



CHEROKEE NATION

P.O. Box 948 • Tahlequah, Okla. 74465 • (918) 456-0671

Wilma P. Mankiller
Principal Chief

John A. Ketcher
Deputy Chief

September 13, 1993

Carl Foreman
1401 Overo Circle
Springdale, AR 72764

Dear Mr. Foreman,

Thank you for your letter of 21 August and your comments on Cherokees: An Illustrated History by Billy M. Jones and Odie B. Faulk (The Five Civilized Tribes Museum, Muskogee, 1984). Although we encourage scholarship and research about Cherokee history to provide greater public understanding of our heritage, it is unfortunate when errors as glaring as the ones you discovered find their way into print. Frequently the errors are perpetuated such as the estimate of Attakullakulla's age at ninety in 1775. Although the mistake did not originate with these authors, more people have seen it because of their work. The generally accepted age estimate for Little Carpenter when he accompanied the Cherokee delegation to London with Sir Alexander Cuming in 1730 is nineteen. If this is correct he would have been about 64 at the time the Treaty of Sycamore shoals was signed in March, 1775. He was no doubt described as being of advanced age at Sycamore Shoals in 1775 and at the Treaty of Long Island in 1777 because he had already lived several decades beyond the average life span for that period of time.

I also am unfamiliar with previous assertions that Old Tassel and the others were assassinated by orders of John Sevier. However, if we accept position of the United States Government during the war crime trials of Japanese military commanders after World War II, John Sevier should be held responsible by history for the actions of his troops, including the unwarranted murders of diplomats under a flag of truce. Sevier knew the disposition of John Kirk, the accused, and failed to take adequate precautions to safeguard the lives of the Cherokee emissaries.

You are right, Elias Boudinot was not the son of Major Ridge but rather his nephew. In checking out another book written by Faulk and Jones in 1984 (Tahlequah, NSU and the Cherokees) the relationship is correctly identified in the last sentence on page 28. Unfortunately, the portrait of Elias Boudinot is misidentified as that of Sam Houston (page 30). Another Cherokee, Spring Frog, whose portrait by Charles Bird King appears on page 19 is erroneously identified as the Osage Chief Black Dog.