

Wilma P. Mankiller
Chief
Cherokee Nation
Tahlequah, Okla. 74465

Naman Crowe
301 Clegg Rd.
Signal Mountain, Tn. 37377
(615) 886-5990

Jan. 30, 1993

Dear Chief Mankiller,

I am part Cherokee. My great grandmother was Martha Dunn who left the Qualla Reservation in the late 1800's to marry my great grandfather Frederick Columbus Crowe, a Civil War veteran and bugler for Robert E. Lee.

I am a good friend of Alva Crowe, son of Richard "Geet" Crowe who is a spiritual man and leader for many years of the traditional dancers at Qualla Reservation, Cherokee, N.C.

I am founder of the Moccasin Bend Heritage Association which played an important part in preventing the Native American burial grounds on Moccasin Bend from being completely destroyed and turned into an industrial site.

The Moccasin Bend Heritage Association, which disbanded after three years, was also a helpful player in organizing the first conclave between the Eastern and Western bands of the Cherokee at Red Clay - doing the advertising, providing and cooking the food, parking the cars and cleaning the grounds.

The burial grounds on Moccasin Bend were saved for a while, but are still in trouble. Grave looting has never stopped. There is no leadership at Cherokee to insist on the protection of Native American burial sites in Chattanooga.

This land deserves to be protected. There should be a Native American interpretive museum established on this land, which is public. Some of the land should be turned over to the Cherokee, with a village built which would show the ways of the Cherokee before the Trail of Tears, and allow the Cherokee and other Indian nations to make a living through the sale of their crafts.

Bones and artifacts stored in basements of museums and universities around the country need to be returned and given a place of honor in a Native American museum on Moccasin Bend. There needs to be an amphitheater built so that the story of the Cherokee of this area can be told.

Chattanooga was one of the main holding and deportation points of the Trail of Tears. Where the main prison stood and where the people were forced to eat rotten meat after being forced out of their warm cabins, a tennis court now stands, without even so much as a plaque to remind us of what took place there. In fact there is no significant marker or reminder to indicate that the Trail of Tears ever took place here, much less the fact that this was the place where the horror began.

There is no leadership yet here to do anything about it. The young Cherokee men and women have enough trouble on their minds just to make a living. The older Cherokees do not seem to have the power or vision to alter the course or improve the situation.

Neither do I have any power or influence. I need to make a living. But I'm looking for work which might lead me someday to a place where I can bring the proper forces together and cause a change for the better. Enclosed is a letter. If you can, would you send in a recommendation for me to the Tennessee Conservation League? May the Great Holy Spirit bless you and all the rest of us.

Sincerely,
Naman Crowe