

Buckongahelas (Delaware) (An indigenous view of the American Revolution, 1781)

"You see a great and powerful nation divided!"

Buckongahelas (c. 1750s-1804), a warrior chief who sided with the British against the Americans in the Revolutionary War, addressed Christian Delawares in Ohio in the following words. He did not mean for them to join the fighting, but he did hope to save their lives by persuading them to leave American territory. He later scolded Captain Pipe for having threatened the missionaries – who had left – and thus encouraged the Christian Delawares to follow them rather than the other Delawares.

Friends! – Listen to what I say to you! You see a great and powerful nation divided! You see the father fighting against the son, and the son against the father! – The father has called on his Indian children to assist him in punishing his children, the Americans, who have become refractory! – I took time to consider what I should do – whether or not I should receive the hatchet of my father, to assist him! – At first I looked upon it as a family quarrel, in which I was not interested. – However, at length it appeared to me that the father was in the right; and his children deserved to be punished a little. – That this must be the case, I concluded from the many cruel acts his offspring had committed from time to time on his Indian children; in encroaching on their land, stealing their property, shooting at, and murdering without cause, men, women and children. – Yes! Even murdering those, who at all times had been friendly to them, and were placed for protection under the roof of their father's house – the father himself standing sentry at the door, at the time.

Friends! Often has the father been obliged to settle, and make amends for the wrongs and mischiefs done to us, by his refractory children, yet these do not grow better! No! They remain the same, and will continue to be so, as long as we have any land left us! Look back at the murders committed by the Long-Knives on many of our relations, who lived peaceable neighbors to them on the Ohio! Did they not kill them without the least provocation? – Are they, do you think, better now than they were then? – No, indeed not; and many days are not elapsed since you had a number of these very men at your doors, who panted to kill you, but fortunately were prevented from so doing by the Great Sun [Col. Dan Broadhead], who, at that time, had been ordained by the Great Spirit to protect you!

Friends and relatives! – Now listen to me and hear what I have to say to you. – I am myself come to bid you rise and go with me to a secure place! Do not, my friends, covet the land you now hold under cultivation. I will conduct you to a country equally good, where your fields shall yield you abundant crops, and where your cattle shall find sufficient pasture; where there is plenty of game; where your women and children, together with yourselves, will live in peace and safety; where no Long-Knife shall ever molest you! – Nay! I will live between you and them, and not even suffer them to frighten you! – There, you can worship your God without fear! – Here, where you are, you cannot do this! – Think on what I have now said to you, and believe, that if you stay where you now are, one day or another the Long-Knives will, in their usual way, speak fine words to you, and at the same time murder you!

Buckongahelas. 1781. "You See a Great and Powerful Nation Divided!" in Blaisdell, Bob. Ed. *Great Speeches by Native Americans* (Dover Publications Inc. NY 2000), 27-28.