VANN, JAMES. SPEECH 13905

Grant Foreman
Director S-149
August 24, 1938.

Speech by
Captain James Vann to Kiowas
August 3, 1872.

From Cherokee Advocate, Vol. 3, No. 43
February 22, 1873.
Page 1, Columns 1-4.

Presented by Mrs. J. E. Sedgwick,
324 South Street,
Waterloo, Iowa.

The ceremony of hand shaking and smoking the Calument over Capt. Vann on behalf of the Indian Peace Commission, arose, and addressing himself to the Kiowas, said: "These people are all my friends. It is a matter of no small importance that we are here to-day; vastly important issues are involved in our deliberations. We are here for the purpose of concibiating all our interests and feelings. We have smoked the Pipe of Peace, and the smoke of that pipe has already reached the home of the Great Spirit. I hope it has ascended high enough to be seen by all of our Red Brothers over these wide plains, and that it will draw them here to take part in the deliberations of this Council. To-day we red brothers have met together, we are all of the same race, and I want us all to make one road and travel in it.

I hope therefore that all will listen well to the talk of to-day, and with strong hearts embrace it. Having made this road, if for any cause, some of us should draw off from it, its beauty will be marred and its strength weakened. We have met, comingled with each other, taken each other by the hand and smoked the pipe of peace; but we know not if this is to be the end-- this remains to be seen, and with this view I direct my words to you my Brothers. The Cherokee Nation is anxiously waiting to hear the result of this Council. Next winter some of the Cherokee Chiefs may go to Washington; they will see their Great Father the President, and represent to him the result of this Council. They will explain to him our true condition. They will tell him that we don't want our lands cut up into parcels--that we want no more Rail Roads--if they want to divide our lands it would be better to take an ax and sever it into two distinct pieces. All of the Tribes here are engaged in making one common road, and I think it will be a strong one because all participate in making it. The Great Father in Washington loves the Indians, if poor, having no homes, he is willing to provide for them if they keep the peace. All white men are not bad, it is a mistake to think so; there are some good Chiefs among them, and they

are trying to help the Indians. The white man's Chief in Washington has told these Chiefs that this country belongs to the Indians, and shall not be taken away from them. It is the border people who have been making bad talk for the Indians. These people want to open this country to white settlement. Our White Chiefs are remonsrating against it, and holding these bad ones back, and if you will now keep the peace, they will help you. You know that two of your men are prisoners in Texas, the President also knows it. Now if you will behave yourselves, we are willing to write to him, and try to intercede with him in your behalf, and in time we think he will have them released. We have met here now to make a good road, and we must go slow or we shall go wrong. Now let me urge you, if you hold prisoners, to bring them in first, that will be the first step in the right direction. If those Kiowa prisoners in Texas were released it would make all their hearts feel good, and if those held by the Kiowas were brought in it would make the whites equally glad, their feelings and the Kiowas in this respect are alike.

My Brothers this is my talk, and I hope you will listen to me, and help to make this good road, and stay on it when it is made. I have taken you by the hand and don't propose to let go of it to-morrow, or next week or next year, but will hold fast to it. We live some to the East, some to the West, some to the North and some to the South, but our road made here leads back to our homes, and from thence directly back to this Council fire. We have met here and had this talk because we love you, and we entreat you to listen to it. Some of these Chiefs are disposed to keep on this road. We respect all Chiefs of that mind. All the people are intently watching us, and they will know who holds fast to this talk. I love all Indians, and don't want to throw away or lose one of them, but desire that all shall come in and live as one, and as brothers. I want you all to feel as I do--- throw no one away, this is the reason we sent for you; we want every Tribe represented in making this road. This lands belongs to the Indians, and if they are wise it will not be given to the whites. The Great Spirit willed it for a home for the Indians, to be kept for them and their children. I love all our women and children, and want this country kept for them, and their posterity. If we all live

on this road and do right, the Great Spirit will pity us, and bless us in the continued possession of this country. Your brothers in the timber have traveled this road for a long time---they are doing right, and we invite you to look to them and do as they do, for it is the only safe, satisfying way. I want you all to participate in making and establishing this road. Quit going on the war path--now, at once, cut it off--quit raiding, and when you go to your camps, if any of your people are on the war path, call them in, tell them of this road, have them quit raiding remember. I want to hold you firmly by the hand, and when you go home remember that we are watching you; remember what you have said and what you have done here, and by and by we will meet again in Council and make this road longer and wider. What I have told you is the truth. After a while I think your children will raise corn like the Cherokees. You will probably not do this yourselves---you may pass away--die, and not see it, but your children will live like us. A great many of your brothers in this country (the Indian Territory) have built houses, and when you visit them, they will welcome you, and

chickens, &c., they are our meat, and if you adopt this road you can have them too. If you will not listen to this talk, the buffalo will soon be gone, and you will be destitute. If you built houses and raise these things for yourselves, you will have homes and subsistance when the buffalo are gone. You can also grow your own tobacco. If you live in houses like the whites you can be dry when it rains, and warm when it snows and is cold. This road is like a clear sky without a cloud, and these houses the proper places for your old men and women and helpless children, of whom you have many. I want every Tribe in attendance to remain upon this Council ground until our deliberation have terminated. We have made a big white road which extends to the homes of the several Nations. The Indians first made this road, and it is known as belonging to them. I would not tell you an untruth, especially in this Council, all that I have said is straight. If I did not know these things to be so, I would not tell you, but I do know the truth of what I say. The Great Spirit is ever present at these councils. He sees and hears us, therefore

we should be careful and talk straight. When we met you, we did not meet you as strangers but as friends. The Delawares are the fathers of all the Indians, being older than any. We all had a common Origin, and ought to live like brothers. The Delawares and Cherokees are just alike, their hearts are good and big enough to take in all their brothers. The Cherokees live a long distance from here, towards sun rise. It took me fifteen days to come to this council. We have come this long distance to see our brothers, the Kiowas, and we have other talk for them after I get through; then I would like to have their Principal Chief speak as I have done--- I have kept you here a long time because I love you."

Remarks of Col. John Jumper
(Seminole)

This morning you have heard the talk from our brother; when I heard that talk I received it well; when I look around upon these chiefs and warriors, I am glad. My heart is sorry that all red skins don't talk the same language, therefore have to speak through interpreters. But our Father in Heaven ordained it so. When our Father created us, he created us to live in peace with each other, to love each other, and to love our women and children. While we live on this earth

nothing is better than to live in peace with each other. (Here a few sentences were lost on account of indistinct interpretation).

I was raised in the East and fought against the United States when we was but a small nation. The cause of my fighting was my fondness of bravery. I was fighting for my love of home and property, which the white man wanted. It was me that was in fault, not controlling my young men. Sometimes the enemy would come and we would check them, then we thought that we had done it. Then they came in larger force. While we were doing that they took our improvements and we had to retreat. We had to leave our homes. It was not only the land we loved, but our relatives were killed; not only moved us out of our houses, but took our horses. Man who is warring is not able to come to the place he left. While we were warring we were small; our enemy got stronger and stronger, and in three years that we fought we became exhausted and could do no more. This was because the United States wanted us to move west, and we fought them. After warring them, my strength exhausted, I moved to this country, where I have been for thirty years. When I left and came here I found the Muscogee here.

When I was fighting, all the "advice" was, to "be at peace," but I declared I would have no peace. When we replied we said, "The grass of the earth is our hair, and the sand is the splinters of our forefathers' heads." This was our boast in reply to the message, but it was in vain, and we had to come here to live in peace. When our father, the President, talked to us he told us he would supply us, and treat us as men and give us land. According to this promise we laid down our arms, and have been at peace. We have suffered, but it has all passed and gone. Man, in his experience, finds trouble; he is afraid to go to his lodge; is afraid to go the road he has been traveling; this is very unpleasant. This is the condition of our brothers, the Kiowas, now, but their friends of the timber will watch for them and protect them, and they can come here and speak without molestation. They are invited now to come and meet with us in peace, as we are in peace; and if they do not come they will get themselves into trouble, and that will make us sorry. For myself I have "hurt" a man often, "but peace is the best", therefore let us all live in peace; let us keep our women and children and young men in peace.

Wherever Indian land is, let us live there, "keep our own;" whoever has anything that belongs to us must give it up. That should be the Indian path; let our rising generation walk over this path; let the water of this Indian nation be our drink. That is the way to live in harmony and love, and our Great Supreme Father will love us.

When God created man on the earth, he made the red, the white, and the black, the Creator is one; he made all, and if we live in peace he will love all. It is true, we cannot see all our different races at once but we can all see the sun, and much more can God see us. Now this is not all for the white man, but for your children, and my children, all live in peace together. Now hereafter let us not hurt a man's feelings, but live in peace with everybody. Let us make peace with each other and with the United States, and the prairie will be ours and the game ours.

Not having influence with my young men, was the cause of my troubles, as I said before, When the Kiowas stop raiding, they will have land to cultivate and be better off, and better contented. What I have said to you, I have plead for you to do. I love your children as I love myself, and desire for you to live in peace.

VANN, JAMES. SPEECH. 13905

11

Capt. Black Beaver (Delaware)

then addressed the councils as follows:

I am mighty glad that all we red people meet here together this pleasant morning. That shows for our brethren our good part that we feel for one another. I wish it had been sooner that we meet together. Now I am an old man, I know all these people, my red brethren. I have traveled all over this country but I have never been over the waters. All these are my red brethren, all this western country I know it, and it knows me, I have been in it. The reason I do that, I want to know how many nations of my red brethren are in this country. I know them all. I have had pretty hard troubles, sometimes I see hard times, but I would not give up. I would travel and see my red brethren. In my travels I see hard times. Sometimes I have to eat mule for a month. I did not want to, but I have to, to save my life and see my red brethren. I traveled five years for that suffering I got. When I come home I was not satisfied, and traveled south. I find here lots of Indians, just my color; Wichitas, Ionies, Pen-e.teth-cas, also some others of my brethren. Then my brethren just like the wild

ones (here pointing to Cheyennes and Arapahoes). Then they make treaty with the United States. The first one they break up before I got in; second treaty I was in. Then I see Pen-e-teth-cas, Caddoes, &c., and they say here is my war hatchet; no more war. We planted an ear of corn in the ground, and promised to go to raising corn. At that time Indians had mighty good chiefs; they are all dead now, but the young chiefs are all here to carry out the same provision; "Keep the war hatchet buried." Now here are my chiefs, all good chiefs, all here together. We all want peace among ourselves and with the United States. We want our country; we love it all here together. Well, now, after we make friends, all of us, no more bad, then we are no more afraid to go anywhere; go all over the United States; meet white men; he ask what tribe you belong to; we tell him; he say that's mighty good Indian. We like that. I hope we are all united together, all chiefs that's what we want---peace. That much I talk to you my brothers; after we get together again I talk more.

Mit-co-hut-chie (creek) then explained to the Cheyennes and Arapahoes and Comanches that not much business could be transacted until the arrival of the Kiowas, and urged them to be patient.

Black Beaver then asked the wild Indians present to remain to assist in getting the Kiowas out of trouble, and pursuade them to make terms with the Government. He said: "I explained to you awhile ago my travels in this country for five years. Good many times I'm hungry, but since I'm settled down and make farm and raise corn I'm never hungry. I know how to raise corn. I'm very sorry I didn't begin to raise corn when I was a young man.

(It may be stated that Black Beaver has a farm on the bank of the Washita, well fenced, containing two hundred acres, and under a pretty good state of cultivation.)

Council adjourned till 29th inst.

Chilly McIntosh.

Chilly McIntosh then addressed the Cheyennes and Arapahoes; he said, "We the Commission, Creeks, &c., have called you here this afternoon to tell you the object of this council. We have come by order of our chief to make friends with our red brethren of the plains, and to perpetuate the friendship between ourselves and the Government of the United States. You know full well and so do we, that it won't pay to fight the United States. We have

already tried that long enough, now we want to make peace with the Kiowas; we want you and us to talk to them all together; we will tell them the plain truth, and if they will not hear us, the fault will be their own.

We were sent here to tell the Kiowas to make peace, and to quit their raiding; that the great soldier captain is now waiting and holding the soldier back to learn the result of this council. If they hear us, well; if not, it will prove their ruin. This is the last call, and if they won't hear us they will be ruined; they will be pursued and hunted and destroyed, and there will be no help for it. If they hear us all will be well, and they will enjoy peace, otherwise destruction is open to them.

At another time, Chilly McIntosh addressed them as follows:

"We are very glad to meet you here; we have been waiting, and our hearts are now glad. We want you, when you make your camps and put your horses away, to come and visit us at our tents, and if you are in want of anything to eat, let us know, and it will be furnished, and when the remainder of your people arrive, then we will all shake hands together and smoke the pipe of peace."

Chilly McIntosh, who has been substituted in place of Black Beaver as chairman of the council, responded on its behalf as follows:

It was the Okmulgee Council that ordered delegates from its body to meet the Indians of the prairie, and particularly those of their brethren on the war path, in friendly council at this place. Our acting chief (the Superintendent of Indian Affairs) was authorized to appoint the delegation, and he as head chief must ratify our action to make it legal. To do this he must be represented here. He sends his Chief Clerk, Cyrus Beede, to represent the Government in his place. He keeps a careful record of all our proceedings, and through him and the agents on the frontier we obtain provisions to subsist us during the council. If it were not for this assistance we would be unable to procure provisions for you or for ourselves. Now I see the different nations represented here together, and you see one of the friends of our big Chief here to represent him, and we are here to make peace with each other and with the Government of the United States, and no white man will dictate our deliberations.

Note: Mrs. J. E. Sedgwick is the daughter of Oliver W. Ellsworth, who was a brother of Harriet Ellsworth, teacher of Cherokees in the South. Ed.