

The journal of jesse
smoke by joseph
bruchac essay
sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Understanding that native people such as the Cherokees is the underpinning concept of *The Journal of Jesse Smoke* written by Joseph Bruchac. Jesse elaborate the heartrending story of what it was like to experienced the Cherokee removal - an arrangement from the United States government to compulsorily relocate Native Americans from their homes in the eastern United States triggered by the greediness of the whites, particularly those from the state of Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama and Carolina who aspire for the land of the Cherokees. Native Americans were drove into detention camps where they experienced miserable life and horrible living condition and in consequence led to the death of thousands. These occurrences created a poignant chapter in American account.

Although Jesse's narrative exemplification of their experiences endow with a sad reflection, at one hand, it also reveals pride and respect in his people and their customs. The regard for the Cherokee in the entire book is the result of author Joseph Bruchac's great presentation of Jesse Smoke's character. In depth internalization of the character's hardships and survival was at hand in this masterpiece. Looking back, Bruchac utters " to do justice in this story I had to spend years in the process of learning with the help of many Cherokee people.

That kind of learning teaches you patience. I would not have been able to write this story twenty years ago, even though I thought of doing such a novel more than once. I am glad that I waited" (Bruchac, 2001). It is beneficial to spend a lot of time contemplating on the subject matter like that of author Bruchac, in order to grasp what really in the story he is writing.

<https://assignbuster.com/the-journal-of-jesse-smoke-by-joseph-bruchac-essay-sample/>

The importance of patience is on top priority in the stunning success of this story. Even though the author has knowledge as regards to the *Trail of Tears*, he still needs ample time to travel, meet and spend time with Cherokee people and have great deal on what the Cherokee experience means in terms of larger issues. Being able to reflect was indeed what the author of *The Journal of Jesse Smoke* embarked to its readers.

The story of Jesse Smoke took place in the Eastern part of the United States. Consequently, it was the place where one of the Native Americans - the Cherokees lived. They spend their lives in this place for such a long time as they dream and build their future. It even became an advance realm having built towns and cities. The Natives also get hold of a written constitution and have printed their own gazette. Without a doubt, the Cherokees established their lives already in their territory until such time that they have come to the attention that they have to leave their own land for the advantage of the majority.

The story is set in an earlier period in the year 1838 as the Cherokee people represent their history under the United States. This was the time where tensions in politics as regards to owning a land were intense and those in authority exhaust their chances of superseding the land of these Native Americans.

Jesse Smoke is a sixteen-year old Cherokee boy who is very strong and well-educated. In fact he make use of his knowledge to get an idea on what plans the Americans has in store for them - to his family and the entire Cherokee people. His family and his fellow Cherokee have lived on the land for a long

time. Indeed, Jesse family owned a successful plantation. Undeniably they are living in a peaceful life; Jesse's going to school and his parents are working.

Unfortunately, life changes abruptly when they were forced to leave their own land in view of the Treaty of New Echota. The people asked to delay the removal and as they've waited for the decision, Jesse lives a normal life. He does the regular chores in their farm - building fences and hunting for meat. He also tries to divert his attentions by playing games with his friends. Jesse writes " We try to live our lives in an every day fashion. But we are worried. Only the very young, like my little sisters, seem unaware of what it all means. The forts have grown in number; we are quite surrounded like hostages in our own land" (Bruchac, 2001).

Increasing number of soldiers entered Cherokee's territory which gave them no option but to follow rules from those in authority. One ominous night, Jesse and his family were awakened together with other Cherokees because they were dragged from their homes and forced to stay in Camp Cherokee which will make their lives more despondent. Jesse inscribe " My mother and sisters had vanished in the crowd.

I tried to find them, but I could not. Some of the Cherokee faces around me seemed familiar, but I could not be entertained who they were. It was not just the darkness and confusion, most of the faces was distorted with fear and grief. All around us was the sound of weeping and moaning, the thud of hooves and angry oaths bellowed at us" (Bruchac, 2001). The forced move was adjunct by starvation and diseases.

The place where they were relocated was not far from a doomed place. The food is poor. The sun burns down on them. Many are sick and each day people die. “ We are crowded like hogs into a sty inside a high wall of timbers. No roof above us but sky and what few blankets can be spread to make shade from the sun” (Bruchac, 2001). As summer goes on, the Cherokee have to bear with throng of mosquitoes, poor sanitation, and diseases like measles and cough. “ Each day more are carried out to be placed in the earth in shallow graves.

No Cherokee can own any of this land except in death, and it is so often the very young and the very old. If we survive, we may be a Nation without children or elders” (Bruchac, 2001). Morale is near to the ground and Jesse confesses, “ It is hard not to lose myself in sorrow and give up, as have some of our people. My pen is like a lifeline that I must have lest I too be washed away” (Bruchac, 2001).

The Cherokee were allowed to organize their exclusion as plans are made for the lands in the west. Finally, after more than four months on the trail, they reach the last campsite. Though he feels deep indignation for what his people have endured, Jesse decides to “ cast anger and hatred out of my heart. If we must build a new nation in the west, we must do it together” (Bruchac, 2001).

As we take hold of the intention of this book we were able to feel the character’s emotion and what adversity they overcome in order to fight for their lives. In this manner, the author’s portrayal of characters was powerful as it leads its readers to go back to the epoch where the story took place. It

gives the readers a broad picture of the scenario which present an impact to feel the passionate sore most specifically in the event where the Cherokees where dominated in their own terrain.

The story illustrates the love of one's nationality. The Cherokees were renowned in a philosophy wherein even the smallest drop of Cherokee blood makes one a Cherokee. Perhaps, it was epitomized in this story as these Native Americans go together in battling the Law which says they have to surrender their rights and follow to what the greater part of the population demands. Clearly, the Cherokee people faced these trials hand in hand and never unfasten the ties that bind them. They did not permit their emotions ruin their forces but instead get strengths with each other. We can never deny how painful it was to loose a co-Cherokee but this does not give them the rationale to loose hope. It was inculcated in their minds that they have to surpass the challenges together.

Sadness and respect were the larger idea that *The Journal of Jesse Smoke* demonstrate. Jesse wrote " Reverend Butler tells me that General Scott gave firm orders from his troops to treat the Cherokees gently. Many of his men tried to follow his orders. Not so the Georgia Volunteers. Scott was shocked to hear a group of Georgia soldiers joking about which of them would gather the most Cherokee scalps. What is that you say, sir? Scott asked one of them. Begin' your pardon, General, a Georgian replied, But it is well known that them Cherokees ain't truly human" (Bruchac, 2001).

As Jesse narrates the tragic story, we cannot hold the admiration for those people who submit themselves to that kind of situation. Indeed, bravery is

the key to all these hardships. It was tough to be in the situation wherein you have to bear the thump with your family – mother and your sisters as to the case of Jesse as he wrote “ My mother and my sisters and I have been chosen for a later detachment. It took all morning to form the line of wagons, perhaps fifty of them. I am not sure of the estimate. The wind blew dust into my eyes. It was hard at times to breathe because of the dust clouds. Finally, at noon, all was ready.

What a sight it was to behold, that long line of people and wagons stretching for a mile along the road that was edged by heavy forest. Perhaps one-fifth of the party was in the wagons or on horseback. Those in the wagons were mostly those too young, too old, or too infirm to walk upon their own feet. The rest would try to walk the whole way” (Bruchac, 2001). Factual to say that they have shed a lot of tears and sadness really empower their inner being but rootless to say, the respect within themselves is in no way put to waste as they join their hands in renewing their life and truly have the life that once fate forbids them. They could stay in another place but what was important was they survived and now they’re moving on.

It is imperative to stay in that persons place and time to recount what really happened during the time of Jesse Smoke. It was a challenge when surrounded by this very different world of the 21st century. Yet, as we go through this account, it’s not hard to understand what really took place during that period of American history.

It was great to realize how effective it was for me to be conscious with this kind of history and be familiar with the story of the marginalized race. This

<https://assignbuster.com/the-journal-of-jesse-smoke-by-joseph-bruchac-essay-sample/>

historical representation of events brought an impact to our daily lives. Upon exploring the Journal of Jesse Smoke, it accentuates my interest to go further and reflect as to what impact the story have on the historical interpretations of American history.

It is essential to look on the brighter side of the story and lift the lessons that will guide us in one way or the other. Part of Jesse's journal " Today was their Independence Day. It was not ours" (Bruchac, 2001). It might be true that the Americans achieved their Independence but looking back to what the Cherokee people had gone through, they have proven themselves already which help them to attain not just their independence, but their peace of mind as well which will aid them all the way to achieve the zenith of success - away from politics and brutality of the people.

In such a simple way, the Cherokees find time to survive despite the intention of eradicating them in their own land. The strengths of Jesse Smoke were remarkable as he tries to balance everything and be strong for his family and for his co-Cherokee.