Cherokee Nation

A traveler through the southern Appalachians realizes that something is missing from the înterior mountains and cascading streams. The people who once lived here no longer work the land or tend to its forests. Their voices are silent. You can see the origin of their name, Cherokee, carved into the landscape—down in no part of their original territory.

Still, they endured. Cherokee Sacred Fire—rekindled in the 1700s, and by 1819 Americans’ unquenchable thirst for land had whittled away Cherokee lands—down to 10 percent of their original territory.

Dwindling Cherokee Lands

• 1819 The Cherokee sign the Treaty of New Echota, in which they cede 26 million acres of land over half their lands.

• 1828 The discovery of gold in northern Georgia leads to the Georgia Gold Rush, causing Cherokee to flee their homeland.

• 1832 The treaty with the Cherokee was overturned. The Cherokee Nation remained alive though, in the spirits they lived on land ceded to them by the United States.

The Removal Act

On the eve Europeans arrived in the New World, they struggled with how to live alongside native peoples. In the 1700s, the Cherokee Nation became the first people in North America to successfully run on the landscape, and cascading streams. The people who once lived here no longer work the land or tend to its forests. Their voices are silent. You can see the origin of their name, Cherokee, carved into the landscape—down in no part of their original territory.

In the early 1830s, Andrew Jackson was president of the United States. He believed that the Cherokee were a “nation holding land多余 which they had no title.” He also believed that the Cherokee were “a nation of savages who should be removed to a distant country.”

The Cherokee were told that they were not citizens of the United States, and that they had no rights to the land they were living on. The government passed the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which gave the Cherokee two years to remove from their current homes to a new location.

The Gathering Storm

On the heels of the Indian Removal Act, government agents, including Andrew Jackson, were sent to remove the southeastern native peoples. The Cherokee were told that they had to leave their homes and march to Indian Territory, west of the Mississippi River.

The government removed most Muscogee Creeks, Seminoles, and other tribes to Indian Territory. The first boat reached its goal in 15 days, but some Indians and families perished on the journey. The Cherokee were forced to leave their homes, but the damage was done. They were forced to endure the harsh winter without food or shelter. Many Cherokee died on the journey.

The Trail of Tears

The Cherokee Trail of Tears was a time when Cherokee people were forced to leave their homes and march to Indian Territory. It was a time of suffering and loss for Cherokee people. The Trail of Tears was a journey that lasted for several months, and many people did not survive the journey.

The Gathering Storm

Most Cherokee refused to recognize the Treaty of New Echota, but had missed their last chance. In the spring of 1838, after the Treaty of New Echota, the Cherokee were forced to leave their homes and march to Indian Territory. The Cherokee were forced to leave their homes, but the damage was done.

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