

The Removal of the Indians – *The Enduring Vision* AP High School Textbook

As white settlers poured into the West, they found in their path sizeable pockets of Indians, particularly in the South...As white's demands for Native America lands reach a boiling point during the 1820s, the traditional policy of negotiating treaties piecemeal with the Indians came under fire. ...When Jackson became president in 1829, he promptly instituted a more coercive removal policy. ...In 1830 he secured from a divided Congress passage of the Indian Removal Act, which granted the president funds and authority to remove Native Americans by force if necessary. ...

The Cherokees, the most assimilated of the southern tribes, tried legal resistance to removal, but to no avail. In 1827 the Cherokees proclaimed themselves in independent republic within Georgia. ...Supreme Court Justice John Marshall...acknowledged that prolonged occupancy gave the Cherokees a right to their land, and...clarified the Cherokees' legal position in *Worcester v. Georgia*, by holding that they were a "domestic dependent nation" entitled to federal protection from molestation by Georgia.

But Marshall's decision had little impact. Jackson ignored it, reportedly sneering, "John Marshall has made his decision; now let him enforce it."

"As Long as Grass Grows or Water Runs" *A Young People's History of the United States* by H. Zinn

Excerpted:

...Andrew Jackson, the harshest enemy of the Indians in early American history became famous during the War of 1812. Textbooks usually say that the war was a struggle against Britain for America's survival, but it was more than that. It was also a war for territory. It allowed the United States to expand into Canada, into Florida (which was owned by Spain), and into Indian territory.

Jackson's first Indian wars were against the Creeks, who lived in most of Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. In the midst of the war, Creek warriors massacred 250 whites at an Alabama fort. Jackson's troops took revenge by burning down a Creek village, killing women and children as well as men. A year later, in 1814, Jackson became a national hero when he fought the Battle of Horseshoe Bend against a thousand Creeks. He killed eight hundred of them, with few deaths on his side. Jackson owed his victory to Cherokees who fought on his side because the government promised to treat them well if they joined the war. Jackson's white troops failed in an attack on the Creeks, but the Cherokees swam a river, came up behind the Creeks, and won the battle for Jackson.

When the war ended...Jackson got himself put in charge of treaties. In 1814 he wrote a treaty that took away half the land of the Creek nation. ...Over the next ten years, Jackson was involved in many more treaties with the southern Indians. Through force, bribery, and tricks, he helped whites take over three-fourths of Alabama and Florida, a third of Tennessee, and parts of four other states. These land grabs became the basis for the cotton kingdom of the South, where slaves labored on white-owned plantations.

In 1828, Americans elected Jackson president. Under Jackson and Martin Van Buren, the man he chose to follow him as president, the U.S. government removed seventy thousand Indians from their homelands east of the Mississippi River. A government official named Lewis Cass had taken millions of acres from the Indians when he was governor of the Michigan Territory. In 1825, at a treaty meeting with the Shawnees and Cherokees, he had promised them that if they moved west, across the Mississippi River, "The United States will never ask for your land there.' The land beyond the river, Cass declared, would remain Indian territory forever.