

REMOVAL OF THE CHEROKEE INDIANS IN 1838 - 1839

An Account of Their Passing Through Cape Girardeau County, Mo.

By
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Removal of the Cherokee Indians

To more fully understand the moving of the Cherokee Indians from their reservation which covered a portion of north Georgia, east Tennessee, west North Carolina and South Carolina and a small portion of North Alabama, which is known as the Snokey Mountain country, to a new reservation west of the Mississippi River, a portion of the Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, which occurred in 1838-39, it is quite necessary to understand their origin, traditions, national life and reasons for their removal and how it was brought about.

The Cherokees are a branch of the Iroquois and were driven south out of the country now known as Ontario, New York and Pennsylvania, by the Iroquois and Delawares and they took up their habitation in the southern section of the Allegheny range where DeSoto found them in 1540, they were friendly with the Spanish and in after years with the English for in 1730 seven Chiefs accompanied Sir Alexander Cummings to England where they were royally entertained, they recognized England and signed a treaty allowing the English to settle in their country.

August 11, 1790, President Washington in a message to the Senate said, "During last year I laid before the Senate a particular statement of the case of the Cherokees. By reference to that paper it will appear that the United States formed a treaty with the Cherokees in November, 1785, that the Cherokees thereby placed themselves under the protection of the United States and had a boundary assigned them, that the white people who settled on the frontiers had openly violated the said boundary by intruding on the Indians' lands, that the United States in Congress assembled did, on the last day of September, 1788, issue their proclamation forbidding all such unwarrantable intrusions and enjoined all those who had settled upon the hunting grounds of the Cherokees to depart with their families and effects without loss of time or they would answer their disobedience to the injunction and prohibitions expressed, at their peril."

The white people continued to trespass and encroach on the Indians' lands and new treaties were entered into from time to time; January 17, 1798, President Adams appointed a commission to treat with the Cherokees which was signed at Tallico October 2, 1798.

In 1808 the Cherokee representatives of the Upper and Lower Towns proceeded to Washington City to have a conference with President Jefferson. The citizens of the Upper Towns desired to lead a civilized life and engage in the pursuit of agriculture in the country which they then were occupying, but they of the Lower Towns did not desire to do this and asked that the reservation be divided, giving the land north of the Hiwassee River to the Upper Towns, allowing them to form a government and adopt their own laws; while they were willing to exchange their portion for lands west of the Mississippi River, as they desired to continue their old customs and habits of living, since the wild game was fast disappearing they desired to locate new hunting grounds where game was more plentiful and Pale-faces fewer.

After hearing them, President Jefferson, desiring to be just, said all those who desired to remain where they then lived would be protected and assisted in the administration of their affairs and all those dissatisfied with their surroundings, might seek a location west of the Mississippi River, along the upper reaches of the White and Arkansas Rivers. They located in Northwest Arkansas and on July 8, 1817, they met with Gen. Andrew Jackson and other Commissioners and entered into a treaty to exchange their holdings in the east for a like territory west of the Mississippi. From then on they were known as Cherokees West.

Quote:

"H. V. Thornton, an instructor in the New York University, writing in the Tulsa Tribune in 1930 says, "As early as 1817, a band of Cherokee Indians, weary of the persecution visited upon them by their white neighbors, took the trail westward. They temporarily settled in Northwest Arkansas". These were known as the Cherokees West."

After the "Cherokees West" had gone to live in what is now Arkansas, the Cherokees remaining in Georgia set to work to improve themselves. They engaged seriously in agriculture and attended the mission schools. The year 1821 saw an innovation that aided greatly in their development -- Sequoyah's invention of a Cherokee Syllabary, or alphabet. Sequoyah, also known as George Gist or Guess, was born in 1760 and lived with his mother in Tuskegee, a town in Tennessee. He never went to school and never learned to either speak, read or write English. He was a hunter and trader and a craftsman in silverware. One day while out hunting he was hurt and became crippled for life. During his forced inactivity he began to ponder on a bit of information he had obtained by chance -- that white men had a system by which they could talk on paper. He set to work upon a syllabary. His tribesmen scoffed at his great idea and throughout the twelve years of his patient labor on the syllabary he was the target for scornful merriment, but at last he perfected it, a system of 85 symbols that stood for sounds in the language and that proved very easy to learn.

Sequoyah came before the head men of the tribe with his invention and it was taken up at once. In an amazingly short time practically all of the Cherokees learned how to read and write. They were able to study the Bible and in 1828 they established the first national Indian newspaper, The Cherokee Phoenix. When the use of his alphabet had become general in the east Sequoyah went to the Cherokees West and taught it to them.

He was a prominent figure in the development of their new country, both in Arkansas and Oklahoma, where he lived for some time near Tahlequah.

His nation voted him a pension of \$300 which his widow inherited, the only literary pension ever granted in the United States.

Early in 1824 (January 30) President Monroe, being under a constantly increasing pressure from the South, especially Georgia, requested the Cherokees to sell their country and remove west of the Mississippi. From their refusal these passages were taken:

"We assert under the fullest authority that all the sentiments expressed in relation to the disposition and determination of the Nation, never

to cede another foot of land, are positively the product and voice of the Nation ... They have unequivocally determined never again to pursue the chase as heretofore, or to engage in war, unless by the common call of the Government to defend the common rights of the United States The Cherokees have turned their attention to the pursuits of the civilized man, agriculture, manufacture and the mechanical arts and education are all in successful operation in the Nation at this time; and while the Cherokees are peacefully endeavoring to enjoy the blessings of civilization and Christianity on the soil of their rightful inheritance, and while the exertion and labors of various religious societies of the United States are successfully engaged in promulgating to them the words of truth and life from the sacred volume of Holy Writ, and under the patronage of the general government, they are threatened with removal or extinction We appeal to the magnanimity of the American Congress for justice and the protection of the rights and liberties of the Cherokee people. We claim it from the United States by the strongest obligation which impose it on them -- by treaties; and we expect it from them under that memorable declaration, ... "That all men are created equal"; "that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

This shows their attitude and in a message to Congress, Monroe expressed his belief that at this time they could be removed only by force.

President Jackson in his first message, December 8, 1829, says:

"The Southern tribes have made some progress in the art of civilized life, they have attempted to erect an independent government within the limits of Georgia and Alabama, the states claiming to be the only sovereigns within their territory, extended their laws over the Indians, which induced them to call upon the United States for protection. My conclusion is that there cannot exist an independent government inside any State. I so have advised the Cherokees that they submit to the laws of the States or move beyond the Mississippi."

As stated, in 1826 George Guess, whose Indian name was Secucyah, invented a syllabic alphabet of the Cherokee language, and in 1828 established a newspaper, the Cherokee Phoenix, which was published until 1838 when it was seized by direction of Georgia, for the policy of the paper was to uphold the claims of the Cherokee Nation. George Guess had removed to the "Indian territory" where he remained for a short time, then went to Texas and never returned.

A powerful detached tribe of the Iroquoian family, formerly holding the whole mountain region of the southern Alleghanies, in southwestern Virginia, western North Carolina and South Carolina, northern Georgia, eastern Tennessee, and northeastern Alabama, and claiming even to the Ohio River. The tribal name is a corruption of Tsalagi or Tsaragi, the name by which they commonly called themselves, and which may be derived from the Choctaw chiluk-ki, "cave people", in allusion to the numerous caves in their mountain country. They sometimes also call themselves Ani-yun-wiya, "real people", or Ani-kitu-hwagi, "people of Kituhwa", one

of their most important ancient settlements. Their northern kinsmen, the Iroquois, called them Oyata'ge'ronon', "inhabitants of the cave country", and the Delawares and connected tribes called them Kittuwa, from the settlement already noted. They seem to be identical with the Rickohockans, who invaded central Virginia in 1658, and with the ancient Talligewi of Delaware tradition, who were represented to have been driven southward from the upper Ohio River region by the combined forces of the Iroquois and Delawares.

The language has three principal dialects: (1) Elati, or Lower, spoken on the heads of Savannah River, in South Carolina and Georgia; (2) Middle, spoken chiefly on the waters of Tuckasegee River, in western North Carolina, and now the prevailing dialect on the East Cherokee Reservation; (3) Atali, Mountain or Upper, spoken throughout most of upper Georgia, eastern Tennessee, and extreme western North Carolina. The lower dialect was the only one which had the r sound, and is now extinct. The upper dialect is that which has been exclusively used in the native literature of the tribe.

Traditional, linguistic, and archeologic evidence shows that the Cherokee originated in the north, but they were found in possession of the southern Allegheny region when first encountered by DeSoto in 1540. Their relations with the Carolina colonies began 150 years later. In 1736 the Jesuit (?) Priber started the first mission among them, and attempted to organize their government on a civilized basis. In 1759, under the leadership of A'ganstata (Oconostota), they began war with the English of Carolina. In the Revolution they took sides against the Americans, and continued the struggle almost without interval until 1794. During this period parties of the Cherokee pushed down Tennessee River, and formed new settlements at Chickamauga and other points about the Tennessee-Alabama line. Shortly after 1800, missionary and educational work was established among them, and in 1820 they adopted a regular form of government modeled on that of the United States. In the meantime large numbers of the more conservative Cherokee, wearied by the encroachment of the whites, had crossed the Mississippi and made new homes in the wilderness in what is now Arkansas. A year or two later Sequoya, a mixed blood, invented the alphabet, which at once raised them to the rank of a literary people.

At the height of their prosperity gold was discovered near the present Dahlonega, Georgia, within the limits of the Cherokee Nation, and at once a powerful agitation was begun for the removal of the Indians. After years of hopeless struggle under the leadership of their chief John Ross, they were compelled to submit to the inevitable, and by the treaty of New Echota, December 29, 1835, the Cherokee sold their entire remaining territory and agreed to remove beyond the Mississippi to a country there to be set apart for them -- the present Cherokee Nation (Oklahoma). The removal was accomplished in the winter of 1838-39, after considerable hardship and the loss of nearly one-fourth of their number, the unwilling Indians being driven out by military force and making the long journey on foot. On reaching their destination they re-organized their national government, with their capital at Tahlequah, admitting to equal privileges the earlier emigrants, known as "old settlers". A part of the Arkansas Cherokee had previously gone down into Texas where they had obtained a grant of land in the eastern part of the State from the Mexican government. The later Texan revolutionists refused to recognize their rights, and in spite of the efforts of Gen. Sam Houston, who defended the Indian claim, a conflict was precipitated, resulting, in 1839, in the killing of the Cherokee chief, Bowl, with a large number of his men, by the Texan troops, and the expulsion of the Cherokee from Texas.

When the main body of the tribe was removed to the West, several hundred fugitives escaped to the mountains, where they lived as refugees for a time, until, in 1842, through the efforts of Wm. H. Thomas, an influential trader, they received permission to remain on lands set apart for their use in western North Carolina. They constitute the present eastern band of Cherokee, residing chiefly on the Qualla Reservation in Swain and Jackson counties, with several outlying settlements.

I quote the following from the Tulsa Tribune, November 13, 1930:

Famous Cherokee Leaders

"John Ross, whose Indian name was Coowees Coowee (Great White Bird), a well educated tribesman of Cherokee and Scotch ancestry, was the first principal chief of the Cherokee, organized a government, to prove to their white neighbors that they were not a savage people, but were competent to govern themselves. Its constitution provided for a principal chief, second chief and a general council made up of two houses, much like our Congress.

"John Ross was a powerful leader, holding out to the last against the removal to the west. He did all in his power to defeat the measures that forced the removal but finally had to capitulate. In spite of bitter dissension in the tribe, he kept the majority on his side in the new country and remained principal chief.

"During the Civil War he attempted at first to keep his people neutral but later favored the north. He took no active part in the war but left the Cherokee country and lived in Philadelphia until it was over.

"Major Ridge, his son, John Ridge, and his two nephews, Elias (Boudinot) and Stand Watie (brothers), opposed John Ross in every way. They favored the move westward and were members of the Committee of 20 that signed the Treaty of New Echota, the agreement by which the federal government forced the removal.

"Elias Boudinot's real Cherokee name was Ga-La-gi-na, "Buck Deer" or Buck Watie. He was the elder brother of Stand Watie. Buck Watie was sent to school in Connecticut, where Elias Boudinot, the eminent publicist and philanthropist, became his patron. As Cherokees often do, Buck Watie adopted the name of the man he so deeply admired and became "Elias Boudinot"." (End of quote)

In the new country, the old settlers of "Cherokees West" resented John Ross's leadership and the Ridges and Boudinots joined the old settlers. The bitter hostility between these two factions culminated in 1839 when an armed band entered the homes of John Ridge and Elias Boudinot and murdered them before the eyes of their families. Major Ridge was also murdered.

Stand Watie, the only one who escaped murder, became leader of the Ridge-Boudinot party and in the Civil War joined with the south. Throughout the terrible conflict, when the Cherokee country was laid waste by war, he remained one of the most staunch and daring officers in the Confederate Army and is said to have been the last southern officer to stop fighting.

From the Tulsa Tribune, November, 1930:

Romance of Cherokee Youths Which Stirred New
Englanders to Riotous Fury

"The romance of Ga-la-gi-na, or Buck Watie, the Cherokee youth who later became the famous tribal leader, assuming the name of Elias Boudinot, is one of the most stirring stories in Indian history.

"The handsome young brave from Georgia, who went north to the foreign mission school at Cornwall, Connecticut, and had the audacity to woo one of Cornwall's fairest daughters, aroused the indignation of the entire populace and narrowly escaped mob violence.

"This romance of Elias Boudinot and Harriett Gold, a love story of the Romeo-Juliet type was written by Carolyn Thomas Foreman of Muskogee and was first in The American Indian, an Indian magazine published in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

"Mrs. Foreman relates how John Ridge, Elias Boudinot's cousin, went to Cornwall, fell in love with Sarah Bird Northrup, daughter of the mission school's steward, and married her.

"Elias followed suit by falling in love with Harriet Gold, the daughter of one of Cornwall's most prominent families and the disturbances that succeeded almost disrupted the school as well as society in the town. Harriet was the fourteenth child in the family of Colonel and Mrs. Benjamin Gold so there were plenty of sons, sons-in-law, daughters and daughters-in-law to protest and criticise. While Harriet is described as one of the fairest and most amiable of young women, she must have had much strength of character to resist the on-slaughts of her plans by her family and friends.

"After Boudinot left school he corresponded with Harriet for two years and she finally decided that she could not go on with the correspondence unless she was prepared to accept the hand of her Indian lover. When his proposal came, her parents refused their consent. Harriet's two clergymen brothers-in-law declared that her marriage would break up the school, as the citizens were still indignant about the marriage of Ridge and Sarah Northrup and that she should consider that phase of the affair rather than her own inclinations. They talked to her for two days but were unsuccessful in getting her to change her mind.

"With the announcement of the intention of the young people to marry, excitement reached the boiling point and conservative Cornwall staged a scene equal to a Ku Klux demonstration. Harriet wrote in June, 1825: "It being thought unsafe for me to stay at home, I left the night before and was kept in a chamber at Captain Clark's, where I had full prospect of the solemn transaction in our valley. In the evening our respectable young people, ladies and gentlemen, convened on the plain to witness and approve the scene and express their indignation.

"A painting had been prepared representing a beautiful young lady and an Indian; also on the same, a woman as an instigator of Indian marriages. Evening came on, the church bell began to toll, one would certainly conclude speaking the departure of a soul.

"Mr. John C. Lewis and Mr. Rufus Payne carried the corpse and Brother Stephen

Gold set fire to the barrel of tar, or rather the funeral pyre. My heart truly sung with anguish at the dreadful scene. The bell continued to toll to ten or eleven o'clock.

"Poor Harriet recounts that she attended church as usual but as she had been requested to leave the singers' seat in order not to disgrace the other girls, she took her place in her father's pew.

"All was not smooth sailing for Elias as he had received threatening letters in his home in Georgia, some of them even containing pictures of a gallows. When he departed for his wedding nearly a year after the engagement was announced, Elias traveled by stage and after reaching Litchfield it was deemed wise for him to disguise himself before arriving at Cornwall, as the young men of the town were still indignant over the victory of the Cherokee and threatened him bodily injury. The wedding took place in the home of the Golds on May 1, 1826 and all the bells of Cornwall tolled the loss of Harriet Gold." (end of quote)

John Ross was born October 3, 1790 and died at Washington, D. C., August 1, 1866. He was a highly educated man and one writer says "the peer of Andrew Jackson", he tried to maintain peace but of no use as gold had been discovered in the southern section of their reservation in a territory about 30 miles wide and 100 miles long, it was not known how rich the deposit was, there had been taken out about \$2,000,000. Georgia wanted these lands and insisted that their laws must be accepted, they had made some drastic laws, one prohibiting the Cherokees from working the gold deposit and others as obnoxious against the Cherokees and persisted in enforcing them which continued to cause trouble. The Cherokees took their cause to the U.S. Supreme Court where their claim was decided in their favor, but Georgia insisted that the United States remove them. While all this was progressing the Government in 1835 sent in a commissioner, Rev. J. F. Schermerhorn of New York State to treat with them, to remove west of the Mississippi. At first, he met with little encouragement but finally succeeded in arranging a treaty with a small minority of the Nation headed by Major Ridge, his son John Ridge, Elias Boudinot, Stand Watie, Col. Bell and their followers, about 600 in all, which was signed December 29, 1835 at New Echota.

The Cherokee Nation held all lands in common and their tribal laws required the consent of the majority of the Nation before any treaty could be entered into, after their removal to the west the feeling against Major Ridge and his adherents became so embittered that the opposition to the removal took it upon themselves to enforce their penalties. They followed Major R. Ridge, who was on his way to Arkansas to visit friends, and shot him from his horse. They entered the homes of John Ridge and Elias Boudinot and murdered them in the presence of their families, also 10 or 12 other men of less distinction. Some accounts say 30 or 40; this is confirmed by Arkansas Gazette, July 3, 1839. This treaty was resisted by the great majority; about 15,000 signing petitions to the Government, but it was confirmed and under this treaty they were removed, after three years resistance. In 1838, Congress directed their removal and President Jackson sent Gen. Winfield Scott with an army of 2,000 men to enforce it.

Gen. Scott, upon arriving, began at once to put in execution his orders. He called on all to come in and prepare to depart. Not getting action, he sent out parties to enforce their obeying. It is stated that these parties would seize

men in the fields, women in their homes, children while out at play, forcing them at the point of the bayonet to march away taking them to stockades prepared, where they were kept until ready to be moved. Often bands of lawless men followed and looted the houses of the Indians in search of pillage, and many an Indian in turning to take a farewell look at the "Dearest spot on earth" saw his house being destroyed by flames.

I quote from the Tulsa Tribune of November 16, 1930, as follows:

Cherokee Removal One of Nation's Cruellest
Military Expeditions

"In a historical sketch included in his nineteenth annual report to the Bureau of American Ethnology, James Moody describes the removal of the Cherokees as related by a Georgia volunteer soldier who witnessed it. The soldier later became a Confederate Army officer.

"He says: "I fought through the Civil War and have seen men shot to pieces and slaughtered by thousands, but the Cherokee removal was the cruellest work I ever saw".

"The soldiers had been ordered to approach each Cherokee home without warning. Some of the Cherokee families went peaceably, stoically, resigned to their fate. One old man called his family about him and they all knelt and prayed, in Cherokee, then went with the soldiers. But all the tribesmen were not so submissive. One old man named Tsali (Charlie) was seized with his wife, his brother, his three sons and their families. Exasperated at the brutality accorded his wife, who being unable to travel fast was prodded with bayonets to hasten her steps, he urged the other men to join with him in a dash for liberty. As he spoke in Cherokee, the soldiers, although they heard, understood nothing until each warrior suddenly sprang upon the one nearest and endeavored to wrest his gun from him. The attack was so sudden and unexpected that one soldier was killed and the rest fled, while the Indians escaped to the mountains. Hundreds of others hid in the mountains, living on herbs and berries until the search was ended. Some died of starvation. Finding further search useless, General Scott sent word that if they would surrender Charlie and his party for punishment, the rest of the fugitives would be allowed to remain in the east until the government had time to adjust their cases.

"At this, Charlie, with his brother and two sons, immediately came down from the mountains and offered themselves as a sacrifice for their people. They were shot to death, a bank of Cherokee prisoners being forced to act as the firing squad. The other fugitives were permitted to remain and they founded the present Eastern Cherokee tribal branch.

"The stoical courage of Charlie was a common attribute of the Cherokees. Throughout the terrible ordeal of the "trail of tears", the white soldiers were impressed, sometimes in spite of themselves, with the bravery and patience of this long-suffering people." (end of quote)

John Madden in his historical series in the American Indian Magazine, published in Tulsa, tells of Malini, the famous singer, a lovely maiden who sang

all along the "trail of tears" to hearten her people. She sang:

"Cherokee, warriors, hunters,
Children of the great Hiawatha
Though the snow of winter bind us,
And the voices of the forest
Come unbidden to our camp fire,
Still before us are the prairies,
Land of sunshine, not of darkness,
Homeland, where the streamlets murmur,
Through the gorges of the mountains,
Where the bounding deer awaits us,
And the feasts are spread before us,
Where the green corn smiles in beauty,
Tahlequah, Tahlequah."

Migration commenced by boat, those of the Ridge faction would not move under John Ross. Gen. Scott issued this proclamation May 10, 1838, informing them that they must move in accord with the treaty of December 29, 1835. In January, 1837, about 600 emigrated themselves; March 3, 1837, 466 in charge of Dr. Lillybridge passed up the Arkansas on the steamer Mohawk, arriving at Ft. Gibson March 29, 1837; October 14, 1837, 365 under B. B. Cannon routed through Kentucky, Illinois and Missouri, started from the Cherokee Agency. They camped on Clear Creek in the Mississippi River bottom. On November 14 they crossed the Mississippi River, marched a few days and camped at Widow Roberts (on Byrd Creek) on the road to Farmington, Caledonia, Waynesville, through Springfield to the Indian Territory, arriving December 28, 1837. On March 25, 1838, 250 embarked under Lieut. Dees on steamer Smelter to Little Rock where they were transferred to the steamer Little Rock which took them to McLains Landing, 45 miles below Ft. Smith, from there they proceeded by wagons, arriving at Sallisaw Creek, Indian Territory, April 28, 1838. On June 6, 1838, 800 started by boat under Lieut. Dees, arriving at Paducah with 489 (this must have been the detachment that was aboard the steamboat Monmouth which had a collision and 311 were drowned). They arrived in the Territory October 4, 1838. June 15, 1838, 875 under Lieut. R. H. K. Whitely passed Little Rock, arriving August 5, 1838. June 17, 1838, 1070 started from Ross Landing, under Capt. Drane, in wagons to Waterloo where they were to take boats.

In the summer of 1838 a universal drouth had set in and the navigation of the Tennessee River was suspended. On July 23, 1838, John Ross, with other Chiefs, petitioned Gen. Scott to permit the Cherokee Nation to undertake the whole business of removal to the west of the Mississippi River.

General Winfield Scott on July 25 agreed, provided they start by September 1 and all be under way by October 20. The agreed meeting place was Rattle Snake Springs near Charleston, Tennessee. In the settlement of terms of vacating, the Government agreed to provide means of transportation and subsistence for the moving and for one year after arriving at their destination. General Scott agreed to furnish a wagon and team for each 20 and a saddle horse for every fourth person, subsistence and ferrriage charges. They traveled in groups of about 1,000 at the rate of from 5 to ___ miles per day, but this rate was varied owing to places for convenient camping as it was necessary to have plenty of water and give the subsistence contractor opportunity to supply necessities. The agreement covering the cost of removal was \$65.88 per person and \$1,000 ferrriage. Under the agreement arrived at between General Scott and the Cherokees, who were represented by

their Chiefs, John Ross, Richard Taylor, Samuel and Edward Guenter, James Brown, Elijah Hicks, Situnwakee and White Path, it was agreed they should arrange all details of removal and superintend same. They appointed Louis Ross, a brother of John Ross, to subsistence the removal. Under the contracted agreement with Gen. Scott, made July 25, 1838, they were gathered in four convenient camps, 3 in Tennessee, 1 in Alabama; they were to start by October 20; they moved in 13 groups about 3 days apart, the last starting December 4, 1838, the Council appointed two Chiefs or head men for each group who was to have charge of the moving.

The old men, women and children were loaded in the wagons with their household belongings, with hundreds of men walking or riding horseback and Army officers riding along the line or in the rear, guarding to prevent their breaking away and returning to their old haunts. It is reported that something like 1,000 did return and in after years were granted permission to remain in North Carolina.

The line of travel crossed the Tennessee River near the mouth of the Hiawassee, passing a little to the south of Pikeville, through McMinnville, crossing the Cumberland River at Nashville and on through Hopkinsville, Kentucky, on by the way of Princeton, crossing the Ohio River at Golconda, Illinois. In Illinois their road followed a well traveled route from North Carolina to the west, passing through what is now Dixon Springs, Vienna, Mount Pleasant, Anna, Jonesboro and Ware to the Mississippi River, crossing on Horse ferry boats, landing at Willards Landing, now called Moccasin Springs, about 10 miles north of Cape Girardeau, Missouri. They followed the Greens Ferry road to Jackson and on to Farmington, Caledonia, Waynesville, Springfield, and on to Indian Territory. This is recorded in the Jackson Advertiser, copied in the Arkansas Gazette December 26, 1838, in which it says from 13,000 to 14,000 passed through Jackson.

The ferry landing now, in 1935, is known as Moccasin Springs, which is directly across the river from where the Golconda road came to the river. This point is directly west of Ware, Illinois and 10 miles north of Cape Girardeau. Moccasin Springs is the eastern terminal of the Greens Ferry Road which was the only road leading from this ferry to Jackson and is in this day, 1935, one of the farm-to-market roads. Thomas Nichols and Jacob Littleton maintained a horse ferry at Willards Landing and it was at this ferry that the Indian migration crossed. As they came to the river they camped, and as they landed on the Missouri side they camped until the entire detachment was across. This is confirmed by the statement of Miss Ada Sheppard of Bainbridge, a grand-daughter of William Sheppard who entered the land in 1830, from the Government, along the river covering two miles, just south of Moccasin Springs, where he maintained a wood yard for fueling the Mississippi River steamers and kept a store where these Indians came to trade and exchange coffee, which the Government furnished them and they did not use, for other edibles, mostly beans. They would buy finery, hats and other things and stand before a mirror, primping. The old dresser with a large mirror is still, in 1935, in possession of the Sheppard sisters who live in the same house built by their grandfather where he had his store, where it has stood for over 100 years. Miss Sheppard, who is around 65 years old, says her information comes from her grandfather who extolled the honesty, courtesy and truthfulness of these Indians.

Dr. Oliver J. Miller of Egypt Mills, whose father owned the land at Moccasin Springs which he inherited, confirms the statement of Miss Sheppard regarding the ferry and the Cherokees crossing at this point; also the camping and death of several, having found graves and markers which undoubtedly were those of Indians.

Mr. Ferdinand Windekenecht, who has always lived on the Greens Ferry Road, who is 76 years old, says his father and uncle, who were boys at the time the Cherokees migrated, have told him of the passing and how the men would hunt and kill game along the way but would never carry it in but would mark the way to the game by breaking off twigs and the women would follow this trail, go out and bring it in and prepare it for consumption.

In Guy Forman's "Indian Removal" he says that Mrs. Rebecca Mingen who was deported with her parents when she was three years old, told him her mother had told her "that on the migration they got very tired of 'salt pork', that her father walked and hunted all the way for turkey and deer and camps were usually made at watering places."

The first detachment to get under way was under John Bengs, October 1, with 1200. He was reported at Batesville, Ark., December 15 and arrived in Indian Territory January 10, 1839. Another party reported from Little Prairie (Caruthersville) December 30 by Evan Jones saying they had been on the road 75 days, that it was extremely cold, that they sent parties ahead to build fires along the road to warm by.

This indicates that not all the parties traveling by land passed through Cape Girardeau County. It was reported by old men who made the trip 50 years before that the crossing of the Mississippi River was made in two divisions at Greens Ferry and Cape Girardeau (this must have been Grays Point).

The second detachment under Elijah Hicks, October 4, with 858, arriving January 4, 1839; third under Jessie Bushyhead, October 5, with 950, arriving February 23, 1839. This detachment passed through Hopkinsville, Kentucky, where "Chief White Path" died. He was a distinguished Chief, 75 years old, had been a great warrior and for many years a member of their Council. A tall pole with a flag of white linen attached to it was planted at the head of his grave. The honor, we are told, has been immemorially paid their departed Chief, reported in the Hopkinsville Gazette, December 26, 1838. By him was buried Fly Smith, an old head man, head of one of the detachments passing through Missouri, crossing the Mississippi River at Willards Landing (Moccasin Springs). Here there were several deaths, one the daughter of Rev. Jessie Bushyhead, the wife of Hilderbrand. The following is taken from the Cash Book of August 22, 1935, from "Items Sixty Years Ago":

Quote:

"River Side, August 21, 1875, Dear Cash Book. Thirty-six years ago, when the Cherokee Indians were passing on their way to their new home, they lost one of their fairest daughters near Moccasin Springs. She was buried on a beautiful knoll near the road one mile west of the ferry landing, by her husband, Hilderbrand. She was a daughter of one of their favored ministers of the gospel, named Bushyhead. Her husband and father erected a nice tomb to mark the spot where the Cherokees' fairest daughter lay at rest. That sacred spot was revered by every one. A few years ago a fire swept over the place and demolished the tomb and only left a few broken stones to mark her last resting place. Last week some evil disposed persons dug up her remains. It is supposed, by the citizens, that they expected to find some valuable jewels, as her father was very wealthy." (End of quote)

This detachment passed west over the Greens Ferry Road camping at the John McLain farm on Little Indian Creek, where there were several deaths, the graves being protected during the life of John McLain, but since they have been obliterated. They passed on west through Jackson, must have camped on Hubble Creek, then on Byrds Creek at Widow Roberts place and then on Apple Creek near where Daniel Hilderbrand had a blacksmith shop. Sam Hilderbrand of Cape Girardeau, Mo., who is a grandson of Daniel Hilderbrand says his grandfather shod the horses and repaired the wagons for the Indians. This is on the old Farmington road over which they are reported to have traveled.

Rev. Jessie Bushyhead and his company were detained at the crossing of the Mississippi River on account of floating ice. While waiting, other detachments caught up with him. The Jackson Advertiser of December 26, 1838, reported:

"During the present week 1900 Cherokee Indians passed through town on their way; some of them have considerable wealth and make a very respectable appearance, but most of them are poor and exceedingly dissipated."

Then again on February 16 the Advertiser says:

"The last detachment of emigrating Indians (Cherokees), consisting of about 1000, passed through this place yesterday on their way to their new home. The largest detachment in which there were 1800 passed the day before."

Children were frequently born on the way during the migration. An incident in Hopkinsville will fully describe these events. A child was born in one of these detachments a few miles east of town; the mother was allowed to drop out and two women were allowed to stop with her in the woods. They were furnished food by the people of the vicinity. They camped for the night and the following day the mother and new-born child left with the detachment.

Louis Ross, contractor of sustenance, in his claim against the Government reported:

					Died	Births	Arrived Destination
Elijah Hicks	- 1st.	detachment consisted of	729	57	9	1-4-1839	
Harris Conrad	- 2nd.	" "	858	54	5	1-7-1839	
Jessie Bushyhead	- 3rd.	" "	950	38	6	2-23-1839	
John Bengs	- 4th.	" "	1200	33	3	1-10-1839	
Situakee	- 5th.	" "	1250	71	5	2-2-1839	
Stephin Forman	- 6th.	" "	983	57	19	2-27-1839	
Mose Daniels	- 7th.	" "	1035	48	6	3-2-1839	
Choc-wa-loo-ka	- 8th.	" "	1150	no report		3-1-1839	
Jessie Brown	- 9th.	" "	350	34	3	3-5-1839	
George Hicks	- 10th.	" "	1118	no report		3-14-1839	
Richard Taylor	- 11th.	" "	1029	55	15	3-24-1839	
Pete Hilderbrand	- 12th.	" "	1766	no report		3-25-1839	
John Ross	- 13th.	" "	219	"	"At Little Rock	2-1-1839	

Little Rock Gazette, December 26, 1838, Page 2, Col. 1:

"Dr. Butler, one of the physicians of the emigrating Cherokees, computes that 2,000 out of 16,000, or one-eighth of the whole number have died since they left their homes and began to encamp for emigration, in June last."

John Ross and his party were detained to settle up matters of dispute and those detained on account of sickness left on the steamboat Victoria, arrived at Little Rock, Arkansas, February 1, 1839.

Reported in the Little Rock Gazette, Wednesday, February 6, 1839:

"The Steamboat Victoria arrived here last Saturday, having on board 228, the last of the Cherokee Nation to be moved from their ancient home to the Indian Territory. There was on board John Ross and his family, his wife Quatia died shortly before landing and was buried in the village cemetery." (J. W. LaGrandie, sexton of Mount Holly Cemetery, Little Rock, says: "She was first buried in what was known as the Peabody Cemetery and removed when the Peabody School was built. Her remains were buried in Mount Holly, lot 163 Willow Avenue; there is no marker but the Daughters of 1812 Society propose to place a monument at her grave in 1935, so says Miss Alice Beyertine, Secretary to Mrs. John Francis Weinmann, National President of the National Society United States Daughters of 1812.") (From The Tulsa Tribune, November, 1930)

Ancient Cherokee Lore

A long time ago there was no earth, nothing but water. Above, beyond the solid stone arch of the sky, was a world where dwelt all the animals. In time it became crowded up there, and the animals began to look about for a new home.

They gazed down at the vast water of this lower world and wondered what was below it. Finally they sent Water Beetle, grandchild of Beaver, to look around. Water Beetle dove deep into the water and brought up a little piece of soft mud. Floating upon the water, this bit of mud began to spread and spread until it became the vast earth. It was flat and square and later on someone, no one knows who, fastened it with long cords at each of its four corners, to the sky.

The Animals then sent down the Great Buzzard to reconnoiter. He found the earth all soft and wet, with no dry place to rest. He became very tired by the time he reached the Cherokee country and his weary wings began to flap and flap, striking the wet ground. His tremendous wings would strike the earth and there would be a valley; they would turn upwards and there would be a mountain. This is why the Cherokee country is so hilly.

The Animals lived on the earth first, then a brother and sister came to found the human race. The man began to kill the animals and birds and when the trouble became so grave the animals and birds held council together. They wished to avenge their wrongs but at first they could think of no plan. Then the birds and insects devised a number of diseases, which it was decided they should visit upon man.

But all the plants of the forest remained friendly to man and so they agreed among themselves that they would furnish a cure for every disease the birds and insects might devise. That is why herbs have always furnished the most beneficial medicine.

Acknowledge information from - Senator R. B. Oliver

Guy Forman's Indian Removal - Dunbar's Travels in America

Drakes Indians of North America - Mason's History

Meacham's History of Christian Co. Ky.

The Ethnological Reports - Files of Little Rock Gazette in Arkansas
Historical Commission Files
Dictionary of American Biography
Various newspaper files.

Cape Girardeau, Missouri

November 25, 1935