Age of Jackson • From Coexistence to Tears
Indian Removal Policies During the Age of Jackson
Thoughts of Thomas Jefferson (1803)

In this way our settlements will gradually circumscribe [restrict] and approach the Indians and they will in time either incorporate [join] with us as citizens of the United States or remove beyond the Mississippi.

The former is certainly the termination of their history most happy for themselves, but, in the whole course of this, it is essential to cultivate [develop] their love.

As to their fear, we presume that our strength and their weakness is now so visible that they must see we have only to shut our hand to crush them, and that all our liberalities [generosity] to them proceed from motives of pure humanity only.
Report to the American Board of Commissioners (1822)

It used to be said, a few years since, with the greatest of confidence, and is sometimes repeated even now, that "Indians can never acquire the habit of labour." Facts abundantly disprove this opinion. Some Indians not only provide an abundant supply of food for their families, by the labour of their own hands, but have a surplus of several hundred bushels of corn, with which they procure clothing, furniture, and foreign articles of luxury.

Appeal to Congress - John Ross (1824)

We appeal to the magnanimity of the American Congress for justice, and the protection of the rights, liberties, and lives, of the Cherokee people. We claim it from the United States, by the strongest obligations, which imposes it upon them by treaties; and we expect it from them under that memorable declaration, "that all men are created equal."

Popular Tune from Georgia (c.1820s)

All I ask in this creation
Is a pretty little wife and a big plantation
Way up yonder in the Cherokee Nation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Cherokee</th>
<th>How to Pronounce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hello</td>
<td>O-si-yo</td>
<td>Oh-see-yo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you fine?</td>
<td>To-hi-ju?</td>
<td>Toe-hee-joo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am fine.</td>
<td>O-si-gwu.</td>
<td>Oh-see-gwoo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And you?</td>
<td>Ni-na?</td>
<td>Nee-nah?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine. (alright)</td>
<td>O-sdi.</td>
<td>Oh-sdee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you.</td>
<td>Wa-do.</td>
<td>Wah-doh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s see each other again.</td>
<td>Do-na-da-go-hv-i.</td>
<td>Doh-nah-dah-go-huh-ee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Uh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Thla</td>
<td>Thlah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know.</td>
<td>Thla Ya-gwan-ta.</td>
<td>Thlah Yah-gwanh-tah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your name?</td>
<td>Ga-do De-ja-do?</td>
<td>Gah-doh Dey-jah-doh?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(name) is my name.</td>
<td>.... Da-wa-do.</td>
<td>.... Dah-wah-doh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is your (family term)?</td>
<td>Ka-hnv- (ja)....?</td>
<td>Kah-hnuh-(jah)....?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is (name or object).</td>
<td>.... Hi-a.</td>
<td>.... Hee-ah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(name) is his/her name.</td>
<td>.... Du-do.</td>
<td>.... Doo-doh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is (name or object)?</td>
<td>Ha-tlv.....?</td>
<td>Hah-tluh......?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is this?</td>
<td>Do-u-sdi Hi-na?</td>
<td>Doh-oo-sdee Hee-nah?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What time is it?</td>
<td>He-la-ya A-hli-li?</td>
<td>Heh-lah-yah Ah-tlee-lee?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is it? (Which is it?)</td>
<td>Do-u-sdi?</td>
<td>Doh-oo-sdee?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you hungry?</td>
<td>Ja-yo-si-has?</td>
<td>Jah-yoh-see-hahs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do you live?</td>
<td>Ha-dlv Hi-he-la?</td>
<td>Hah-dluh Hee-neh-lah?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discovery of gold in Georgia

Success of Tribal Farmlands

Increasing Conflict with Settlers

Pressure to Open Southern Farmlands

Election of Jackson as President

Causes for Removal
Causes for Removal
Jackson’s Message to Congress (1830)

It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent [well meaning/kind] policy of the Government, steadily pursued for nearly thirty years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements is approaching to a happy consummation [conclusion]. Two important tribes have accepted the provision made for their removal at the last session of Congress, and it is believed that their example will induce [persuade] the remaining tribes also to seek the same obvious advantages.

It puts an end to all possible danger of collision between the authorities of the General and State Governments on account of the Indians. It will place a dense and civilized population in large tracts of country now occupied by a few savage hunters. By opening the whole territory between Tennessee on the north and Louisiana on the south to the settlement of the whites it will incalculably strengthen the southwestern frontier and render the adjacent States strong enough to repel future invasions without remote aid.

Can it be cruel in this Government when, by events which it can not control, the Indian is made discontented in his ancient home to purchase his lands, to give him a new and extensive territory, to pay the expense of his removal, and support him a year in his new abode? How many thousands of our own people would gladly embrace the opportunity of removing to the West on such conditions! If the offers made to the Indians were extended to them, they would be hailed with gratitude and joy.
Indian Removal Act (1830)

Be it enacted ... That it shall and may be lawful for the President of the United States to cause so much of any territory belonging to the United States, west of the river Mississippi... to be divided into a suitable number of districts, for the reception of such tribes or nations of Indians as may choose to exchange the lands where they now reside, and remove there...

And be it further enacted, That in the making of any such exchange or exchanges, it shall and may be lawful for the President solemnly to assure the tribe or nation with which the exchange is made, that the United States will forever secure and guaranty to them...

And be it further enacted, That upon the making of any such exchange... it shall and may be lawful for the President to cause such aid and assistance to be furnished to the emigrants as may be necessary and proper... and also, to give them such aid and assistance as may be necessary for their support and subsistence for the first year after their removal.
President Jackson’s Letter to the Cherokee National Council (1835)

My Friends: I have long viewed your condition with great interest. For many years I have been acquainted with your people, and under all variety of circumstances in peace and war. You are now placed in the midst of a white population. Your peculiar customs, which regulated your [interactions] with one another, have been abrogated by the great political community among which you live; and you are now subject to the same laws which govern the other citizens of Georgia and Alabama.

I have no motive, my friends, to deceive you. I am sincerely desirous to promote your welfare. Listen to me, therefore, while I tell you that you cannot remain where you now are. Circumstances that cannot be controlled, and which are beyond the reach of human laws, render it impossible that you can flourish in the midst of a civilized community. You have but one remedy within your reach. And that is, to remove to the West and join your countrymen, who are already established there. And the sooner you do this the sooner you will commence your career of improvement and prosperity.
Comments from Major Ridge
Upon Signing the Treaty of New Echota (1835)

I am one of the native sons of these wild woods. I have hunted the deer and turkey here, more than fifty years. I have fought your battles, have defended your truth and honesty, and fair trading. The Georgians have shown a grasping spirit lately; they have extended their laws, to which we are unaccustomed, which harass our braves and make the children suffer and cry.

I know the Indians have an older title than theirs. We obtained the land from the living God above. They got their title from the British. Yet they are strong and we are weak. We are few, they are many. We cannot remain here in safety and comfort. I know we love the graves of our fathers. We can never forget these homes, but an unbending, iron necessity tells us we must leave them. I would willingly die to preserve them, but any forcible effort to keep them will cost us our lands, our lives and the lives of our children. There is but one path of safety, one road to future existence as a Nation. That path is open before you.

Make a treaty of cession. Give up these lands and go over beyond the great Father of Waters.
From Representative David Crockett

It was expected of me that I was to bow to the name of Andrew Jackson, and follow him in all his motions, and windings, and turnings, even at the expense of my consciences and judgment. Such a thing was new to me, and a total stranger to my principles. … His famous, or rather I should say infamous Indian bill was brought forward and, and I opposed it from the purest motives in the world. Several of my colleagues got around me, and told me how well they loved me, and that I was ruining myself. They said it was a favorite measure of the President, and I ought to go for it…

David Crockett, A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett

I believed it was a wicked, unjust measure … I voted against this Indian bill, and my conscience yet tells me that I gave a good honest vote, and one that I believe will not make me ashamed in the day of judgement.

David Crockett, A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett
Worcester v. Georgia Summary

The case begins when missionary Sam Worcester and his family (wife and 5 fellow missionaries) refused to move from a land that was labeled an “Indian territory.” In addition to refusing to move, the group refused to apply for the government license that would allow them to reside on the lands. Because of this refusal, the army entered the Native American lands and arrested Worcester along with the other 6 people. Following his arrest, Worcester appealed his charges and took his case to the Supreme Court.

Chief Justice John Marshall (the judge who presided over the case) ruled in favor of Mr. Worcester in Worcester v. Georgia. Chief Justice Marshall believed that the state government of Georgia did not have the power to enforce a law within lands that were not within the jurisdiction of the state. The Supreme Court, through Marshall, also stated that the interactions between the Native American tribe and the state of Georgia must be considered and approached as international talks.

The Supreme Court of the United States ruled in favor of Worcester because they found the state to have violated his 14th Amendment rights. The 14th Amendment does not allow any government in the United States from blocking a citizen’s right to pursue “life, liberty and happiness.” Furthermore, Worcester v. Georgia also dealt with the due process clause which refers to the government’s obligation to maintain and respect these legal rights. The United States government is thus required to treat all American citizens in a respectful manner. Any attempt to over-step their boundaries will be deemed a violation of the constitution.
Cherokee Nation v. Georgia Summary

During June of 1830, a delegation of Cherokee Nation leaders selected former attorney general, William Wirt, to defend the right of their tribe before the United States Supreme Court. The Cherokee Nation in Cherokee Nation v. Georgia wanted the laws to be thrown away. The Cherokee Nation wanted these laws to be terminated because the tribe felt that the state of Georgia wanted to destroy the Native American tribe for political reasons.

In Cherokee Nation v. Georgia, Attorney General Wirt argued that the Cherokee Nation was a separate foreign nation according to the United States Constitution. According to this belief, Wirt felt that the Cherokee nation should not be subject to the state’s jurisdiction. Using this argument in Cherokee Nation v. Georgia, Attorney General Wirt asked the Supreme Court to rule Georgia law null and void because the state violated the United States’ Constitution.

The United States Supreme Court ruled that the Cherokee Nation did not maintain original jurisdiction in the legal matter. The United States Supreme Court ruled that the Cherokee Nation was a dependent nation with the United States.
General Winfield Scott’s Proclamation to the Cherokee (1838)

The President of the United States has sent me with a powerful army, to cause you, in obedience to the treaty of 1835, to join that part of your people who have already established in prosperity [comfort and success] on the other side of the Mississippi.

Unhappily, the two years which were allowed for the purpose, you have suffered to pass away without following, and without making any preparation to follow; and now, . . . the emigration must be commenced in haste, but I hope without disorder. . . . The full moon of May is already on the wane; and before another shall have passed away every Cherokee man, woman and child in those states must be in motion to join their brethren in the far West. . . . Thousands and thousand [of troops] are approaching from every quarter, to render resistance and escape alike hopeless. . . .

Will you then, by resistance, compel [force] us to resort to arms? God forbid! Or will you, by flight, seek to hide yourselves in mountains and forests and thus oblige us to hunt you down? Remember that, in pursuit, it may be impossible to avoid conflicts. The blood of the white man or the blood of the red man may be spilt and, if split, however accidentally, it may be impossible for the discreet and humane among you, or among us, to prevent a general war and carnage.
The Ridge House is located in Rome, Georgia, near New Echota, the Cherokee national capital. The two windows to the left of the front door were part of the earliest part of this house, a log cabin of two rooms separated by an open breezeway.

By the time of the relocation, Major Ridge had enlarged the cabin into a fine house, with eight rooms, 30 glass windows, four brick fireplaces, and paneling in the parlor. The two one-story wings were added in the 20th century. This house was part of a 223-acre plantation farmed by about 30 slaves. The property also included a ferry, a store, and a toll road, all sources of considerable wealth.
John Ross’ Home

This log house is located in Rossville, Georgia, on the Georgia-Tennessee border near Chattanooga. It consists of two rooms on each floor separated by a central breezeway, now enclosed, and was built in the 1790s by John Ross's grandfather. Ross lived here with his grandparents as a boy and the house later served as a headquarters for the enterprises that made him a rich man. The property also included a large farm, worked by slaves. Ross also owned a supply depot and warehouse at Ross's Landing (now in Chattanooga).

In 1832, Ross returned from a trip to Washington to find that his plantation had been taken over by Georgia whites who had won it in the lottery for Cherokee land. He moved back into this house, where he stayed until removal.
This illustration shows the homestead of Lying Fish, located in a relatively remote valley in northern Georgia. In the early 1830s, Lying Fish's homestead included a 16 by 14 foot log house with a wooden chimney, another house of the same size, a corn crib, a stable, 19 acres of cleared bottom land, of which six were on the creek, 30 peach trees and 3 apple trees.
Witness to the Army’s Treatment of the Cherokee (1838)

The Cherokees are nearly all prisoners. They have been dragged from their houses, and encamped at the forts and military posts, all over the nation.

In Georgia, especially, multitudes were allowed no time to take any thing with them except the clothes they had on. Well-furnished houses were left prey to plunderers, who, like hungry wolves, follow in the trail of the captors. These wretches rifle the houses and strip the helpless, unoffending owners of all they have on earth.

Witness of the Cherokee on the Trail of Tears (1838)

We found the road literally filled with the procession for about three miles in length. The sick and feeble were carried in waggons [sic] . . . a great many ride horseback and multitudes go on foot—even aged females, apparently nearly ready to drop into the grave, were traveling with heavy burdens attached to the back—on the sometimes frozen ground, and sometimes muddy streets, with no covering for the feet except what nature had given them.
Witness of the Cherokee on the Trail of Tears (1838)

[We saw a] detachment of the poor Cherokee Indians ... about eleven hundred Indians—sixty wagons—six hundred horses, and perhaps forty pairs of oxen. We found them in the forest camped for the night by the road side 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, after the fatigue of the day, they spent the night. Many of the aged Indians were suffering extremely from the fatigue of the journey, and the ill health consequent upon it.... Several were then quite ill, and an aged man we were informed was then in the last struggles of death.

We met several detachments in the southern part of Kentucky on the 4th, 5th, and 6th of December. The last detachment which we passed on the 7th embraced rising two thousand Indians with horses and mules in proportion. The forward part of the train we found just pitching their tents for the night, and notwithstanding some thirty or forty wagons were already stationed, we found the road literally filled with the procession for about three miles in length. The sick and feeble were carried in wagons-about as comfortable for traveling as a New England ox cart with a covering over it—a great many ride on horseback and multitudes go on foot—even aged females, apparently nearly ready to drop into the grave, were traveling with heavy burdens attached to the back on the sometimes frozen ground, and sometimes muddy streets, with no covering for the feet except what nature had given them.

We learned from the inhabitants on the road where the Indians passed, that they buried fourteen or fifteen at every stopping place, and they make a journey of ten miles per day only on an average.
Survivor of the Trail of Tears (1838)

Long time we travel on way to new land. People feel bad when they leave Old Nation. Women cry and made sad wails. Children cry and many men cry, and all look sad like when friends die, but they say nothing and just put heads down and keep on go towards West. Many days pass and people die very much.
Relating a Family Story - Robert K. Thomas (1972)

Let me tell you this. My grandmother was a little girl in Georgia when the soldiers came to her house to take her family away. . . . The soldiers were pushing her family away from their land as fast as they could. She ran back into the house before a soldier could catch her and grabbed her [pet] goose and hid it in her apron. Her parents knew she had the goose and let her keep it. When she had bread, she would dip a little in water and slip it to the goose in her apron.

Well, they walked a long time, you know. A long time. Some of my relatives didn't make it. It was a bad winter and it got really cold in Illinois. But my grandmother kept her goose alive.

One day they walked down a deep icy gulch and my grandmother could see down below her a long white road. No one wanted to go over the road, but the soldiers made them go, so they headed across. When my grandmother and her parents were in the middle of the road, a great black snake started hissing down the river, roaring toward the Cherokees. The road rose up in front of her in a thunder and came down again, and when it came down all of the people in front of her were gone, including her parents.

My grandmother said she didn't remember getting to camp that night, but she was with her aunt and uncle. Out on the white road she had been so terrified, she squeezed her goose hard and suffocated it in her apron, but her aunt and uncle let her keep it until she fell asleep. During the night they took it out of her apron.
Land occupied by Southeastern Tribes (c. 1820s)

1. Seminole
2. Creek
3. Choctaw
4. Chickasaw
5. Cherokee
6. Quapaw
7. Osage
8. Illinois Confederation

http://www.nps.gov/nr/lwkp/wwtlps/lessons/118trail
Rattlesnake Springs was one of the stockade camps where Cherokees were initially collected after being forced off of their land. It is located in the far southeastern corner of Tennessee, near the North Carolina border. The farm buildings shown in this recent view would not have been there in 1838.

There were more than 4,800 Cherokees waiting at camps in this general area before relocation. The final Council of the eastern Cherokees was held at Rattlesnake Springs. Lamentations were pronounced and the Council determined to continue their old constitution and laws in the new land.
This photo shows a segment of road believed to have been used during the Cherokee removal of 1838. This trail segment has survived because it is used as a private farm road.