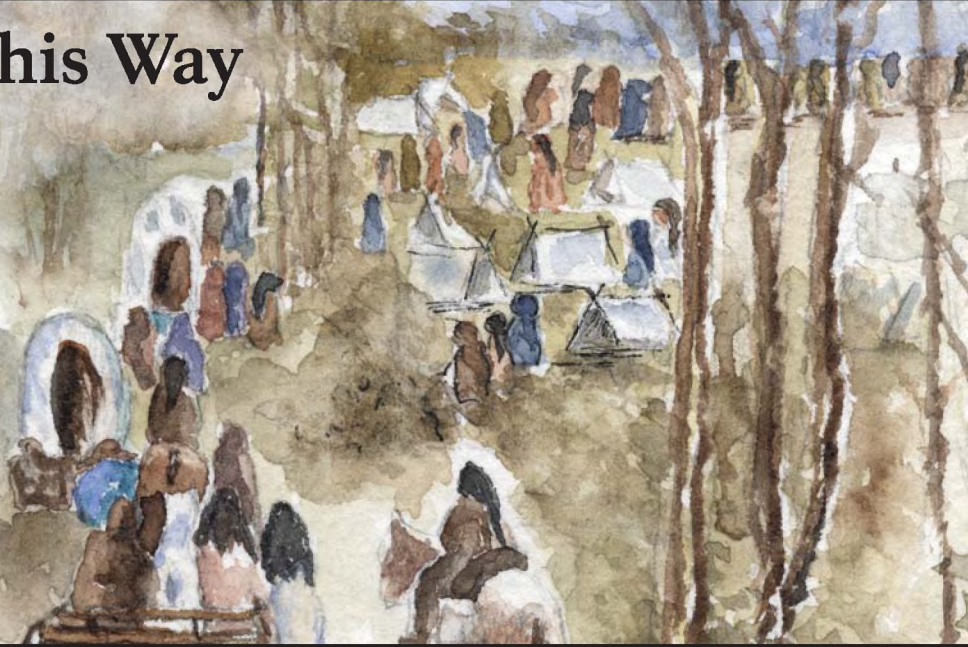


They Passed This Way

*...we have Suffered a great deal...
The roads are in very bad Order as
the ground was frozen very deep...
We have been lying by about two
weeks...The [river] has been full
of large quantities of floating Ice...
we must calculate on suffering a
good deal from hardships &
exposure before we yet reach our
homes in the far West.*

Recollection of a survivor of the Trail of Tears

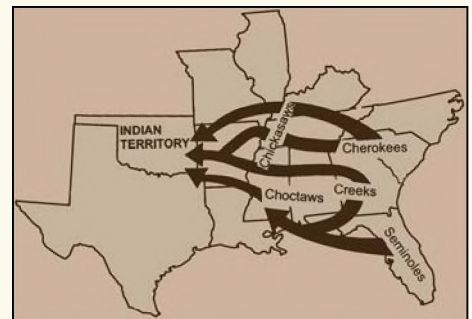


Federal Indian Removal Policy

After passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the United States government forced thousands of American Indians to leave their ancestral lands in the southeast for new homes in Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). They traveled by existing roads and by rivers. Many groups left in the fall, hoping to avoid the disease and heat of summer travel, and instead faced treacherous winter weather. Hundreds died during the ordeal—remembered today as the Trail of Tears.

Despite the hardships of the journey, the people of the five tribes of the Southeast established new lives in the West. They stand now as successful sovereign nations, proudly preserving cultural traditions, while adapting to the challenges of the 21st century.

Federal Indian removal policy aroused fierce and bitter debate. Supporters of the policy claimed it was a benevolent action to save the tribes east of the Mississippi River from being overwhelmed and lost in the onslaught of an expanding American population. Opponents decried its inhumanity and the tragic consequences it would have for the Indian peoples. One thing was certain; removal freed millions of acres of desired Indian lands for use by white settlers.



In the 1830s, the federal government forcibly removed approximately 12,000 Cherokee, 21,000 Muscogee (Creek), 9,000 Choctaw, 6,000 Chickasaw, and 4,000 Seminole from their ancestral homes in the southeastern United States.

The Cherokee story of perseverance and survival is told along the original route and hiking trails at Mantle Rock Preserve. Join us in remembering those who traveled on the Trail of Tears.

Trail of Tears National Historic Trail

The National Park Service works with partners to administer the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. By helping to preserve historic sites and trail segments and developing areas for public use, the story of the forced removal of the Cherokee people and other American Indian tribes is remembered and told.

You can visit sites along the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

Learn more at www.nps.gov/trte

