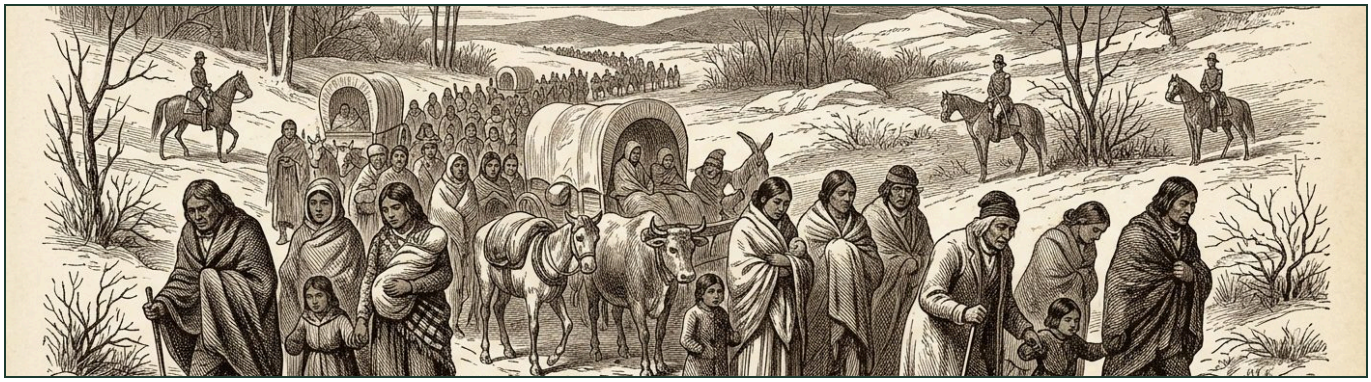


1830 – 1839

Trail of Tears Timeline

The Trail of Tears was the forced removal of Native American nations from their homelands in the southeastern United States to territory west of the Mississippi River, resulting in the deaths of thousands.

~1820s — **Pressure to Remove Native Nations Grows**

White settlers in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi demand the federal government remove Native American nations from valuable land; gold is discovered on Cherokee land in Georgia in 1829.

> **Why it mattered:** *The discovery of gold intensified demands for removal — state governments began passing laws stripping Native people of their rights and making life in the East impossible.*

1830 — **Indian Removal Act**

President Andrew Jackson signs the Indian Removal Act, letting the president trade land west of the Mississippi River for the lands of Native nations in the Southeast that agreed to move; nations that refused were later forced out.

> **Why it mattered:** *The Act gave legal cover to forced removal — Native nations could negotiate, but those who refused faced increasing state pressure and eventually military force.*

1831 — **Choctaw Removal**

The Choctaw Nation becomes the first to be removed under the Act; thousands march west in harsh winter conditions with little food or shelter.

> **Why it mattered:** *About 2,500 Choctaw people died during removal — an early and devastating warning of the suffering the policy would bring to other nations.*

1832 — **Worcester v. Georgia**

The Supreme Court rules that Georgia cannot enforce its laws on Cherokee land — the Cherokee Nation is a distinct community with the right to remain.

> **Why it mattered:** *President Jackson reportedly dismissed the ruling and did not enforce it. The decision showed that even a Supreme Court victory could not protect Native nations if the president refused to act.*

Trail of Tears Timeline *continued*

1835 — **Treaty of New Echota**

A small, unauthorized group of Cherokee leaders signs a treaty giving up Cherokee lands in exchange for territory in the West and $5 million.

> **Why it mattered:** *The treaty was rejected by the vast majority of the Cherokee Nation and its elected leadership — but the US government used it as legal justification for forced removal.*

1836 — **Creek Removal**

The Creek Nation is forcibly removed from Alabama under military supervision after resisting departure.

> **Why it mattered:** *Thousands of Creek people died during removal or in the years immediately after from disease, exposure, and starvation on the journey west.*

1838 — **Cherokee Roundup**

US Army soldiers round up approximately 16,000 Cherokee people and hold them in crowded stockade camps while awaiting removal.

> **Why it mattered:** *The roundup was brutal — families were separated, homes were burned and looted, and disease spread rapidly through the overcrowded camps.*

1838–39 — **The Trail of Tears**

The Cherokee are forced to march more than 1,000 miles to Indian Territory during the winter; an estimated 4,000 to 8,000 people die from cold, disease, and starvation.

> **Why it mattered:** *The Cherokee called it Nunna daul Tsuny — the trail where they cried. It became the defining symbol of the human cost of Indian Removal.*

1839 — **Arrival in Indian Territory**

Survivors reach present-day Oklahoma; the Cherokee Nation begins rebuilding schools, government, and communities in its new homeland.

> **Why it mattered:** *Despite devastating losses, the Cherokee rebuilt remarkable institutions — a newspaper, a constitution, and public schools — showing extraordinary resilience in the face of catastrophic loss.*

1842 — **Seminole Resistance Ends**

After seven years of the Second Seminole War — the most costly Indian war in US history — most remaining Seminole in Florida are either removed or driven deep into the Everglades.

> **Why it mattered:** *A small group of Seminole never surrendered and never signed a peace treaty — their descendants still live in Florida today.*