, 1938), pp. 79-80.

Dr. Butler died at the Cherokee Agency September 21, 1850, after an illness of five weeks, leaving his widow, Jane Tweedy Perry (a sister of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry) whom he had married December 22, 1819, and his numerous children.⁹ Brigadier General W. G. Belknap filled the position of Cherokee agent until George Butler, a son of Dr. Butler, was appointed on October 31, 1850.

On September 24, 1850, Surgeon J. B. Wells wrote from Fort Gibson to Hon. James A. Pearce, U. S. Senator, Washington, D. C., telling of the death of Dr. William Butler, Cherokee Agent:¹⁰

It gives me pain to address you in relation to the demise of one who during his intercourse with me repeatedly made mention of your name, in terms of true friendship. I allude to Doctor William Butler late U. S. Agent for the Cherokees. For many years of feeble health & subject of violent attacks of intestinal spasms, he about five weeks ago was attacked with congestion of the liver & the enfeebled bowels soon sympathetic with this collatitious viscera & ending in *ulceration*, terminated his earthly existence this afternoon at 4.35 o'clock,

You knew him well, therefore no eulogy is here given, other than to say: that he was a pure & honest man. But my Dear Sir, allow me to say something of his bereaved family. He leaves a widow & eleven children¹¹ now here in a state of helplessness & it is in behalf of his family I write.

His eldest son *George Butler* came with his father to this country. he is a young gentleman of moral worth & good understanding & if it is possible for him, to succeed his father it will gratify us all, (red man & White) I am requested by his disconsolate widow (who is a sister of Commodore Perry) to say to you that the Honbl. J. J. Crittenden¹² was a personal friend of her husband, also the Honbl. Mr. Berrien¹³ with whom she wishes you to confer. I have addressed a letter to his brother Honbl. A. P. Butler,¹⁴ but the shock of his brother's death induced me to forbear mentioning the subject of his nephew's appointment to the vacant agency.

⁹ Jervey, *op. cit.*, 300, 301; Foreman, *op. cit.*, 391.

¹⁰ National Archives, Records of the Secretary of the Interior. Appointment Division, 1849-78, Indian Agencies: Cherokees.

¹¹ The first two children were born dead. Those surviving were: George, born Oct. 24, 1823; died about 1875. The fourth child was born dead. The fifth, a daughter, was Behethland F. Butler, born May 2, 1827. Christopher R. P. Butler born August 26, 1829; died Nov. 1, 1853. William Butler, born April 15, 1831—time of death unknown. James L. Butler, born Sept. 28, 1832; died Feby. 20, 1866. Pickens P. Butler, born March 24, 1834—time of death not recorded. Matthew C. Butler, born March 8, 1836. Sally W. Butler, born 1837. Emmala F. Butler, born Dec. 11, 1838. Thomas O. L. Butler, born April 29, 1841; died July 2, 1863. Elise W. L. Butler, born July 28, 1842. Oliver N. Butler, born Sept. 4, 1844. (Jervey, *op. cit.*, 301).

¹² John J. Crittenden, born in Woodford County, Kentucky, September 10, 1787, served as United States senator four terms, twice as attorney general of the United States, governor of Kentucky, and member of the House of Representatives as a Unionist. He died at Frankfort, Kentucky July 26, 1863.

¹³ John Macpherson Berrien, a native of New Jersey, who served three terms as United States Senator from Georgia and Attorney General under President Jackson.

¹⁴ Andrew Pickens Butler, United States Senator from South Carolina from 1846 until his death May 25, 1857.

Aside from politics, but even on this ground the claim is strengthened, for the son inherits alike the personal & political virtues of his Father, merit & worth, a family dependent altogether on the salary, then being here in position, are all suggestions in their favor. I have nothing more to add, other than the request, that you will please give this subject your immediate & earnest attention.

I am sir, Very Respectfully
Yr. Obt. Servt.

J. B. Wells
Surgeon U. S. Army

Dr. William Butler and his wife, Jane Tweedy Perry Butler, had fifteen children of whom James Leontine Butler was the eighth. This son born September 28, 1832, married Frances Taylor, a Cherokee, on December 29, 1851. She was a daughter of Richard and Susan Taylor. By her he had two children, Eloise and George Butler. James L. Butler recruited a company, mostly of Cherokees, at the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, and served as a captain under General Sterling Price in the Trans-Mississippi Department of the Confederate States during a large part of the conflict. Towards the end of the war he was a scout in the Carolinas and Virginia. He died at Mt. Pleasant, Titus County, Texas, February 20, 1866.¹⁵

Eloise and George Butler were direct descendants of two noted men in the Army and Navy of the United States—General William Butler and Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry. They were also nephew and niece of Senator Matthew Calbraith Butler, of South Carolina. Eloise was the second wife of Dennis W. Bushyhead, Principal Chief of the Cherokees (1879 to 1887).

Mrs. Bushyhead was educated in the Cherokee public schools and finished her education in Philadelphia. It was said of her: "She is a lady of great personal beauty and possessed of many accomplishments. . . ."¹⁶

Chief and Mrs. Bushyhead were the parents of Frances and Butler Bushyhead. Frances became the wife of James K. Gibson of Tennessee and Oklahoma. When she passed away in Kansas City in 1929 she left one son, James K. Gibson, Jr. Butler married Nenna Walker of Pleasant Green, Missouri, and they had three sons: Henry, Butler, and Jack, all of whom received university educations. Henry Bushyhead was killed in World War II.

¹⁵ Jervey, *op. cit.*, 301, 302.

¹⁶ H. F. & E. S. O'Beirne, *The Indian Territory* (Saint Louis, 1892), pp. 119-20.

Mrs. Eloise Bushyhead died in St. Louis in 1938 and she and her daughter, Mrs. Gibson, were buried in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.¹⁷

GEORGE BUTLER

With the support of distinguished statesmen it was not surprising that George Butler received the appointment of agent as successor to his father. He was the third child of Dr. William Butler and he was born October 24, 1823. He settled in Missouri at an early date and married Nanny Thurston.

According to a statement of Senator A. P. Butler on October 18, 1850, George Butler was about twenty-eight years of age. In his recommendation of young Butler, dated October 19, 1850, Hon. W. Thompson of South Carolina stated that "no appointment could be as gratifying to the people of this state."

In the *Official Register of the United States*, George Butler is listed as Cherokee agent as of September 30, 1851. His salary, like that of his father, was \$1500 per annum. Andrew Taylor, a Cherokee, in a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated March 21, 1853, related that Agent "Butler had faithfully discharged his duty, and that during Taylor's 'forty years with the Indians' they had never had an agent more acceptable to them."

Butler again received appointment as Cherokee Agent on September 30, 1853: "An executive commission signed February 29, 1856, reveals that he was appointed by President Franklin Pierce to be agent for the Cherokee Indians for a term of four years from February 27, 1856." He was again listed in that position on September 30, 1859. By September 30, 1861, John Crawford of Arkansas had become the incumbent. He had received his temporary appointment from the incoming Lincoln administration on April 5, 1861.¹⁸

George Butler's report to Superintendent of Indian Affairs John Drennen at Van Buren, Arkansas, September 14, 1851, gave a full description of "the Cherokees, in their half-civilized condition." He considered that they presented "some interesting peculiarities; their long intercourse with the whites has produced great mixture of blood and had great influence upon their language. Most of the mixed bloods speak the English very well, and in many cases the English is the only language they use, and cannot even understand their own. There are eight hundred boys and girls who are taught

¹⁷ Authority of Mrs. James W. McSpadden, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, first cousin of Mrs. Gibson and Butler Bushyhead.

For an interesting account of the Butler Family see *Genealogy of the Mays Family to 1929*, by Samuel Edward Mays, Plant City, Florida, 1929, pages 113, 114, 116, 118-19, 121. The writer is greatly indebted for the privilege of making notes from the above genealogy to Miss Ella M. Covell, Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Miss Covell belongs to one of the early families of the Cherokee capital and she is well versed in the history of her people.

¹⁸ National Archives, January 4, 1952.

at the [twenty-two] public schools. . . .” and only one in which the Cherokee language was used.

Butler considered that the Cherokees were unsuited to the government they had established:

“In their present condition they are not prepared to receive and enjoy the benefits and blessings of such a government. They have not, nor can establish, any system of taxation by which the government can be supported. They have no income from any source except the annuity they receive from the United States, a tax of twenty-five dollars on lawyers, and a small tax on ferries.

“The nation is about two hundred thousand dollars in debt; and their debt has been increasing, because the income does not pay the annual expense of the nation. The national council of last year reduced the salaries of officers, and it is now to be tried whether that reduction will not enable the nation to pay some of her debts. . . . The expense of one trial of murder, since I have been in the nation, cost . . . two thousand dollars. . . .”

Agent Butler favored the United States government extending territorial government over the Cherokee country, and allowing the nation a delegate in Congress. Agriculture was the principal pursuit and yet the Indians had no surplus produce for sale; their meat, flour, etc., was furnished from Arkansas and Missouri. He wrote that “their country is well adapted to fruit, such as apples, peaches, plums, &c., yet they have few orchards.” That showed good judgment on the part of the Agent as the Cherokee Nation, one hundred years later, has become noted for the fine fruit raised there, and many families are making a good living off their land.

“That part of the nation called the neutral land, containing eight hundred thousand acres, has immense mines of stone coal near the surface of the ground, which could be easily got to market, as the Grand or Neosho river runs through the nation, and is navigable for flat boats a great part of the year. . . .

“There is a weekly newspaper printed at Tah-le-quah, the seat of government. . . . edited by Mr. David Carter. . . . and I believe has quite an extensive circulation. . . .”¹⁹

In 1837 Governor Montfort Stokes had purchased buildings six or seven miles east of Fort Gibson for the Cherokee Agency and it remained there until 1851 when Agent Butler sold the houses and removed to a place three miles from Tahlequah.²⁰ Agent Butler reported on July 5, 1851 that he had received \$250 for the agency buildings and had located the new agency three miles northwest of Tahlequah in a high and healthful country.²¹

Superintendent John Drennen had been authorized to make the per capita payment to the Old Settler Cherokees at Fort Gibson in

¹⁹ *Report*, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1851, pp. 379-81.

²⁰ Grant Foreman, *Indians and Pioneers* (New Haven, 1930), p. 269, note 55.

²¹ Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes* (Norman, 1934), p. 391.

1852, so he was closely concerned with affairs of the nation. Agent George Butler made a complaint to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Luke Lea that Drennen was monopolizing the entire business of the Cherokees, and he wished the jurisdiction of each defined.²²

The annual report, dated September 30, 1852, which Butler made to Colonel Drennen was in a much more optimistic strain than his previous one. The Cherokees had received a large amount of money from the United States government and this caused an increase in trade; the crops produced were greater than any in ten or fifteen years, and the Indians displayed more industry. Small pox had been disastrous during the winter while the unusually wet spring and summer had caused various diseases, some of them fatal. A body of influential men in the capital had organized a section of the Sons of Temperance and this had a most happy effect on the Cherokee citizens. During a celebration of this organization in Tahlequah a body of women presented a handsomely bound Bible to the group. This was a fortunate movement as liquors were still being introduced into the nation although the native sheriffs were zealous in checking the trade. A Cherokee delegation had been instructed to treat with the United States for the disposal of the neutral land.²³ The nation was still greatly in need of money to liquidate debts and to build a jail.

Butler disclosed the friendly intercourse existing between the Cherokees, the frontier states, and the various other tribes of Indians by whom they were surrounded:

"It is very galling to their pride to have a military force among them for the alleged purpose of preserving order, such not being the case with some of the adjoining tribes; and I think the garrison at Fort Gibson a very useless and unnecessary expense to the United States government; for, in case of emergency, (which I hardly think will ever happen,) aid could easily be obtained from the headquarters of the department at Fort Smith. . . . The military reserve at Fort Gibson embraces the most valuable portion of the Cherokee country, being at the head of navigation of the Arkansas river, and the only good steamboat landing on Grand river; and hence of the greatest possible advantage to the Cherokees. . . ."

This report was followed by statements from five or six mission stations in the nation. Pneumonia, chills and fever had seriously afflicted the Cherokees according to Agent Butler's report of September 13, 1853:

²² Morris L. Wardell, *A Political History of the Cherokee Nation* (Norman, 1938), p. 81.

²³ A strip forty-five miles wide between Oklahoma and the Osage tribe was retained as a buffer between them and the white settlements, and it became known as the neutral lands; in 1835 the area was called the Cherokee neutral land. It lay north of the thirty-seventh parallel, but the Cherokees never occupied it. —Roy Gittinger, *The Formation of the State of Oklahoma*, (Berkeley, 1919), pp. 5, 16; and Wardell, *op. cit.*, p. 89, note 2.

"Many of the full-blood Cherokees yet have a great aversion to the medicine of the regular faculty, and prefer the roots and herbs of their own native doctors. The more enlightened portion are fast losing their prejudice, and always call in a regular physician when one can be had; and it afforded me much pleasure to be able to state that they have among them several physicians of high reputation in their profession, both whites and natives."

There had been an abundant yield of crops and the people were making advances in agriculture.

"The more enlightened and intelligent portion who have means to live much in the same style of the southern gentleman of easy circumstances. Many of the dwellings of that class are large, comfortable, and handsome buildings; their fields, too, are well enclosed with good rail fences, and their yards and gardens are handsomely paved in, and the grounds tastefully laid off and ornamented with rare and beautiful shrubbery.

"The moral influence which is being brought to bear upon the youth of the country, through the indefatigable efforts of the principal chief [John Ross], and other intelligent and leading men of the nation, in the great cause of education, must tell powerfully upon the rising generation."

Butler wrote of the neat and industrious women among the Cherokees, many of whom had acquired some of the finer accomplishments of the whites. A full suit of dressed buckskin, exhibited at the Crystal Palace in New York, was the skillful work of the women of the family of J. M. Payne. The art of weaving was carried on in many families where all of the garments worn were from the looms of Cherokees. Mrs. W. A. Adair excelled in weaving and Butler stated that her work would have made competition for prizes in any agriculture fair in the country.²⁴

The Cherokees acquired many white citizens through marriage and the men, after being admitted legally, were entitled to all of the privileges of the nation, and were eligible for all offices, except that of chief. White men who failed to furnish satisfactory evidence of good character were refused citizenship by the national council.

The Indians failed to understand the justice of permitting liquor to be sold by white men to whomever he pleased within the borders of the state, when the identical laws would severely punish the Indians, "not only for selling but for giving a dram to his brother within the limits of the nation."

Prominent men of the nation were privately advocating taxation in order to liquidate the national debt, but the editor of the *Cherokee Advocate* favored it openly in his columns, while a majority of the citizens preferred releasing the neutral lands to the government of the United States:

"Much dissatisfaction exists here with those Cherokees who still reside in North Carolina, in consequence of their claiming an equal per capita

²⁴ Carolyn Thomas Foreman, *Cherokee Weaving and Basketry* (Muskogee, 1948), p. 6.

interest in the Neutral land. If those remaining in Carolina would remove west and become citizens of this nation, they would be received and welcomed as friends and brothers, and at once admitted to equal rights with these now here; but while they remain citizens of a different government and not amenable to the laws of this nation, I think the authorities here have good cause to protest against their right to any interest in this soil. . . ."

Butler described the grand council held in June at a point high up on North Fork of the Canadian River where delegates of thirteen tribes assembled to attempt to establish friendly relations between the border Indians and their less enlightened brothers who spent their lives roaming over the vast prairies of the West. Chief Ross appointed several of their most intelligent men to inform the Comanches and other wild tribes that it was the wish of his people to establish a lasting friendship with them and to assist in improving their condition. He instructed the Cherokee delegates to explain to the western tribes the relation in which they stood to the United States; "that the United States, since the war with Mexico, had bound herself to protect the Mexicans from the depredations of the Indians; and if they continued to rob the Mexicans, and makes slaves and prisoners of their people, that the United States would certainly punish them for such outrages. . . ."²⁵

According to the Agent in his report of September 27, 1854 the government of his charges was still in a bad financial state. A bill was introduced in the last meeting of the council to assess taxes but it failed principally because of opposition among "the lower classes of Indians."

The farmers had been unusually industrious but a severe drought prevailed and Butler feared there would be suffering among the poor. "This privation will be more keenly felt at this time from the fact of their having enjoyed an abundance since the payment of their 'per capita' money, but which the most of them have spent with Indian-like improvidence, without having derived any permanent benefit."

In spite of the conditions the Cherokees continued to improve in many respects. Their laws were rigidly enforced and there had been little crime during the past year. "And if the system of education now being carried on continues to meet with the encouragement it does at present, the Cherokees in a few years will have fully as many advantages in this respect as their more advanced neighbors in the States."

As a whole Butler approved of the efforts of the missionaries, but there were a few who were making themselves obnoxious to the Cherokees through their interference in the slavery question. Butler

²⁵ Report, George Butler, Cherokee agent to Gov. Thomas S. Drew, Superintendent Indian Affairs, Van Buren, Arkansas, 381-84.

again referred to the subject of removing Fort Gibson from the most desirable area in the nation, not because of any dereliction of the officers, but because of its location at the head of navigation "the only eligible point on the river from which commercial advantages can be derived."²⁶

When Butler made his report August 11, 1855, he recounted that the health of the Indians had been good and that agriculture was in a flourishing state. "The neat condition of their farms gives the best evidence of their industry, and they have been abundantly rewarded by the heavy yield of the corn, wheat, and oats crops. . . ."

The cause of religion and education were advancing hand in hand to the great benefit of the red people. The failure of the delegation to dispose of the neutral land caused much dissatisfaction as the government was burdened with debt and there appeared no way to settle their affairs and free themselves from the obligation.

The anti-slavery question was causing great discontent and Butler warned the new superintendent of Indian affairs, Dr. Charles W. Dean at Fort Smith, that "the intelligent portion of the community, . . . denounce in strong terms the movements of the abolitionists in the country, and if the excitement is not put down, it will lead to disastrous consequences."

The Agent called attention to the 500 white men and women who had intermarried with the Cherokees, but who claimed immunity to their laws, according to the construction placed upon the intercourse law by the district court for the western district of Arkansas. The Cherokees had their own laws which bound all persons who had connected themselves with the Cherokees. According to Butler these whites displayed no interest in the affairs of the nation as they would do if they were full citizens.

An account is given of the injustices committed upon the Cherokees by carrying them across into Arkansas for trial when they had their own laws which covered the controversial subjects. ". . . There is no one thing that produces as much disturbance. . . among the Cherokee people, or does as much to discourage and retard their advancement, as the present oppressive construction placed upon the intercourse law by the District court at Van Buren. . . ."

The Cherokees gave a party of Mormon elders a warm welcome but before they had been long in Tahlequah the missionaries complained that the Mormons were interfering with their work. Agent George Butler issued an order early in May, 1856, to Jefferson Hicks

²⁶ Report Commissioner Indian affairs, 1854, 114, 115. Butler to Gov. Thomas S. Drew, superintendent Indian Affairs, Fort Smith, Arkansas. Morris L. Wardell, *A Political History of the Cherokee Nation*, Norman, 1938, 119-20. Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes*, Norman, 1934, 412-13.

to arrest Elder Henry W. Miller, take him to Fort Gibson and deliver him to the commandant. The sheriff refused to serve the writ after he had talked to Dr. Ross, one of the counselors of the nation, and Butler promised that Elder Miller would be notified by letter if it became necessary for him to leave the nation, and that he would not issue another writ.²⁷

An interesting subject in Butler's report of September 10, 1856 was on the subject of physicians. Although the country was fairly supplied with good doctors, a number of young Cherokees were preparing for the medical profession, by studying under "our best read physicians, and completing their studies at some of the medical colleges of the States. . . ."

While the educational and agricultural interests were in an advanced state the mechanical arts were far in the rear and an effort was needed to speed the advancement of the Indians. The school surplus was exhausted and there was not enough money to support the common schools and the two seminaries so some provision had to be made or the high schools would have to be closed.

The question of the disposal of the neutral land was still being debated and various ways of using the money suggested, but no satisfactory conclusion had been reached. Butler stated that the morals of his charges were improving, and many were connecting themselves with the various churches. Butler's report was accompanied by a most intelligent address from W. A. Duncan, superintendent of Cherokee Public Schools.²⁸

On September 8, 1857, Agent Butler notified Major Elias Rector at Fort Smith that nothing of interest had taken place at the Cherokee Agency. Good health had prevailed until the last months of the summer when there had been many deaths among the children from fevers. The weather had been unusually wet and many streams had overflowed.

The Cherokees were turning their energies to stock raising and by importing animals from Missouri and other western states their live stock was being improved. Several thousand head of cattle and ponies were driven from the nation during the summer and a large part of the cattle went to California.

The two high schools [seminaries] were closed for lack of means but it was still hoped to dispose of the neutral lands to the United

²⁷ Grant Foreman, "Missionaries of Latter Day Saints," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (June, 1935), pp. 205-206. Butler advised Elder Miller not to preach in the settlement any more for the present.

²⁸ *Report*, Commissioner Indian Affairs, 1856, pp. 140-43.

States government so as to replenish their school fund and place the means of education within the reach of every family.

The elections had been held for members of the council, and other officers, and they had passed off quietly. Butler thought that since Fort Gibson had been abandoned by the government and reverted to the Cherokees that the capital of the nation would be removed there. At that time the Cherokees numbered about twenty-two thousand.²⁹

George Butler reported on September 10, 1858 that the majority of the Cherokees were strongly national, or democratic, in their sentiments: "I regret to say, however, that there are a few Black Republicans, who are the particular fondlings of the abolition missionaries that have been, and still are making themselves very officious upon the subject of slavery. . . ."

The natives were deeply interested in education and the system was under the management of "a talented and public spirited superintendent, H. D. Reese, esq., a man of education and indomitable energy. . . ."³⁰

The farmers were curing great quantities of prairie grass which was unusually fine. Several attempts at cultivating Chinese sugar cane resulted in complete success and Messrs. M. M. Schrimsher and D. M. Gunter, had given the agent samples of molasses extracted from that plant, grown on their farms. He stated that it was equal, if not superior, to the celebrated golden syrup. The general health had not been good owing to diseases of a malarious character and many prominent citizens had died although the nation was well supplied with physicians. "There are several natives who are graduates of the most celebrated medical institutions in the United States, besides a great many other followers of Esculapius who have married here and become citizens of the nation."

The site of Fort Gibson had been laid off into town lots and sold exclusively to Cherokee citizens for twenty thousand dollars. The council had passed an act to give the place the name of "Cattoo-wah" and the capital was to be removed there, but it was thought the bill would be vetoed which would require a majority of two-thirds to make it a law.

Butler made a wise suggestion when he advised that the United States District Court be removed from Van Buren, Arkansas, into

²⁹ *Report, Commissioner Indian Affairs, 1857, pp. 499-500.*

³⁰ Henry Dobson Reese served his nation in several important capacities. He was solicitor for Tahlequah District in 1845, 1846, and 1875. He was appointed Judge that same year to succeed James R. Hendricks who was suspended. He was a delegate to Washington in 1867, 1868. He appears to have been most successful in his administration as superintendent of education which position he held in 1855, 1857 (Emmet Starr, *History of the Cherokee Indians* [Oklahoma City, 1921], pp. 229, 285, 289, 300).

the different nations within its jurisdiction. This would materially lessen the expense, and be a grateful change to the Cherokees.³¹

Butler remarked that he could see a decided change for the better in agriculture among his charges, principally through the use of machinery in farming, such as reapers, mowers, threshers, etc. More comfortable homes were built and old buildings repaired and enlarged. Spring houses were being built for the preservation of milk, butter, and cheese.

The raising of cattle was becoming the leading occupation of some of the farmers and many animals had been sold at high prices. "I am clearly of the opinion that the rapid advancement of the Cherokees is owing in part to the fact of their being slaveholders, which has operated as an incentive to all industrial pursuits. . . ." The greatest trouble facing the Indians was in getting their products to market. If that could be remedied vast quantities of produce could be sent from the nation. "This fact compels the Cherokees to imitate the example of their neighbors in the State of Arkansas, that of allowing their cows and calves to run together in the winter, during which time 'con-na-ha-ney', or hominy, is extensively used as a substitute for milk, which is very palatable and nutritious. . . ."³²

Owing to the unsettled state of affairs shortly before the Civil War no later reports of the Cherokee Nation from Agent Butler are to be found in the Reports of the Commissioner of Indian affairs.

Butler became a captain under General Sterling Price at the commencement of the war. Upon his wife's death he returned to South Carolina where he married Fannie Townes of Greenville, by whom he had a daughter, Jane Tweedy Butler. After the passing of his second wife he took a third wife and made his home near Augusta, on the Savannah River, "where he was killed in a collision with a neighbor." He died about 1875.³³

³¹ Report, Commissioner Indian Affairs, 1858, pp. 140-42.

³² Report, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1859, 540-41. Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes* (Norman, 1934), pp. 418-19.

³³ Theodore D. Jervey, "The Butlers of South Carolina," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* (Charleston), Vol. IV, No. 4, (October, 1903), p. 301. Arkansas was well represented in President Buchanan's administration and Cherokee Agent George Butler was among the prominent citizens of that state (Wardell, *op. cit.*, p. 111).