

# Native americans and the trail of tears



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Long before Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean blue in 1492 was a time when North America was the unknown except to the natives who were already living there. He called the natives Indians because he thought he had reached India. Fast-forward a couple of hundred years people were trying to get away from England to have religious freedom and came to North America to start their own country and their own rules.

Realizing the need for more land, the US government wanted to make the move west. Eventually, they were so land hungry they forced five civilized Indian Tribes off their land and moved them to Oklahoma at any cost necessary. Thousands of Native Americans died during the move which is now known as the Trail of Tears.

This all started back in 1803 when the Governor of Tennessee John Sevier wrote a letter to the Cherokee Warriors asking them if it would be ok to build a road through their territory. The road would be paid for and built by the US government, but the road would benefit the Cherokee more than the settlers that were going to be using the road. The settlers informed the Cherokee that the council in Tennessee was waiting for their reply. Then in 1817 Tennessee Governor Joseph McMinn spoke in front of the Tennessee council and in front of the Cherokee Nation about moving the Native Americans east of the Mississippi and civilizing them due to the treaty that was signed in 1817. The treaty gave them the option two options and that was either removal or citizenship. If they chose to move, then they the US would give them land that was like the land that they were currently living on. Which tells me that there was no acreage limit and if they choose to stay where they were they would be forced to move and forced to become US citizens

and be granted over 600 acres in land. There were some that made the choice to move on their own, but most of the Cherokee tribe did not want to move.

The Cherokee Chiefs and warriors wrote a letter to Joseph McMinn expressing not wanting to be removed from their land since the grounds were sacred to them because of their family being buried there. They did not like any of the two options that the US government gave them. One of their biggest concerns that the Cherokee expressed to their letter to the US government is if that they agree to move and accept the 640 acres and become US citizens then they know that in the constitution or the treaty that brings them together gives the US the right to take any private property away from someone to use for public use. The Cherokee felt strongly that the land that would be given to them by the US would never really be viewed as private property. The fact that the US government would show in the treaty that they would use force to remove them from the land they were currently on showed them that it really did not matter if the Cherokee owned the land or not.

With help from people who were supposed to be looking out for the best interest of protecting the Native Americans and with representatives who were not authorized to represent the Cherokee Nation helped pass the New Echota Treaty. Chief John Ross visited Washington several times in protest of the treaty it did not work and because of the new treaty the Cherokee Nation was given 2 years to remove themselves off their land in Georgia. After the 2 years was up the majority of the Cherokee Nation still at their reservation in Georgia sat and watch the US military come onto their land and create posts

and forts. The removal process had begun. A trail that ran the span of 7 states moved an entire Cherokee Tribe of 16, 000 to Tahlequah, Oklahoma. The move that came at a huge price because roughly somewhere between 7 to 10, 00 Cherokee's lost their lives during the trail. The US government did not care about their culture, their wellbeing, or their heritage.