



TRAIL OF TEARS Reading Comprehension

In the early 1800s, America's population was booming and people were moving west. Westward expansion came mostly at the expense of the Indians who were often forced to move from their native lands.

In the state of Georgia, the population increased 600 percent in a matter of 40 years. As a result, many of its native tribes were pushed out. The Cherokee Indians of western Georgia had managed to keep their land until gold was discovered in their territory in 1828. In 1830, however, President Andrew Jackson authorized the Indian Removal Act. The Cherokees fought the law, and it was overturned by Chief Justice John Marshall two years later.

Just three years later, however, in 1835, the Treaty of New Echota was signed. The treaty was not authorized by the Cherokee Nation, but rather a small group of Cherokee radicals led by John Ridge. Under the treaty, the Cherokee were to leave Georgia and the government would compensate them at a price determined to be about 5 percent of the value of the land. The majority of the Cherokee Nation would never have agreed to the treaty, but the U.S. government ratified it anyway. John Ridge was thus seen as a traitor by the Cherokees and would later pay with his life. The Georgia government then staged a land lottery in which Cherokee land was divided into 160 equal portions. They were sold to anyone who had \$4.00 and who had won a chance to own land.

In 1838, General Winfield Scott and 7,000 troops invaded Cherokee land. Men, women, and children were forced to walk westward from Georgia nearly 1,000 miles with minimal facilities and food to reservations set up for them in Oklahoma. Cherokee Chief John Ross eventually was able to convince Winfield Scott that his people should lead the tribe west. Scott agreed and Ross divided the people into smaller groups so they could forage for food on their own. Although Ross may have saved countless lives, nearly 4,000 Indians died walking this Trail of Tears.

1.) What is a "treaty?"

- a.) A prize
- b.) A battle
- c.) A sale
- d.) An agreement

2.) Where were the Cherokee forced to walk?

- a.) From Oklahoma to Georgia
- b.) From one part of Cherokee territory to the other
- c.) From Georgia to Oklahoma
- d.) To Georgia from Oklahoma

3.) Who saved countless Cherokee lives on the brutal Trail of Tears?

- a.) John Ross
- b.) John Marshall
- c.) John Ridge
- d.) None of the above

4.) The Indian Removal Act was authorized after the discovery of _____ in western Georgia.

5.) Why was John Ridge viewed as a traitor by the Cherokees?

- a.) He sold his land to the U.S. government.
- b.) He represented the U.S. government.
- c.) He signed a treaty for the Cherokees that most of the Cherokee Nation would have never accepted.
- d.) He staged a land lottery for the U.S. government.

6.) What general invaded Cherokee lands for the purpose of removing them?

- a.) John Ross
- b.) Winfield Scott
- c.) John Ridge
- d.) Andrew Jackson

7.) What does "ratified" mean?

- a.) made official
- b.) overturned
- c.) constructed
- d.) classified

8.) What happened first?

- a.) John Ross convinced Winfield Scott that he should lead his people to the Oklahoma reservation.
- b.) Treaty of New Echota
- c.) Indian Removal Act
- d.) the Georgia land lottery

9.) In 1830, _____ authorized the Indian Removal Act.

10.) Which of the following best describes the 1835 Treaty of New Echota?

- a.) Fair to the Cherokees
- b.) Unfair to the government
- c.) Unfair to the Cherokees
- d.) None of the above