HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

After years of leading brutal Indian campaigns as an Army General across the South, Andrew Jackson assisted in the process of negotiating hundreds of thousands of acres of land from Native Americans for white settlers, often times using forceful and unethical tactics. During the 1830s Jackson continued the process of removing Native Americans from their land as President of the United States through legislation and sometimes violence.

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 gave the President authority to negotiate treaties of removal with Native Americans, in which their land within existing state borders was exchanged for tracts of land west of the Mississippi River. Jackson received ample support from most white southern settlers due to their desire to use the fertile land for agricultural production. While some Native Americans adopted a more violent approach to resisting removal, others, such as the Cherokee, utilized a series of nonviolent measures to resist removal when a faction of their tribe signed the fraudulent Treaty of New Echota. Petitions, boycotts, noncooperation, and legal arguments were all part of the Cherokee resistance campaign against removal.

The Removal Act stated that no one would be forced off of their land and Native Americans would be able to carry on their cultural practices and government without settler interference once in the western territories. However, the United States did not uphold those promises. Tribes were often violently forced from their land and marched towards the West under terrible conditions. This journey became known as the Trail of Tears. While thousands died because of removal, many more survived and persevered carrying on their culture and traditions.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

The following primary sources and images showcase the significance and impact of Andrew Jackson’s presidency and the Trail of Tears on Native Americans. Start off by allowing students to explore the maps on page two to gain insight into Native American culture and an understanding of the large scale displacement. Many of the text are legal documents and can use language difficult for some students to comprehend. Break the texts down or divide students into groups. Students in higher grades can use the primary source analysis tool to analyze and critically think about various documents.
Maps of Cherokee Nations and Indian Removal

Map of the former territorial limits of the Cherokee "Nation of" Indians; Map showing the territory originally assigned Cherokee "Nation of" Indians [1884]

Map showing the lands assigned to emigrant Indians west of Arkansas and Missouri, [1836]

National Historic Trail Official Map [2012]

This map, provided by the National Park Service, showcases detailed routes along the Trail of Tears. Click Here to explore the interactive map of the Trail of Tears.

Additional Links
- TPS-MTSU lesson plan: "Trail of Tears"
- TPS-MTSU March 2011 Newsletter: Native American History and Culture
- National Park Service lesson plan: “The Trail of Tears and the Forced Relocation of the Cherokee Nation”
- Indian Pioneer History Collection: Family stories from the Trail of Tears
- Digital Library of Georgia: Cherokee primary sources
- Sequoyah National Research Center: “Trail of Tears through Arkansas”
- Southeastern Native American Documents
- Andrew Jackson’s message to Congress ‘On Indian Removal’
- Primary Source Set: Assimilation through Education

Aboriginal map of Tennessee [1886]
Andrew Jackson and The Indian Removal Act

Sketch map of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend of Tallapoosa River, 27th March 1814 [1814]

For more information on the Battle of Horseshoe Bend click here.

Andrew Jackson / painted by D.M. Carter; engraved by A.H. Ritchie [c1860]

Related Links:
- Office of the Historian: Indian Removal Act of 1830
- Andrew Jackson: Resource Guide
- Timeline of Andrew Jackson’s Presidency
- The War of 1812 and Indian Wars
- Primary Documents in American History: Indian Removal Act

Indian Removal Act of 1830 in A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875 [1830]

To the public. The following document, in the form of a letter to Mr. James Jackson, has been presented to him, and he has refused to answer [accusing General Jackson and others of fraudulent land deals] Nashville Banner and Nashville Whig. [1828]

Click Here for the full transcription

Washington City, 5th March, 1831
Dear Sir: To do right is the first duty of a representative of the people in the Congress of the United States ... [Signed] C. Johnson [1831]

Click Here for full transcription
THE INDIAN REMOVAL ACT AND EMIRATION

More on Trail of Tears and Emigration

- Journal of B.B. Canon – Indian Removal 1837
- Journal of Edward Deas - Indian Removal 1837
- Speeches regarding the passing of the Indian Removal Act 1830
- Chief Little John and the Trail of Tears web page

On Removal of Indians in A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875 [1830]

Land Lottery Tickets, 1832
Cherokee Gold Lottery [1832]

Cherokee County plat and land grant issued to Rachel Forgason [1836]

John Ross, a Cherokee chief / drawn, printed & coloured at the Lithographic & Print Colouring Establishment, 94 Walnut St [1801-1856]
P. P. Pitchlynn, Speaker of the National Council of the Choctaw Nation and Choctaw delegate to the government of the United States [1804-1805?]

For more on Native American Resistance to the Removal Act click here.

Se-Quo-Yah / R.T.; drawn, printed & coloured at J.T. Bowen's Lithographic Establishment, No. 94 Walnut St. [1838]

Cherokee payments(?). Several men seated around table counting coins; large group of Native Americans stand in background [Between 1870 & 1900]

Related Links:
- Native Americans: Resources for Students
- The Indians at the time of contact (essay)
- Music and Native American Heritage Month
- Native American Culture Today
- America’s Story: Trail of Tears Pow Wow
- Celebrating Native American Heritage: Whispering Giants
- Immigration & the destruction of Native American cultures
- Changing Images of Native Americans
- “The Cherokee Phoenix” (Search within database)
- Laws of the Cherokee Nation
CITATIONS: Teachers: Providing these primary source replicas without source clues may enhance the inquiry experience for students. This list of citations is supplied for reference purposes to you and your students. We have followed the Chicago Manual of Style format, one of the formats recommended by the Library of Congress, for each entry below, minus the access date. The access date for each of these entries is July 5th 2017.


Royce, C.C., creator. “Map of the former territorial limits of the Cherokee "Nation of" Indians ; Map showing the territory originally assigned Cherokee "Nation of" Indians” map. 1884. From the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3861e.np000156

United States Topographical Bureau, contributor. “Map showing the lands assigned to emigrant Indians west of Arkansas and Missouri” map. 1836. From the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division. https://lcnn.loc.gov/99446197


McEwen , Robert Houston, publisher. “Sketch map of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend of Tallapoosa River, 27th March 1814” manuscript maps. March 27, 1814. From the Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3971s.ct003678


Benton, Jesse, contributor. “To the public. The following document, in the form of a letter to Mr. James Jackson, has been presented to him, and he has refused to answer [accusing General Jackson and others of fraudulent land deals] Nashville Banner and Nashville Whig” print. 1828. From the Library of Congress, Broadsides, leaflets, and pamphlets from America and Europe. https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.17401700/


“Cherokee payments(?). Several men seated around table counting coins; large group of Native Americans stand in background” photographic print. Between 1870 and 1900. From the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division Washington D.C. https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3c11280/