

Research Lesson Plan: Trail of Tears

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Targeted Grade Level: High school- 9th grade (honors)

Essential Question: How have different historians come to understand the trail of tears differently?

Formative Assessment Prompts:

Instructional Chunk #1: Why might different historians come to different conclusions about the same event?

Instructional Chunk #2: What were the causes and outcomes of the Indian Removal Act? Why were they relocated?

Instructional Chunk #3: Give three reasons that historians might come to different conclusions about the same event. Give two reasons that mapped data might be presented in a manner that is biased.

Identify one reason that Indians were removed from their land.

Standard Addressed: 9-12a: Students will compare competing historical narratives, by contrasting different historians' choice of questions, use and choice of sources, perspectives, beliefs, and points of view, in order to demonstrate how these factors contribute to different interpretations.

Problematic Prior Knowledge (PPL) Addressed

One opinion or interpretation is just as good as another.

Once bias is detected in a source, it is useless.

Activating Strategies:

Motivation/Advance Organizer:

Students will brainstorm answers to the following stinger:

“Why might different historians come to different conclusions about the same event?”

After five minutes, the students will pair/share their answers and will report their findings.

A class list will be compiled of all the possible answers

The teacher will help students develop a list that says: questions, sources, perspective, beliefs, and point of view.

Key Vocabulary to preview

Trail of tears

Manifest destiny

Bias

Point of view

Teaching Strategies:

Independent, pairs, strategic grouping, summarizing, whole class

Graphic Organizer(s) Used:

Resource # 1: Guiding Questions

Materials Needed:

All Attached Resources, Notebook Paper, Pencils/Pens, Posterboard (if enlarge maps), post-its/dot labels/other stickers

Differentiation Strategies:

Students will work in small groups. Each group will be analyzing a different reading and set of maps. Reading difficulty varies, and students will be assigned these readings based on the difficulty of the reading and the ability of the students in the group.

Have Trail of Tears maps posted around the room in page protectors or in laminated form

Have at least two colors of post-it notes or dot labels or other stickers

Instructional Plan:

Activity #1 Document Analysis (resources 1-5, 6-15)

Purpose: Students will analyze documents and will search for differences in questions, sources, perspective, beliefs, and point of view. Since they are used to treated geographic data as neutral, they will also analyze maps looking for similar information.

Directions:

Students will be handed a document to read. These documents are to be distributed upside down in order to disguise the fact that different students are being handed different documents (resources 2-5).

Students use “document analysis questions” to investigate the document they have been given (resource 1).

Students will answer queries about questions, sources, perspectives, beliefs and point of view.

Students will analyze the maps according to their vocabulary, purpose, information, patterns, subject, and meaningful contribution to the article. (resources 6-15)

Activity #2 Map Analysis (resources 6-15)

Purpose: Students will analyze maps and will evaluate the inherent biases in maps by matching the documents to the maps.

Directions:

Students will be asked to choose which map around the room best describes the story as they have read it. Students will walk around the room and choose a map by placing a post-it note (or other sticker) on it and standing near it.

Students will be asked to explain why they chose the map.

Students will answer discussion questions regarding questions, sources, perspectives, beliefs and point of view on the creation of different maps.

Activity #3 Jigsaw (resources 1-5)

Purpose: Students will evaluate the effect of different questions, sources, beliefs, perspectives, and points-of view on historical writing.

Directions:

Students will get in groups according to which students have been given the same document.

The small groups will work to come to an agreement regarding the questions on the question sheet. (The students will become experts on their document.)

The groups will break up into groups that have one representative for each document.

Students will present their findings about the document to the rest of the mixed group. Each student will teach his document to the others.

Students will compare their documents, and each student will write a paragraph answering, “Why were Native Americans moved out of the Southeast and into the Oklahoma territory?”

Activity #4 Map Analysis Redux

Purpose: Students will compare the biases in the documents to the biases in the map.

Directions:

Students will be directed to choose the map that best tells the story of the Trail of Tears as they now understand it.

Students will walk around the room and choose a map by placing a different color post-it (or sticker) on the map. The stickers will serve as a visual measure of how many students changed their answers.

Students will be asked if they changed their answer and why or why not.

Students will discuss the different ways that editorial decisions in map making can change the way a story is told.

Summarizing Strategy:

Students will answer the following as an exit ticket:

Give three reasons that historians might come to different conclusions about the same event.

Give two reasons that mapped data might be presented in a manner that is biased.

Identify one reason that Indians were removed from their land.

Resource # 1: Guiding Questions

Questions for Document Analysis

1. What questions was the historian trying to answer? How did this choice of questions affect the historian's telling of the story?
2. What sources did the historian use to answer those questions? How did the choice of sources affect the historian's telling of the story?
3. What is the perspective of the historian about this event? How did this perspective affect the historian's telling of the story?
4. What does the historian believe about this event? How does this belief affect the historian's telling of the story?
5. What is the historian's point of view? How does this point of view affect the historian's telling of the story?
6. Why were Native Americans moved from the Southeast to the Oklahoma territory?

Questions for map analysis

1. What vocabulary is necessary to understand this map?
2. What is the purpose of this map? Is the purpose of this map to tell the story or to make an argument? How can you tell?
3. What information does this map provide? How does this choice of information affect your interpretation of the map? Is there any information missing?
4. What patterns exist in the map? Do you think these are the only patterns or might there be more if more information was included?
5. Why do the patterns you identified exist? What do these patterns tell you about Indian Removal?
6. Based on the map, why were Native Americans moved from the Southeast to the Oklahoma territory?

In a paragraph, use what you learned from the reading and from both maps to answer the following:

Why were Native Americans moved out of the Southeast and into the Oklahoma territory?

Resource # 2: Document 1

[FinalCall.com News](#)

National News

The trail of tears continues for Black Indians

By Saeed Shabazz

Staff Writer Updated Nov 10, 2003 - 10:38:00 PM

ENID, Oklahoma (FinalCall.com) - "History speaks of the 'Trail of Tears' in the past tense, and perhaps for the Indian nations it is, but for Black Indians 173 years later, we find ourselves still traveling this journey," Eleanor "Gypsy" Wyatt, chairman of the Freedman Descendants of the Five Civilized Tribes told those gathered at the first annual Enid, Oklahoma, Black Indian pow wow.

She was speaking of the forced march at gunpoint that thousands of Native Americans endured in the 1930s after the United States government decided that they wanted the Indian lands east of the Mississippi.

Ms. Wyatt said her ancestors marched on the trail, and like many Black families, part of their history has been lost. "Though my complexion is of a dark hue, my African brothers don't claim me for my hair is too straight or wavy, my nose is not broad, my lips are not full. My Choctaw and Chickasaw brothers won't claim me, although my features are much like their own. I am a reminder of the inhumane treatment against a people," she said.

In 1929, settlers found gold on the Cherokee lands in northeastern Georgia, and they wanted government officials to remove the Indians off their land. In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which was signed into law by President Andrew Jackson. The act argued that, "no state could achieve proper culture, civilization, and progress, as long as Indians remained within its boundaries." The bill called for the removal of all Indians in the southeastern United States to the territory west of the Mississippi River. In 1838, the first groups started out on their 1,000-mile trek, which became known as the Trail of Tears because of the horrors faced, such as disease, lack of food, water and bad weather.

Indian nations such as the Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Kickapoo, Seminole, Wyandotte, Lenapi, Chickasaw and Mohawk had their lands taken away because settlers and corporations wanted more land, according to historians.

The Cherokee arrived on March 24, 1839 in their new land called the Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, a word that means "red people."

Today, organizations, such as the Black Indians United Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Freedman Descendants of the Five Civilized Tribes, argue that the history of Black Indians has been left out deliberately by government agencies such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

"Our current struggles arise from what seems to be a concerted effort by the highest levels of U.S. government agencies responsible for the fiduciary and trustee duties to deny Black

Indians their rights under the Treaty of 1866, giving slaves held by the five tribes equal rights, as full members of the tribes.

"I charge the BIA with ethnic cleansing, racial discrimination, ethnically exclusionary procedural systems and breach of contractual obligations," Ms. Molette said. She said the main purpose of the First Annual Black Indian Pow Wow in Enid was to call "members" of the five tribes back home so that they may re-claim the heritage that was lost due to the forced exile. Historians have estimated that at least 18 percent of the Indians that survived the Trail of Tears were Black.

Robert Finley, 62, told The Final Call that he moved back to Enid from California to claim his lost heritage. He said his father Robert Finley, Sr., would sit around the house on the weekends and hold conversations with his uncles in Choctaw. "I would ask them what language they were speaking, and they would tell me that I would pick it up as I got older, but that never happened," Mr. Finley said. He said that his generation was not encouraged to seek information about their Indian heritage. He said the elders felt it was difficult enough being Black, and adding the Indian to it would make life unbearable.

Pearl Mitchell, 86, is the matriarch in Enid's Black Indian enclave. "We never knew much about our Indian heritage," she said, admitting that she learned more about her true heritage at the pow wow than she had over the years. "It is good that the young want to know about their Indian ancestors," Ms. Mitchell added.

James Hakeem Sweeney, his sister Nzingha Beverly Sweeney and Charline Habiba Tramel traveled from Buffalo, New York, to attend the pow wow. "There is a part of my history here that I need to know," Mr. Sweeney said. He said his grandparents came from Oklahoma. Nzingha Sweeney said that she always felt that her grandparents, aunts and uncles were keeping secrets about their Indian heritage. "I remember looking at my grandfather with those cheekbones and high nose, and I would say there is more to where we come from," Ms. Sweeney shared.

"I have been to other pow wows because I am always searching for my Indian history. I have grandchildren and I want them to know where they come from, so they will know where they are going," Ms. Tramel said.

Resource # 3: Document 2

The road 17,000 Cherokee Indians plodded along into exile almost 170 years ago winds 1,200 miles through the heartland of America from North Carolina to Oklahoma. Today, it is a road of hope and promise, but in 1838 it was a road of misery and heartache, sickness, and death known today as "The Trail of Tears." A proud nation, uprooted and dispossessed, traveled it for six long, bitter months in the winter of 1838-39. Sickness broke out at every mile. One person out of every four died on the forced march. The humiliation and suffering that the Cherokee experienced on this sorrowful march have no parallel in American history. To preserve the story of that experience, the Cherokee Historical Association in 1951 sent an expedition out over the old trail. Four Cherokee tribal leaders headed the group that made the trip through North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas to Oklahoma. The story of that march into exile and its cause forms one of the darkest chapters in the history of American empire building.

Betrayed by Gold:

The Cherokee were forced onto that tragic trail after years of trying to hold out against white encroachment upon their lands, years that were filled with deceit and greed and strewn with broken treaties. Their downfall was probably made inevitable by the coming of the first white man, Hernando DeSoto, in 1540, but it was not until 1815, with the discovery of gold on their land, that their doom was sealed. With that discovery their enemies moved quickly to rout them from the coveted land. The Indian Removal Act of 1830, approved by President Andrew Jackson, provided for the removal of all Indians to the West. Rage swept the majority of Cherokee chieftains when they learned of the New Echota Removal Treaty of 1835, signed by a minority group, which would have paid each man the handsome sum of \$42. They declared that the majority of the Cherokee desired to remain in the land of their birth. But their fate had been determined and was not to be changed.

Herded into Stockades:

Finally, after years of bickering and fighting, it was agreed the Cherokee should be paid \$5 million for their lands. General Winfield Scott was named to force the removal. Scott's 7,000 troops moved into Cherokee country in May 1838, and began disarming the Cherokee. Stockades were built at strategic points in North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama. Into them troops herded the Cherokee. From the stockade garrisons, squads of troops were sent to search out with rifle and bayonet every small cabin hidden away in the coves or by the sides of mountain streams. They had orders to seize and bring in all occupants as prisoners, however or wherever they might be found. A lawless rabble followed quick upon the heels of the soldiers. In many cases the captives were barely on the march before their homes were blazing under the torch. Cattle were driven off, homes ransacked. By the end of May, 17,000 Cherokee had been herded into stockades across the Cherokee Nation.

The Tragic March Begins:

Meanwhile, some 4,000 of the prisoners began the long westward trek by boat and raft from Chattanooga down the Tennessee to the Ohio and then to the Mississippi. Many died, and the Cherokee leaders pleaded for permission to lead the remainder overland to the new home. And so the great migration began, the tragic exodus of a once proud nation. The route they took was north and west, running through a region where game still abounded, game they would need as food. There were men and women, old and gnarled. There were newborn babies and unborn babies who chose just this moment to come into the world. There were the blind and the dying consumptives who had to be carried on litters. As they picked up their few belongings they looked about, gazed toward the high peaks of the Great Smokies, toward the mountains that had sheltered them. Then they moved on, heads down. They were organized into detachments of 1,000 each. There were more than 600 wagons, 5,000 horses, and 100 or so oxen.

Across the Cumberlands:

The procession crossed to the north side of the Hiawassee at a ferry above Gunstocker Creek, then moved down along the river and northwest across Tennessee through Athens, Pikesville, McMinnville, and Murfreesboro. The sick, the old, and the smaller children rode the wagons and carts, along with blankets, cooking pots, and other belongings. The others trailed along on foot or on horseback. All the groups were routed through Nashville where contractors furnished them with supplies. They passed by the home of Andrew Jackson, the man who had betrayed them, but some of the Cherokee who had helped win the Battle of Horseshoe Bend for him stopped by to pay their respects to an old soldier. They were so beaten and sick at heart they did not even think of killing the man who had given the order for their removal. As the Cherokee plodded west the rains came, and with them came cold weather. The roads, cut up by thousands of horses, cattle, and people, hundreds of wagons and carts, became an appalling morass, making travel even more difficult and dangerous.

A Gruesome Toll:

There was death every day, and new sickness almost every mile. One observer reported that the Cherokee buried 14 or 15 of their people at every stopping place. The venerable Chief White Path, who had been a great warrior, succumbed to sickness, infirmity, and hardships of the forced journey near Hopkinsville, Kentucky. He was buried near the Nashville road, and a monument of wood painted to resemble marble was erected in his memory. A tall pole with a flag of white linen flew at his grave to mark the spot for his people who were following. The procession crossed the Ohio at a ferry near the mouth of the Cumberland. The folks of Tennessee and Kentucky and Illinois saw them plodding along, heads down, sickness in their hearts and souls. In December, a traveler from Maine encountered a party led by the Rev. Jesse Bushyhead about halfway along the route to Oklahoma. What he saw was reproduced several weeks later in the New York Observer. "We found them [about 1,100 in all] in the forest camped for the night by the side of the road...under a severe fall of rain, accompanied by heavy wind. With their canvas for a shield from the inclemency of the weather, and the cold wet ground for a resting place, where after the fatigue of the day, they spent the night. When I read in the President's Message that he was happy to inform the Senate that the Cherokee were peaceable and without reluctance removed..., I thought I wished the President could have been there that very day in Kentucky with myself, and have seen the comfort and willingness with which the Cherokee were making their journey."

Onward to Indian Territory:

The Cherokee moved through Southern Illinois, past Golconda, Vienna, Anna, and Ware, until they reached the Mississippi River opposite Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Their crossing was delayed by the passing ice which endangered the boats that were to ferry them. For days they were compelled to remain beside the frozen river. Hundreds were sick or dying, penned up in the wagons or stretched out upon the ground. They had only a blanket overhead to keep out the January blast. The crossing was made at last in two divisions. One was accomplished at Cape Girardeau. The other was made at Green's Ferry, a short distance below. Safely on the other side, the miserable homeless trudged on. They crossed Missouri, past Framington, Rolla, Lebanon, Springfield, Monett, through a corner of Arkansas, and entered Indian Territory, a confused, disillusioned people who only had a great expanse of country upon which to lay their tired and weary bodies over a thousand miles from their home. The Cherokee had come to the end of their trail into exile in March 1839. The journey had taken six months, in the hardest part of the year. More than 4,000 had died along the trail, to be buried in unmarked graves in strange and alien soil. "Cherokee Heritage Trails Guidebook" marking the North Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee portions of the trail is available at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian Gift Shop, Cherokee, N.C.

Resource # 4: Document 3

Scholars Debate: **The Effects of Removal on American Indian Tribes**

Clara Sue Kidwell, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ©National Humanities Center

The Trail of Tears has become the symbol in American history that signifies the callousness of American policy makers toward American Indians. Indian lands were held hostage by the states and the federal government, and Indians had to agree to removal to preserve their identity as tribes.

The factors leading to Indian removal are more complex. Early writers such as Annie Heloise Abel and Grant Foreman simply described the policy and events. Foreman's book, *Indian Removal* (1932), is compelling because the reader can draw from quotes from primary documents the details of the removal experience for the five southeastern tribes. The bulk of the literature on removal deals with the impact on the Choctaws, Cherokees, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles, but Abel's work, *Events Leading to the Consolidation of American Indian Tribes West of the Mississippi River* (1906) deals with the wider implications of the policy for other tribes in other parts of America.

The complexity of reasons for removal comes from later historical interpretation. Richard White's *The Roots of Dependency* (1983) puts the Choctaws in the larger context of American history and explains their experience in light of the changing economy of American society in the post-revolutionary war era. The religious justification for removal, preservation of Indian nations from the pernicious influence of white populations, is apparent in George A. Schultz's *An Indian Canaan* (1972), the story of Isaac McCoy, the Baptist missionary who was the most active proponent of an Indian state, where Native peoples could be consolidated in an area where, if the environment was foreign, they could be protected to pursue their own lifestyle.

The moral objections to removal are evident in the writings of Jeremiah Evarts, Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the organization that established the first Christian missions among the Cherokees and Choctaws in the early 1800s. *Cherokee Removal: The "William Penn" Essays and Other Writings* (1981) is a collection of Evarts's letters and essays. Evarts upheld an inherent right of Native people to be secure in their lands. His covert agenda was to protect the financial investment that the American Board had made in the mission buildings that they had established in the southeast.

The impact of removal on native populations has led to some debate in terms of demographics. The extent of the loss of life among migrants has an impact on the ability of people to maintain community structures such as clan and kin relationships. Loss of large numbers of family members through epidemic disease and the rigors of removal disrupt communities. Debates about the impact of epidemic disease and depopulation continue among scholars today. For the Cherokee Trail of Tears, consult Russell Thornton's *The Cherokees: A Population History* (1990), in which he estimates both loss of life and the potential population of the Cherokee nation had Removal not taken place.

The dynamic ability of tribes to adapt to new environments is evident in William McLoughlin's *After the Trail of Tears: The Cherokees' Struggle for Sovereignty 1839-1880* (1993). Although the usual historical interpretation of the Trail of Tears has portrayed Indians as victims of federal policy, renewed attention to earlier scholarship such as Grant Foreman's works shows that Indians were making decisions to move west of the Mississippi long before the Removal Act. Those decisions may have some basis in traditions that they had originally lived west of the Mississippi. The historical tragedy and loss of homelands has been emphasized. The resilience of tribes and their ability to adapt to new environments needs to be stressed. In the larger scheme of American history, many tribal members were adapting to a new kind of economic system as were Americans generally. They faced the pressures of a market economy in which land was becoming a commodity to be bought and sold. The result was a historical experience that for contemporary tribal members joins traditional origin stories with accounts of the experiences of their ancestors in moving to and adapting to a new environment.

Resource # 5: Document 4

[Back to Hypertext History: Our Online American History Textbook](#)

[Jacksonian Democracy](#)

Indian Removal

Period: 1820-1860

At the time Jackson took office, 125,000 Native Americans still lived east of the Mississippi River. Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Creek Indians--60,000 strong--held millions of acres in what would become the southern cotton kingdom stretching across Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. The key political issues were whether these Native American peoples would be permitted to block white expansion and whether the U.S. government and its citizens would abide by previously made treaties.

Since Jefferson's presidency, two conflicting policies, assimilation and removal, had governed the treatment of Native Americans. Assimilation encouraged Indians to adopt the customs and economic practices of white Americans. The government provided financial assistance to missionaries in order to Christianize and educate Native Americans and convince them to adopt single-family farms. Proponents defended assimilation as the only way Native Americans would be able to survive in a white-dominated society. By the 1820s, the Cherokee had demonstrated the ability of Native Americans to adapt to changing conditions while maintaining their tribal heritage. Sequoyah, a leader of these people, had developed a written alphabet. Soon the Cherokee opened schools, established churches, built roads, operated printing presses, and even adopted a constitution. The other policy--Indian removal--was first suggested by Thomas Jefferson as the only way to ensure the survival of Native American cultures. The goal of this policy was to encourage the voluntary migration of Indians westward to tracts of land where they could live free from white harassment. As early as 1817, James Monroe declared that the nation's security depended on rapid settlement along the Southern coast and that it was in the best interests of Native Americans to move westward. In 1825 he set before Congress a plan to resettle all eastern Indians on tracts in the West where whites would not be allowed to live. After initially supporting both policies, Jackson favored removal as the solution to the controversy. This shift in federal Indian policy came partly as a result of a controversy between the Cherokee nation and the state of Georgia. The Cherokee people had adopted a constitution asserting sovereignty over their land. The state responded by abolishing tribal rule and claiming that the Cherokee fell under its jurisdiction. The discovery of gold on Cherokee land triggered a land rush, and the Cherokee nation sued to keep white settlers from encroaching on their territory. In two important cases, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* in 1831 and *Worcester v. Georgia* in 1832, the Supreme Court ruled that states could not pass laws conflicting with federal Indian treaties and that the federal government had an obligation to exclude white intruders from Indian lands. Angered, Jackson is said to have exclaimed: "John Marshall has made his decision; now let him enforce it."

The primary thrust of Jackson's removal policy was to encourage Native Americans to sell their homelands in exchange for new lands in Oklahoma and Arkansas. Such a policy, the president maintained, would open new farmland to whites while offering Indians a haven where they would be free to develop at their own pace. "There," he wrote, "your white brothers will not trouble you, they will have no claims to the land, and you can live upon it, you and all your children, as long as the grass grows or the water runs, in peace and plenty." Pushmataha, a Choctaw chieftain, called on his people to reject Jackson's offer. Far from being a "country of tall trees, many water courses, rich lands and high grass abounding in games of all kinds," the promised preserve in the West was simply a barren desert. Jackson responded by warning that if the Choctaw refused to move west, he would destroy their nation.

During the winter of 1831, the Choctaw became the first tribe to walk the "Trail of Tears" westward. Promised government assistance failed to arrive, and malnutrition, exposure, and a cholera epidemic killed many members of the nation. Then, in 1836, the Creek suffered the hardships of removal. About 3,500 of the tribe's 15,000 members died along the westward trek. Those who resisted removal were bound in chains and marched in double file.

Emboldened by the Supreme Court decisions declaring that Georgia law had no force on Indian Territory, the Cherokees resisted removal. Fifteen thousand Cherokee joined in a protest against Jackson's policy: "Little did [we] anticipate that when taught to think and feel as the American citizen ... [we] were to be despoiled by [our] guardian, to become strangers and wanderers in the land of [our] fathers, forced to return to the savage life, and to seek a new home in the wilds of the far west, and that without [our] consent." The federal government bribed a faction of the tribe to leave the land in exchange for transportation costs and \$5 million, but most Cherokees held out until 1838, when the army evicted them from their land. All told, 4,000 of the 15,000 Cherokee died along the trail to Indian Territory in what is now Oklahoma.

A number of other tribes also organized resistance against removal. In the Old Northwest, the Sauk and Fox Indians fought the Black Hawk War (1832) to recover ceded tribal lands in Illinois and Wisconsin. The Indians claimed that when they had signed the treaty transferring title to their land, they had not understood the implications of the action. "I touched the goose quill to the treaty," said Chief Black Hawk, "not knowing, however, that by that act I consented to give away my village." The United States army and the Illinois state militia ended the resistance by wantonly killing nearly 500 Sauk and Fox men, women, and children who were trying to retreat across the Mississippi River. In Florida, the military spent seven years putting down Seminole resistance at a cost of \$20 million and 1,500 casualties, and even then succeeding only after the treacherous act of kidnapping the Seminole leader Osceola during peace talks.

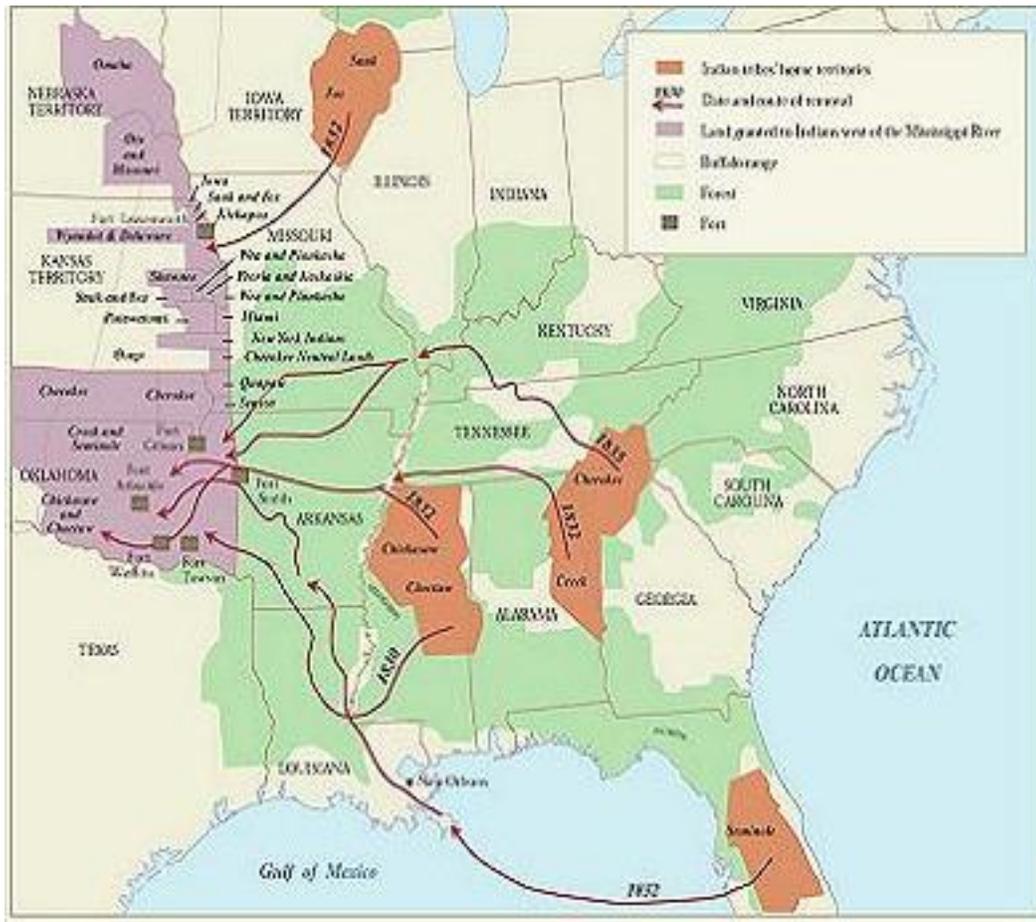
By twentieth-century standards, Jackson's Indian policy was both callous and inhumane. Despite the semblance of legality--94 treaties were signed with Indians during Jackson's presidency--Native American migrations to the West almost always occurred under the

threat of government coercion. Even before Jackson's death in 1845, it was obvious that tribal lands in the West were no more secure than Indian lands had been in the East. In 1851 Congress passed the Indian Appropriations Act, which sought to concentrate the western Native American population on reservations.

Why were such morally indefensible policies adopted? Because many white Americans regarded Indian control of land and other natural resources as a serious obstacle to their desire for expansion and as a potential threat to the nation's security. Even had the federal government wanted to, it probably lacked the resources and military means necessary to protect the eastern Indians from encroaching white farmers, squatters, traders, and speculators. By the 1830s, a growing number of missionaries and humanitarians agreed with Jackson that Indians needed to be resettled westward for their own protection. Removal failed in large part because of the nation's commitment to limited government and its lack of experience with social welfare programs. Contracts for food, clothing, and transportation were awarded to the lowest bidders, many of whom failed to fulfill their contractual responsibilities. Indians were resettled on semi-arid lands, unsuited for intensive farming. The tragic outcome was readily foreseeable.

The problem of preserving native cultures in the face of an expanding nation was not confined to the United States. Jackson's removal policy can only be properly understood when seen as part of a broader process: the political and economic conquest of frontier regions by expanding nation states. During the early decades of the 19th century, Western nations were penetrating into many frontier areas, including the steppes of Russia, the pampas of Argentina, the veldt of South Africa, the outback of Australia, and the American West. In each of these regions, national expansion was justified on the grounds of strategic interest (to preempt settlement by other powers) or in the name of opening valuable land to white settlement and development. And in each case, expansion was accompanied by the removal or wholesale killing of native peoples.

Resource # 6: Map 1



THE TRAIL OF TEARS

June 6—19, 1838

September 28, 1838—January 17, 1839

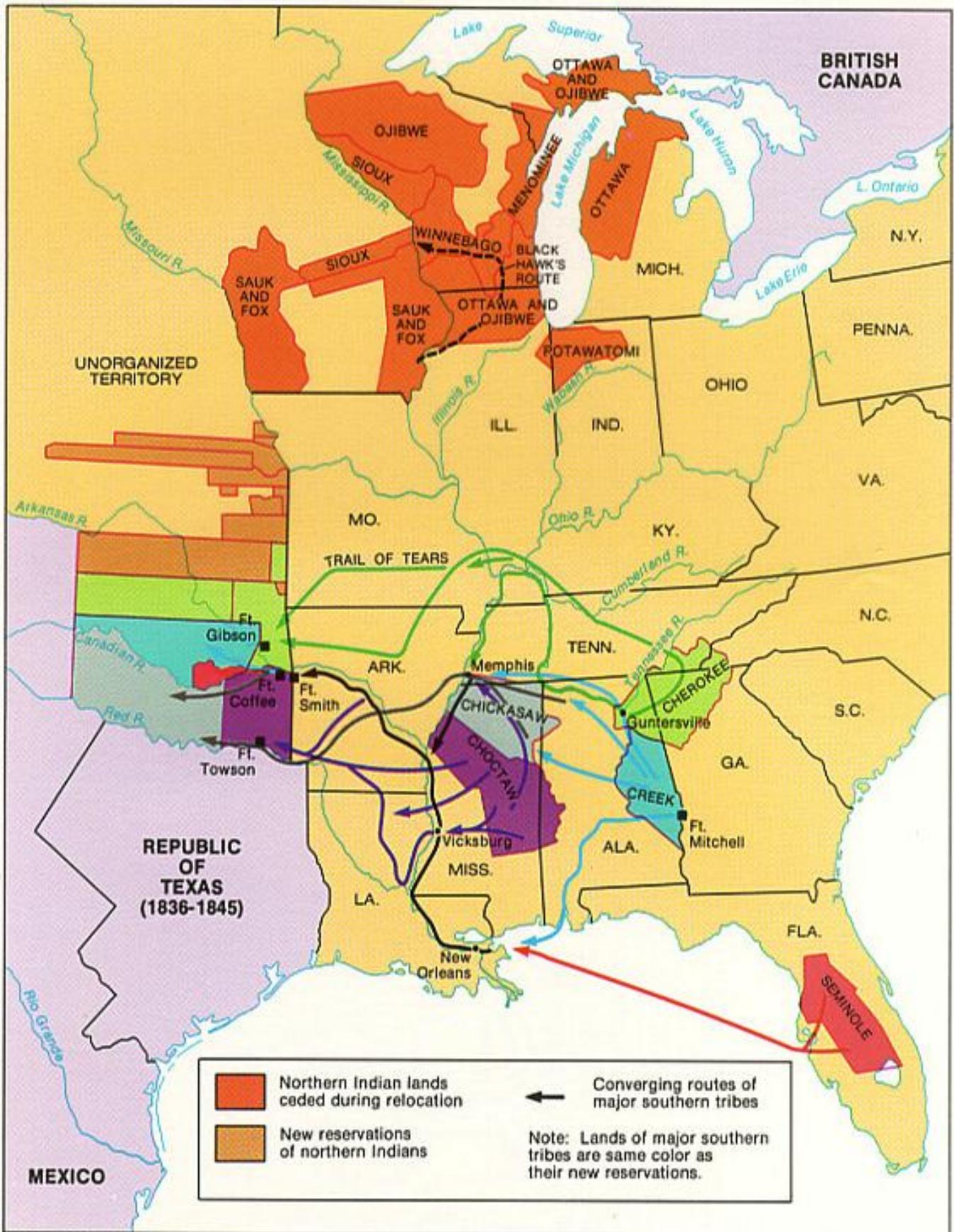
October 11—January 7, 1839

October 23, 1838—March 24, 1839



Trail of Tears.
Courtesy
National
Geographic
Society.

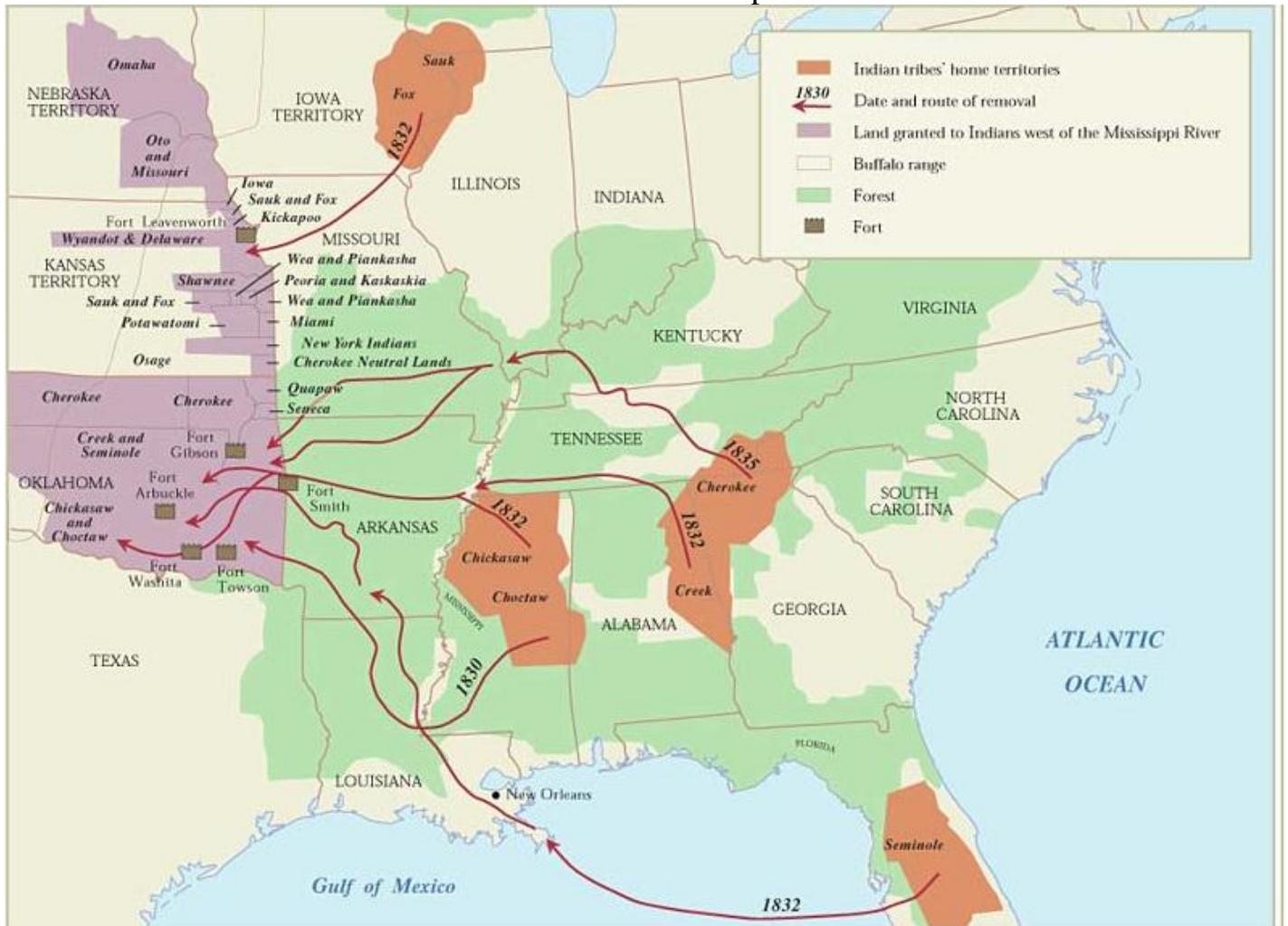
Resource # 9: Map 4



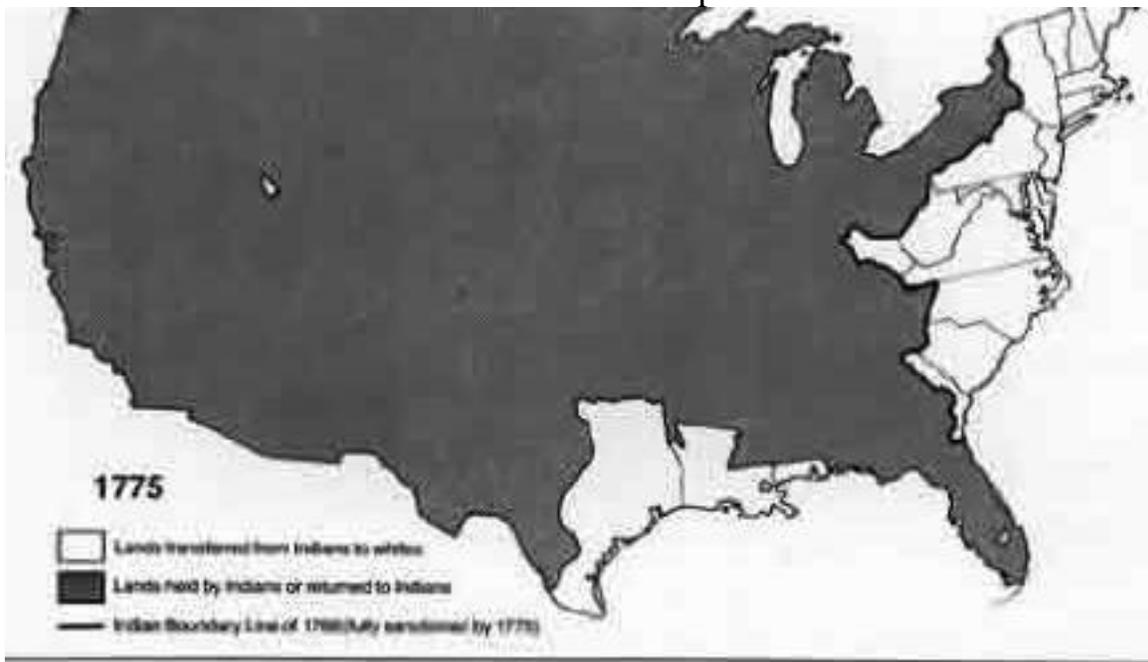
Resource # 10: Map 5



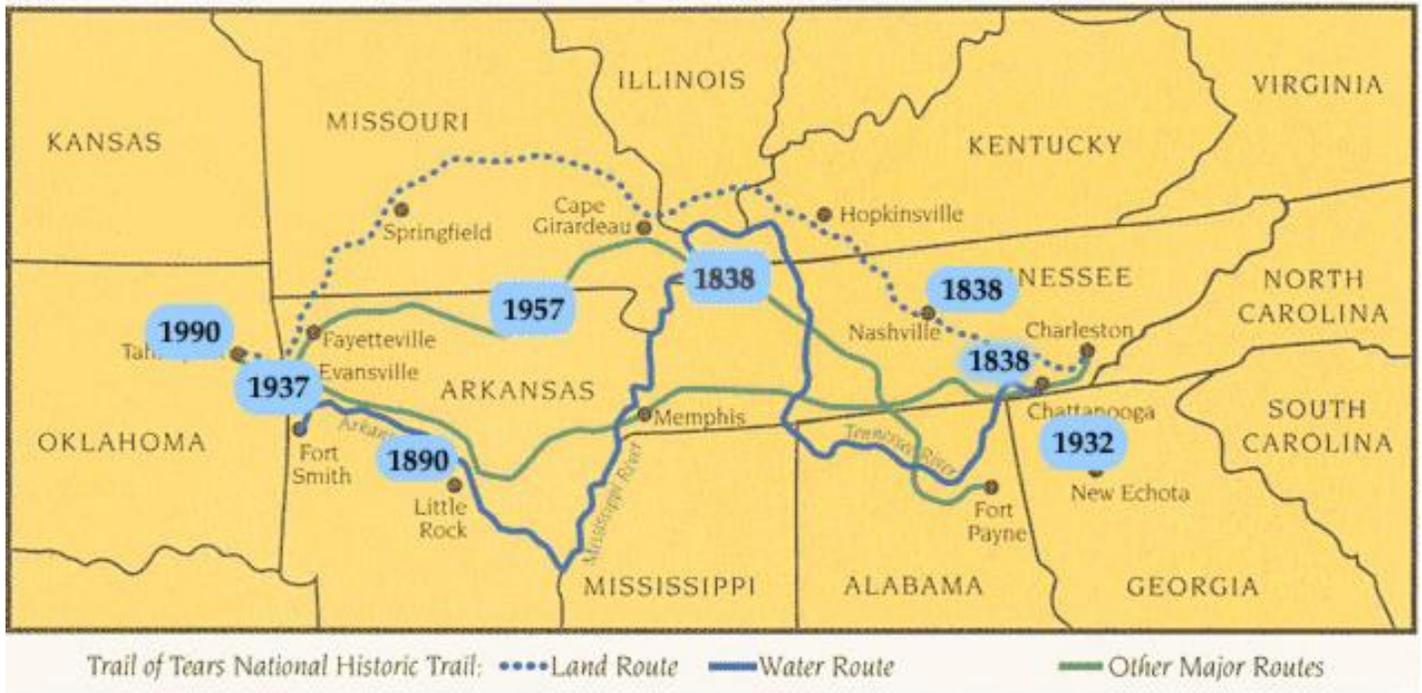
Resource # 11: Map 6



Resource # 12: Map 7



Resource # 13: Map 8



Resource # 14: Map 9



Resource # 15: Map 10

