

Feb 12, 1980

TO: F. Lawrence Oaks
Executive Director
Alabama Historical Commission
725 Monroe St.
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

FROM: Creek Nation East of the Mississippi Inc.
Poarch Band of Creeks
Route 3, Box 243-A
Atmore, Alabama 36502

Re: U. S. Department of Interior (HCRS) letter 712

Dear Sir;

Application is hereby made for funds from the Historic Preservation Discretionary Fund Grant-in-Aid program. This application should be considered under Category #1 as the proposed undertaking both assists in preserving part of a historic district of Native Americans and results in the direct participation of Native American Groups.

Hickory Ground (1-Ee-89) is of major importance in the history of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. It has supplied many of the important leaders in Creek history. One of particular note was Alexander McGillvray.

"O-Che-au-po-fau"; from the Muskogean "Oche-ub", a hickory tree, and "po-fau", in or among, called by the traders "Hickory Ground" (Owen 1921:1088). Hickory Ground was located on the east bank of the Coosa River, south of the present-day Wetumpka approximately two miles above the French Fort Toulouse (Pickett 1962:229,343,357; Owen 1921:1088; Hemperly 1969:224; Brewer 1955:25; Swanton 1952:162).

Hickory Ground was an Upper Creek town and by tradition was originally inhabited by the Coosa or Abihkas (Corkran 1967:307; Owen 1921:1088; Swanton 1922:242). It was here that Lachland McGillvray married Sehoj Marchand in 1745, and established a trading house (Brewer 1955:15; Debo 1967:38; Swanton 1922:242). Lachland and Sehoj were the parents of Alexander McGillvray an important Creek leader having special trade relationships with the Panton Leslie and Company trading house in Pensacola.

With the French established at Ft. Toulouse McGillvray's residence at Hickory Ground was the center of Spanish, French, British and American intrigue. Don Pedro Olivier, a frenchman in the Spanish Service, spent many months at Hickory Ground (Debo 1967:52; Pickett 1962:413). Hickory Ground was loyal to the British during the revolutionary war, and was a place of refuge for many loyalists (Brewer 1955:25-26; Corkran 1967:307-308). President Washington sent Col. Willett to Hickory Ground to encourage Alexander McGillvray to come to the capitol at New York for treaty negotiations (Brewer 1955:27; Pound 1951:58). Hickory Ground was visited by Benjamin

Hawkins, the first american agent to the Creeks, many times(Pound 1951:111; Hemperly 1969:224; Owen 1921:1088; Swanton 1952:154).

During the Creek War of 1813-1814, Otchiapofa was listed as a hostile Creek town, and was visited by Tecumseh. Here he was able to enlist more followers (Halbert and Ball 1969:68,79,99-100; Pickett 1962:511). As a hostile Creek town Hickory Ground was not un-noticed by Andrew Jackson. The Jackson Trace was opened primarily so Jackson could move his army to Hickory Ground(Brewer 1955: 15; Pickett 1962:592).

From the above it is apparent that Hickory Ground was involved in nearly all the major historic events in the southeast before the removal of Creeks from Alabama in 1836. With the proper techniques and data recovery methods Creek involvement in these events can be studied. More importantly the effects of these activities upon the Creek Nation can be understood. Hickory Ground has the potential of measuring changes in the political, social, and economic structures of the Creek people in pre-removal times.

As outlined by the Secretary of the Interior this project is designed to meet the general and specific standards for acquisition as applies to this particular site.

THE USE OF THE LAND

Acquisition of the property is principally a protection measure. Acquisition will prevent development on the property. All historic structures on the site have been destroyed. What is left consists of below surface remains. Through proper archaeological methods and techniques these below surface features can reveal a tremendous amount of information about the Creek way of life in the late 1700's and early 1800's. Upon gaining fee-simple title to the land as called for in this proposal plans will be developed to minimize continued destruction of the archaeological resources. Prior to any type of development of the property a scientifically sound archaeological program will be conducted to mitigate or minimize effects upon the historic resources.

The property will serve as valuable resource for cultural enrichment of Creek people. The site can serve as a place where classes of Creek culture may be held. The Creek people in Oklahoma pride in heritage and ties to original homeland can only be enhanced. There is still an existing Hickory Ground tribal town in Oklahoma. They will be pleased to know their home in Alabama is being preserved. The site may serve as an open air classroom where Creek youth can learn of their heritage. Interpretive programs can be developed around the vast array of history connected with Hickory Ground. The Creek Nation East of the Mississippi, Inc. (Poarch Band of Creeks) has already conducted CETA sponsored training in archaeological methods for Creek youth. The Hickory Ground site will continue to enhance their understanding of their history, without excavation.

SPECIFIC STANDARDS OF PROTECTION

For most cases land in the hands of Realtors and developers is veiwed from the prospective of income producing property. At this location in order to have

a commercial development the land will have to be cleared and leveled. In order to halt the destruction planned for the site and insure against future destruction, funds for acquisition of fee simple title are requested.

As the landowner is very much interested in developing the property for commercial purposes it is felt acquisition of fee simple title is necessary to prevent destruction of the site. The land was scheduled for commercial development. Plans for development called for construction of Recreation facilities and multi-family dwellings.

To the immediate east of the property is existing commercial property. These commercial properties include a Hardees and local restaurant. To the immediate south adjoining the land of the site, a contract has been entered into with an option to be agreed upon between Aeronov Corporation and the landowner, Mr. W. D. DeBardleben. This agreement is based upon Aeronov's plans for construction of a Kmart store upon the property.

Mr. Gary Skaret and the landowner have plans for constructing apartments for low-income and handicapped persons upon the land to the immediate west of the proposed Kmart and to the immediate south of the Hickory Ground site.

From the foregoing it is evident that the surrounding area, and indeed the land, the site itself, is prime development land and may very well be bulldozed and cleared soon.

The property is in the process of being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer has determined the property eligible and the required forms are now being processed by the Keeper of the National Register.

Project does conform to Secretary of Interior Standard for Historic preservation projects. Specific end products of the project is to provide protection for a particularly important site in Creek History, while providing a foundation for innovative educational programs. Hickory Grounds may also be a place where Creeks from Oklahoma may return and visit their ancestral home.

Upon approval of the proposal the site will be maintained almost entirely by minority groups. One half the appraised value will be donated to Creek Nation Foundation, Inc. in Oklahoma. The grants-in-aid proposal is designed to be awarded to Creek Nation East of the Mississippi, Inc. (Poarch Band of Creeks). Both are Native American groups. The Creek Nation Foundation, Inc. represents western Creeks that were removed to Oklahoma from Alabama. While Creek Nation East of the Mississippi, Inc. (Poarch Band of Creeks) represents a group of Creeks that were excluded from removal and remained in Alabama in the Mobile Region.

Under this plan the property will be jointly owned by both groups of Creeks. They will be equally responsible for the protection and care of the site. This is an opportunity for the Creek people to enter into cultural resource management by guarding and preserving a site directly connected with their culture history.

The significant aspect of this project is the protection by acquisition of a historic Creek site by Creeks. Archaeological resources, directly related to Native Americans have for the most part been managed and investigated by non-Native Americans. This is an opportunity for Native Americans to manage their archaeological records. Presently on staff with the Creek Nation East of the Mississippi, Inc. (Poarch Band of Creeks) is Larry D. Haikey who has a Master's degree in Anthropology. Mr. Haikey is well trained and aware of the proper management of archaeological resources. He will act as advisor to the tribal councils on plans for permanent protection of the site.

Time for complete acquisition of the site is not expected to take longer than forty-five days. This time schedule includes time necessary for mailing contracts between Oklahoma and Alabama. Both tribal groups will have adequate time for review by respective lawyers and approval of council meetings.

The Creek Nation East of the Mississippi, Inc. (Poarch Band of Creeks) agrees to the provisions of covenants and letter of agreements. They are also aware of the information needed for an acquisition Project Completion Report. A detailed completion report will be the responsibility of Creek Nation East of the Mississippi, Inc., and will be done by Mr. Haikey as a part of his normal job activities, at no cost to the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS) Project.

Consultant and technical assistance will be in the nature of legal services. The property deed and other agreements will need to be legally sound with respects to the by-laws and intents of the corporations. These legal services will be the responsibilities of the respective tribal groups.

Mr. John Charloe, Attorney for Creek Nation Office of Justice, will handle legal matters for Creek Nation Foundation, Inc. in Oklahoma. Mrs. Hollis Geer, Legal Services Corporation of Alabama, will handle matters for Creek Nation East of the Mississippi, Inc. Technical advice concerning the site as to maintaining its archaeological integrity will be handled by Larry Haikey and other archaeologists with interest in Creek cultural history.

Hickory Ground fits in a historic preservation district which includes the area of Wetumpka, Alabama. There have been numerous maps of Creek sites referenced in historic documents as being located in this area (Swanton 1922; Owen 1921). Swanton (1922) provides numerous maps of Creek Tribal town locations at various times in their history. One, (Appendix A) is partially reproduced for enclosure with this proposal, it shows the location of Hickory Ground as concerns this project and in the time period for which the site has been dated. As is evidenced by the other town locations on the map the area was heavily populated by Creek in the pre-removal period. Some of the other towns have been located and are on record in Alabama archaeological site files. An item of importance concerning Hickory Ground is the immediacy of its near destruction. The others that have been located are not as close to destruction at this time.

A matter of great importance about this project is the involvement of Creek People through their government in the management and protection of their

archaeological resources. It can be safely said that anthropology and archaeology have had a bad name among Native American groups. This has stemmed from the archaeologists being more concerned in the research potential of the sites rather than the significance as they relate to Native Americans. The excavation and research has been carried out without very much returned to the Indian community, causing Native Americans to distrust the motives of archaeologists.

The Creek Nation is attempting to take an active role in management of their cultural resources. In the winter of 1978 and 1979 the Creek Nation East of the Mississippi cooperated with the University of Alabama in Birmingham on an archaeological excavation to test an area of burial remains. Attention was called to the site after treasure hunters removed a couple of burials.

In the summer of 1979 the Creek Nation East of the Mississippi conducted a CETA Title VI training program in archeology. The main emphasis of this program was to train young Creek people in the proper techniques of archaeology. It was hoped that some of these young people would continue into the field and help preserve Creek archaeological resources.

Destruction of archaeological resources in Alabama adversely effects the profession of Archaeology, while destroying the cultural history of Creek people. There is an increased recognition in the field of archaeology of the need for Native Americans and archaeologists to work together in the cultural resource management area (Lipe 1977:22-23; Schiffer and Gumerman 1977:586). Creek People feel that this proposed project would do a great deal toward bridging the communication gap between archaeology and Native Americans.

Enclosed appendix contains information documenting the two Creek groups as legal entities:

- Appendix A Map of towns of the Creek confederacy, 1818
- Appendix B Organizational chart of Creek Nation East of the Mississippi and list of Tribal Council
- Appendix C Articles of Incorporation of Creek Nation East of the Mississippi
- Appendix D Constitution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Oklahoma
- Appendix E Minutes of Creek Nation East of the Mississippi, Inc., (PBC) tribal council meeting giving approval to apply for HCRS grant
- Appendix F Certificate of Assurances & Certifications
- Appendix G Budget