

Petition of Nottoway Indians, Southampton County, December 11, 1821, Legislative Petitions of the General Assembly, 1776-1865, Accession 36121, Library of Virginia.

To the Honourable the Speaker and House of Delegates

The petition of the undersigned, the Female Chief, and others, of the Nottoway tribe of Indians, in behalf, and with the assent of the whole tribe, convened in Council for that purpose, on the 27th day of October 1821 most respectfully represents and submits:

That the lands belonging to the said tribe are rendered in a great measure useless by their being held in common, which tenure takes away the main inducement to industry in the cultivation of them, derived from a certainty that the benefits to be received will bear a just proportion to the efforts made by each individual. It is found to be impossible to divide a common Crop, made by a number of persons of various powers, and different wills, so as to give to each a share strictly proportioned to the part taken in the labour performed, and in consequence of long continued dissatisfaction on that head, at length no crop at all is made.

There is no longer any game worth pursuing on the lands of the said tribe, and the people are wholly unemployed. Their wants have brought them to consider the timber as the property of the individual who first finds, and marks the tree; as the game formerly was of those who could first get possession of it. Each Indian is apt to take on himself the power of selling the choice timber trees he may chance to find, and the whole, of what is of any value, must soon be destroyed.

That your Petitioners, while they solicit to have their lands divided amongst them, have no expectation of being admitted to the right of suffrage, although they are conscious they could never misuse it; and they will acquiesce readily in a limitation upon the power to alienate the land allotted to each, which may prevent the first, second, third and fourth holders in succession, from selling more than one fourth part, each, of the quantity actually confirmed to each individual by the act of division; and also if thought requisite they will be satisfied with an extension of the time of minority, among them, and their descendants, for a given number of years. Your Petitioners humbly solicit that a Law may be passed containing provisions such as the Legislature in its Wisdom may deem most fit for the aforementioned purposes, and they will as in duty bound, ever pray &c.

Done in presence of
THOS. M. RANDOLPH
JNO. B. RICHARDSON
JOSEPH DANFORTH

WANÉ ROONSERAW or
EDITH TURNER HIS X MARK
KARÉ HOUT or
POLLY WOODSON HER X MARK
WM. WOODSON
TE-RES-KÉ or
SOLOMON ROGERS HIS X MARK