

Documentary to Trace Trail of Tears Through Region

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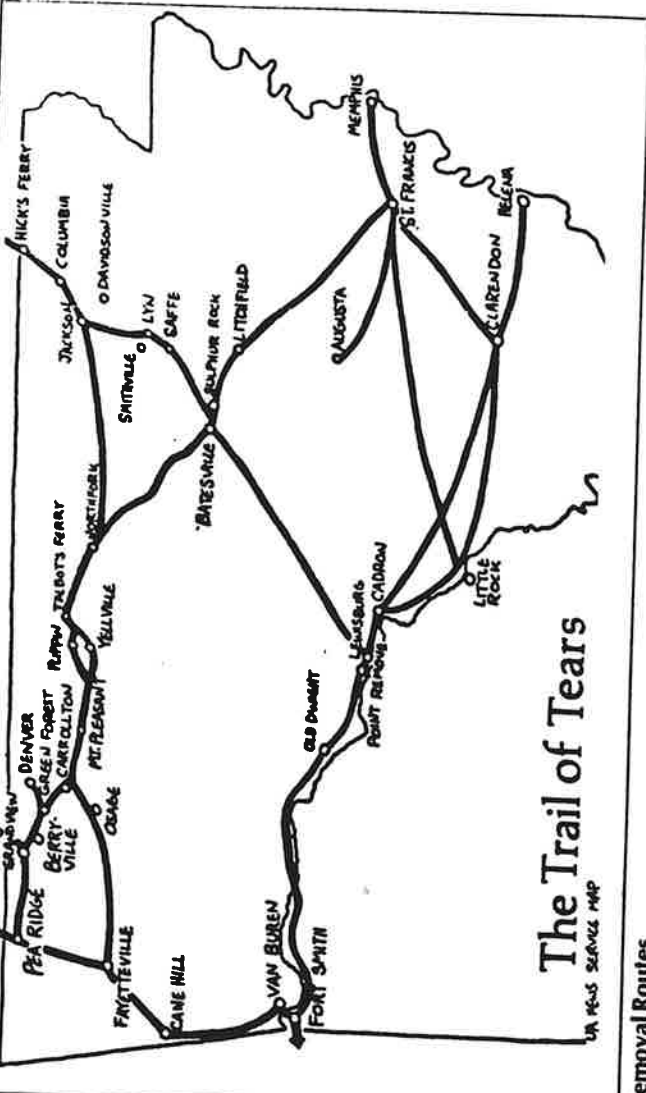
okee leaders and many Cherokee were educated at the seminary.

UA News Service

Mention the Trail of Tears or the Cherokee Nation and stand back for the response. That's what Frank Scheide discovered when he began researching for a documentary script he and others are writing. Scheide, an instructor of film and television at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, is an officer of Arkansas Images, Inc., a non-profit media group based in Fayetteville. Arkansas Images received a grant from the Arkansas Endowment for the Humanities (AEH) to develop the script. Working with Dr. Michael Hoffman, an Indian expert and professor of anthropology at the UA, Scheide has completed the research and will submit the script to AEH in September. Production of the documentary, Scheide hopes, will be funded in the next grant cycle.

Although Scheide knew Hoffman and other scholars were interested in the Cherokee, the general public's intense fascination surprised him. "We sent out 100 letters to the editors of Arkansas newspapers and we've gotten about 30 responses so far," he said. "Most people have a stereotypical idea of Indians — they picture the Plains Indians who lived much differently from the Cherokee — but they may be descended from the Cherokee or know someone who is. So they want to know the heritage."

Scheide became interested in the project over coffee one afternoon in a Fayetteville cafe. His companion mentioned the Trail of Tears and neither of them knew where it was located. "We found out it goes right through Fayetteville," Scheide said. Ridge House, still standing in Fayetteville and Sophia Sawyer's Female Seminary are more evidence of Northwest Arkansas' link with the Cherokee. John Ridge and his father, Major Ridge, were Cherokee leaders and many Cherokee



Removal Routes

Here are some removal routes identified by researchers working on a documentary script about the Trail of Tears and the Cherokee Indian in Arkansas. Frank Scheide, of Fayetteville, said the National Park Service

has learned about the Cherokee will be available to others. "Some 17,000 Cherokee were forced over the Trail of Tears," he said. "About 4,000 of them died along the way. These were a civilized people, civilized by every standard Americans use to determine civilization. Their removal was a disgrace."

is also gathering information to designate as the "official" Trail of Tears traveled by all the Indians removed from the east to Oklahoma.

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