

## **Cherokee Constitution of 1827**

### **Historical note:**

A product of a convention held in early July 1827 at New Echota, Georgia, the constitution appears to be a version of the American Constitution adapted to suit Cherokee needs. Formulated mainly by the convention's president, John Ross (1790-1866), the constitution does not represent a position of assimilation to white society but, rather, a conscious strategy to resist removal and maintain autonomy. Nevertheless, opposition to the constitution within the Cherokee nation was fierce. Traditionalists had long been concerned with laws passed by the Cherokee National Committee and Council that seemingly undermined old customs. To this faction, the Cherokee constitution seemed to be one more concession to white, Christian authority. Further opposition came in the form of vehement protests from state governments such as Georgia who insisted the document was an unconstitutional infringement on the state's sovereign prerogatives regarding rule over Indian domains. For their part, John Ross and his followers saw the constitution as an attempt to maintain Cherokee autonomy in the midst of continued pressure from governments to remove the Cherokee from their homelands. An explanation of the political ramifications of the Cherokee Constitution of 1827 can be found in William G. McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renascence in the New Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), chapter 19.