

We shall remain - trail of tears: a review

[History](#)



A 19Th Century Tragedy

History has always shown to repeat itself. In this case, through repetition of hatred from one group of people unto another. Usually this hatred shows its flesh in the form of racism and this made up notion of superiority. In PBS's "Trail of Tears", the United States' supposed "Manifest Destiny", to have its people stretch from coast to coast, reared its ugly head in pursuit of a total elimination of Native Americans, the Cherokee People in this specific instance, from their land. Throughout the film, the author shows us different historical leaders in the US and most specifically the Cherokee's John Ross and the aristocratic Ridge family. The author keeps pounding his ideas of Native Americans being treated unfairly into the readers' head. I'd go as far to say that this was a biased film looking to persuade the reader to have disdain for America.

"Trail of Tears" tells a story of a 19th century tragedy. The United States told the Native Americans that if they assimilate to the Anglo-Saxon way of life, they could live a civilized, prosperous life among the American peoples. So like any intelligent man, John Ridge, from a very well respected family, ventured off to Cornwall, Connecticut to study at a Foreign Mission School. His teachers always criticized him for his quirky personality and lack of enthusiasm, but what they could give him props for was his immense intelligence. While still in school, John met Sarah Northup and eventually ended up marrying her in 1824. The hatred and criticizing toward their marriage really corrupted the way John thought of the White Americans. In verbatim, John Ridge was never to trust the White man again. He really took this blow to the heart. He'd done everything the Americans had told him to

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in order to be an accepted member of society and yet he still couldn't win. In comes John Ross; A white man who grew up in the confines of the Cherokee Nation. His father was white and his mother was of Cherokee descent. This blend of races really gave Ross an edge in terms of his eventual leadership position among the Cherokee people. Ross was really able to communicate across the borders of the nation and he was a near perfect representative of the Cherokees for what this time period in history. John Ridge would learn to work side by side with Ross in attempts to fend off their incurring foe. But, as time started to run out, John Ridge started to resent Ross's leadership and ran against him in the next election. When the Americans gave the Cherokee its last warning of removal, Major Ridge and John Ridge agreed upon leaving the Georgia region and anyone who wanted to go on their journey was welcome. Very few went along with the Ridges while most stayed around and were willing to risk their lives for their land. Along with the thousands that stayed included John Ross. The Cherokee people continued to have harvest and live peacefully among each other until they were swept from their land by force. Thousands of Cherokee were forcefully removed from their lands. On the way to lands past the Mississippi River, many perished from disease and a brutal winter. Many of the Cherokees were dissatisfied with the Ridge family leading to the brutal murdering of John Ridge in front of his wife.

In this piece, the author tries to portray the position of the Cherokee Nation through characters. The author uses the perspective of the Cherokee position and feeling towards the American people and their attempts to rid them of the land. Instead of a basic facts approach, the author adds in subtle details and insights on some of the Cherokee leaders' lives and how their

roles evolved in the Cherokee community. Personally, I feel like the author did an exceptional job of using primarily John Ridge's and John Ross's lives to tell the story of the eventual Trail of Tears. Not only was the film intriguing, but it was able to keep me watching through its ongoing twists and turns in the plot. But, like most films, there are a few discrepancies I have with the how it was told. The author took the perspective of the Cherokee people and rightfully so, but there was a missing piece to the story. The narration was never on the side of the American people. Yes, they were the perpetrators, but that doesn't mean they aren't apart of the story. So, in that sense of the film, the author didn't do a complete job of blending and balancing the Americans into the story.

Personally, I was disgusted with the United States' stubbornness and unrelenting will to assert their superiority over not only the Cherokee people, but all Native Americans. It just boils my blood about how this happens and continues to happen through the history of mankind. You can look back on Nazi Germany or Stalin and his Russian Regime and see the similarities to the American Government at the time of the Trail of Tears. Another example would include the imperialistic powers of Europe in the late 19th century. I cannot relate to the inferiority of the Cherokee Nation throughout my life, but this scenario draws an image of a bully taunting a victim on the playground. Initially, I wasn't as hard on the Americans, but as the film progressed and Andrew Jackson came into office, I really came at a cross-road in terms of how I felt as an American. When you grow up as an American, you were always told that we live in the greatest country on the planet. But, what we fail to cover in our education is how inhumane we were

as a country just a few hundred years before. This isn't the first time I realized this, but this film sure didn't lessen my standpoint. So what I ask to Americans in the past is would there have been a better way to resolve this issue? Could you have done something not so imperialistic and inhumane?

As you can tell I am siding with the author in this particular instance. I think this film was created not only to teach people about a terrible event in history, but to teach the audience a lesson. To survive in a never-changing world, we need to stick together and be as one. Everyone has different cultures and different races, but that doesn't change who they are as a person. We should all take this lesson into consideration when dealing with the present day situation going on in the United States. Look at the "Black Lives Matter" movement or the Trump's immigration clause. We need to be more vigilant of how we treat others and how we want to be treated. Put yourself in their shoes for a second and feel what they feel. The worst thing someone can do is be ignorant and hateful. Make a difference.