and in spite of the advice of the Agents and those who were acquainted with the country they landed their effects & considered themselves at home." The next day the boats continued to Fort Coffee where the remainder of the emigrants were landed. The empty boats then ascended the river to Fort Gibson.[22]

22 Journal of Dr. C. Lillybridge, March 29, 1837, OIA; *Arkansas Gazette*, April 18 and May 16, 1837, p. 2; Young to Harris, March 29, 1837, OIA, *ibid.*; *Army and Navy Chronicle*, IV, 301, 361; *New York Observer*, May 27, 1837, p. 3, col. 4. "The *Revenue* has gone up to Webbers waiting a rise in the river so she can continue to Fort Gibson. She cannot pass Webbers Falls. The steamboat *Tecumseh* which grounded last fall a few miles below Fort Coffee is still aground on a sand bar and is now six or eight feet above the water" (*Arkansas Gazette*, April 18, 1837, p. 2, col. 2).

Major Ridge's family and others of this party settled on Honey creek in the northeast corner of the Cherokee Nation near the Missouri line. Stand Waitie, who was a member of this party, was bereft of his wife, Betsy, who died in childbirth about May 1, 1836, at his home near the present Rome, Georgia; the child died also. However, another Mrs. Waitie accompanied Doctor Lillybridge's party.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO / *March of the Broken Spirited*

GEN. JOHN ELLIS WOOL, who represented the federal government in the execution of the treaty, observed the oppression exerted on the Indians by the whites who were encouraged by local authority to intrude on the Indians and take possession of their improvements. When the courts were appealed to, the Indians were defeated by deliberate delay, the hostility of jurymen who were in sympathy with the intruders, and the denial of the right of an Indian to testify against a white man. They then appealed to General Wool, who under his instructions was required by section sixteen of the treaty, to protect the Indians against the intruders. Many such complaints were made to him, and after investigation intruders were dispossessed in favor of the Indian owners. This situation was particularly notorious in the Cherokee country in Alabama, where the majority of the white population came "for the purpose of robbing and plundering the Indians, and have exercised every species of oppression towards them."[1]

In this section of the State General Wool endeavored to protect the Indians in their homes and by the suppression of the sale of whisky, and thereby incurred the hostility of state authorities. On July 3, 1837, the governor and legislature of Alabama charged General Wool with having "usurped the powers of the civil tribunals, disturbed the peace of the community, and trampled upon the rights of the citizens;" demanded of the secretary of war that military officers be restrained from further infractions of their laws and outrages on their citizens, and asked that General Wool's conduct be investigated and condemned. The president referred the charges to a military court of inquiry at Knoxville in September, before which the governor of Alabama was

1 *American State Papers*, "Military Affairs," VII, 534.

invited to submit proof to support his charges, but neither the governor nor legislature offered any proof and the court vindicated General Wool of any wrong-doing.[2]

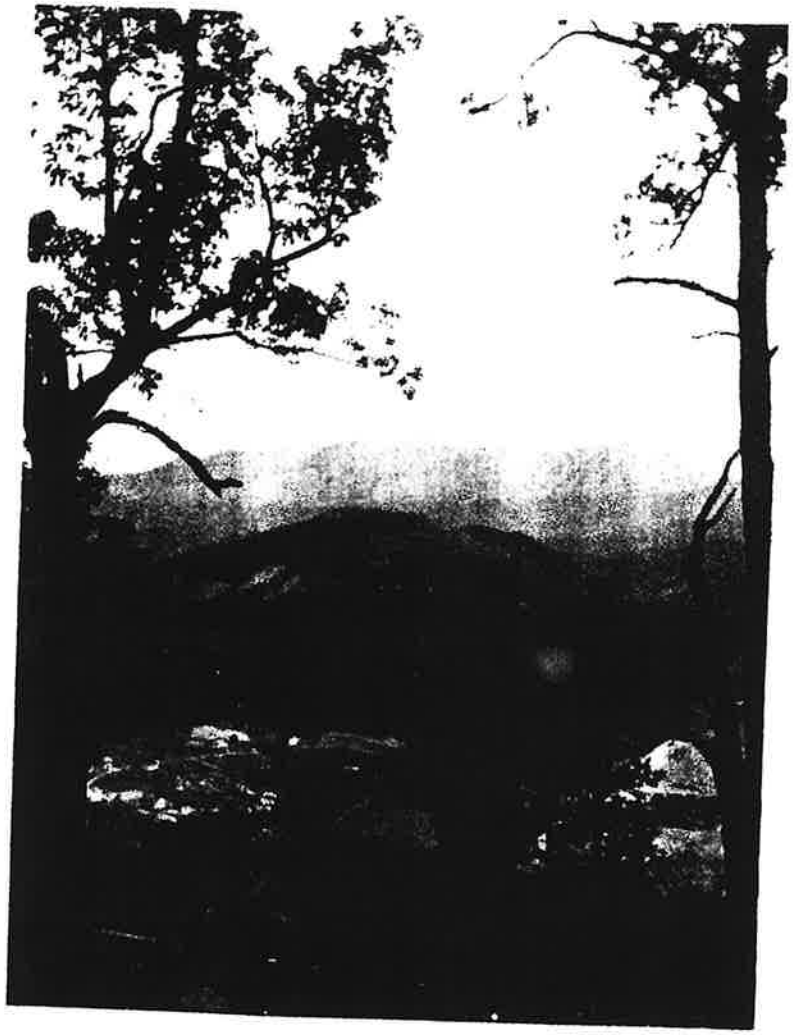
The second emigrating party numbering 365, with B. B. Cannon as conductor, was routed overland through Kentucky, Illinois and Missouri.[3] After spending two days in loading their wagons, they set out from the Cherokee Agency October 14, 1837, crossed the Hiwassee river at Calhoun and camped five miles beyond. The next day was spent in mustering the party and in the evening of the next day they reached the Tennessee river after a march of fourteen miles. On the seventeenth they were ready to commence crossing the river at daylight but were prevented by the fog, so that the crossing was not completed until four o'clock; they then advanced seven miles before they camped at eight o'clock.

The crossing of the Cumberland Mountains required four days and severely taxed the endurance of the emigrants who camped at Sequachee river. On the twenty-second they "passed through McMinnville, encamped and issued corn and fodder, corn meal and Bacon, sugar and coffee to the Waggoners and Interpreters, no water for 12 miles ahead, procured a quantity of corn meal and bacon." On the twenty-fifth "buried Andrew's child" and passed through Murfreesborough;" the next day they passed through three turnpike gates; on the next, two more, and they crossed the Cumberland river on the toll-bridge at Nashville. Their progress had been uneventful thus far; they had averaged from twelve to sixteen miles a day and there were issued corn,

2 *Ibid.*, 541. "On Dec. 8th Gov. Schley made an important communication to the Georgia legislature, enclosing recent dispatches sent by express from Gen. Wool touching the alarming state of things produced among the Cherokees, by the shameful practice pursued by the whites of selling to them intoxicating liquors, particularly whiskey. This abuse is carried on to a great extent in New Echota and its vicinity, and among the despatches is a remonstrance from the principal chiefs petitioning the legislature to prevent the practice. Any person by the small fee to the clerk, may obtain a license. Gov. Schley urges the passage of a law totally prohibiting such licenses. Gen. Wool implores the Governor to use his exertions to procure such a law; otherwise he fears the worst of consequences at the approaching assemblage of 1,800 Indians at New Echota, to meet the commissioners. The chiefs say their people are by the frequent potations of whiskey becoming degraded to brutes."

3 Cannon kept a journal: OIA, "Cherokee Emigration" C553, "Special File 249." See also Reynolds to Harris, December 31, 1837, file R 196.

Above—Current River, Missouri, on the route of the Cherokee emigrants; Below—Advance agents secured camping grounds when possible near water mills where the Indians could have their corn ground. A view of one in Tennessee



C. JAS. E. THOMPSON COMPANY, KNOXVILLE, TENN.

The former home of the Cherokee Indians in East Tennessee

bacon, and flour to the Indians every second or third day and corn and fodder for their horses daily.

After crossing the river at Nashville, they "rested for the purpose of washing clothes, repairing wagons and shoeing horses. Reese, Starr, and others of the emigrants visited Genl. Jackson who was at Nashville; issued corn and fodder, corn meal and bacon." The next day they resumed their march and on October 31 reached Graves, Kentucky. November 1 they "buried Duck's child, passed through Hopkinsville, Ken." On the third they reached Princeton, and two days later Salem, both in Kentucky. Three days later they arrived at Berry's Ferry on the Ohio river opposite Golconda but the high winds on the river prevented their crossing into Illinois until the next day.

On the eighth "Mr. Reese and myself remained behind and buried a child of Seabolt's. . . James Starr & wife left this morning with two carry-alls to take care of and bring on three of their children who were too sick to travel, with instructions to overtake the party as soon as possible without endangering the lives of their children." They were detained on the tenth while they built a bridge across Cypress creek and the next day passed through Jonesboro, Illinois, and encamped at Clear creek in the Mississippi river bottom.

On November 12 the emigrants began crossing the Mississippi river, but the next day high winds arrested their progress and it was not until the fourteenth that they were all across. During this time another of Duck's children died and "Starr came up, the health of his children but little better. Richard Timberlake and George Ross overtook us and enrolled and attached themselves to Starr's family."

They marched a few days more, stopping one day to rest and wash and on the sixteenth "*left Reese, Starr and families on account of sickness in their families, also James Taylor (Reese's son-in-law) and family, Taylor himself being very sick, with instructions to overtake the Party. Passed through Jackson, Mo., halted & encamped at Widow Roberts on the road via Farmington. . . A considerable number drunk last night obtained liquor at Farmington yesterday; had to get out of bed about midnight to quell the disorder; a refusal by several to march this morning.*" However they continued and passed through Caledonia and the next day passed "through the lead mines or Courtois diggings, halted at Scott's" where they remained another day to repair wagons, shoe

horses and wash, and where Starr, Reese, and Taylor caught up with them.

By the time the emigrants had crossed the Mississippi river, much sickness had developed among them from the unwholesome stagnant water in Illinois and their intemperate consumption of grapes along the route which brought on violent attacks of dysentery; nearly all the drivers were ill, some were left on the road, and substitutes hired. Finally when sixty of the emigrants became too ill to travel the physician with the party, G. S. Townsend, on the twenty-fifth called a halt. The party went into camp and the conductor obtained permission for as many as could enter, to occupy a school house near a spring two miles farther along. The doctor treated them here for about ten days during which four persons died, two children of Corn Tassel and Oolanheta, George Killion and a wagoner, a black boy.

After the illness had abated somewhat they got under way again December 4, though there was not room in the wagons for all the ill. On the fifth they camped at the Meramec river, and passed Massey's iron works the next day; on the seventh "Reese's team ran away; broke his waggon and Starr's carry-all; left him and family to get his waggon mended, and to overtake us if possible." The next day they buried Nancy Bigbear's grandchild; it rained all day and at night several Indians were drunk. On the ninth "Mayfield's waggon broke down at about a mile—left him to get it mended and overtake; halted at Waynesville, Mo." They camped at the Gasconade river on the tenth, next at Summer's, then Mr. Parke's, Eddington's on the thirteenth, and reached the James fork of White river December 14.

"December 15th, 1837—James Starr's wife had a child last night. . . Waggoners having horses shod until late at night, encamped & issued fodder & beef." They passed through Springfield, Missouri on the sixteenth and "buried Elleges wife and Chas. Timberlake's son (Smoker)." It was now snowing, much colder, and sickness was increasing. "Buried Dreadful Waters this evening." They remained in camp at Dye's several days to attend the ill and wait for medicines to be brought from Springfield; on the twenty-first they reached "Lockes on Flat Creek." The next day "Buried Goddard's Grand child." On the twenty-third "Buried Rainfrogs daughter (Lucy Redstick's child)," and halted at Reddix. Three days later they camped "at James

Coulters on Cane Hill, Ark.," and the next day "Buried Alsey Timberlake, Daughter of Chas. Timberlake. Marched at 8 oc. A.M. halted at Mr. Beans in the Cherokee Nation west."

Having crossed the line the exhausted party refused to advance farther and went into camp to minister to their sick. "Buried another child of Chas Timberlake's, and one which was born (untimely) yesterday of which no other account than this is taken. Jesse Half Breed's wife had a child last night." Two days later on December 30 Cannon remustered his party and turned them over to Lieutenant Van Horne. Fifteen deaths had occurred on the march, eleven of children, eight of them under two years of age.

In spite of threats of arrest and punishment, Ross still continued active effort in behalf of his people. In the spring of 1838, two months before the time fixed for the removal, he presented to Congress[4] another protest and memorial, dated February 22 and signed by 15,665 Cherokee, which, like the others, was tabled by the Senate. That the so-called treaty was nothing more than a transparent fraud upon the Indians had become notorious. The Indians implored the administration not to take their statement of the facts, but to make an investigation and ascertain the truth of their contention. The president and secretary of war were adamant; they answered merely that the treaty had been ratified by the Senate and that it was therefore beyond their powers to question it. And when reminded that under similar circumstances President Adams had refused to proceed under the fraudulent treaty with the Creeks negotiated in 1825 by government officials, and promptly had set it aside as a nullity, they were unmoved. In the crisis of affairs the president was willing to avail himself of the expedient presented by the Schermerhorn paper, shabby and venal as it was, to get the Indians out of Georgia for the benefit of white and red.

Martin van Buren had now succeeded Jackson as president and was disposed to allow the Cherokee a longer time to prepare for emigration, but was met by the declaration from Governor Gilmer of Georgia that any delay would be a violation of the rights of that state and in opposition to the rights of the owners of the soil, and that if trouble came

4 *New York Observer*, March 24, 1838, p. 1, col. 5.

from any protection afforded by the government troops to the Cherokee, a direct collision must ensue between the authorities of the state and federal government.[5]

May 23, 1838, had been fixed as the time after which those who refused to leave voluntarily would be removed by force. But such was their love for their native land and their dread of removal, because of the accounts they had heard of deaths on the journey and in the new home provided for them, that few would consent to leave. Large keel boats had been constructed and were waiting at the bank near the Cherokee Agency to carry the emigrants down the Tennessee river as far as "The Suck." These boats were 130 feet in length, with a house one hundred feet long, twenty wide, two stories high, "banistered" around the top. They were made with partitions on each floor, making four rooms fifty by twenty feet furnished with windows. They were provided with stoves inside and five hearths on top of each boat for cooking.

Gen. Nathaniel Smith of Athens, Tennessee, had been appointed superintendent of removal to succeed B. F. Currey who died December 16, 1836. Smith planned to start another party and about 300 gathered near the Agency; but the number dwindled to 250 and in spite of warnings and threats, by March 25, 1838, only these few Indians could be induced voluntarily to leave for Waterloo; there they were embarked aboard the *Smelter* and a keel-boat in tow, leaving on April 5 in charge of Lieut. Edward Deas.[6]

The boats reached Paducah the second day and were anchored out in the river to prevent white people from introducing whisky among the Indians. When they resumed their journey in the evening the waves from the Ohio river washed in the keel boat and the terrified Indians, thinking it was sinking, rushed aboard the steamboat. As they could not be induced to return to the keel-boat it was discarded and the emigrants were all carried on the *Smelter*.

After a short stop at Memphis to secure supplies and "stopping once to wood" they reached Montgomery's Point on the afternoon of the ninth. Securing a pilot for the Arkansas river they passed through the cut-off, proceeded up the river, and reached Little Rock on the morning

5 James Mooney, *op. cit.*, 120.

6 Smith to Harris, April 15, 1838, OIA, "Cherokee Emigration" S 926; *ibid.*, Journal of Edward Deas, File D 209-217; "Special File" 249.

of the eleventh. The river had fallen so low that it was impossible for the *Smelter* to ascend higher and Lieutenant Deas secured passage for his people aboard the *Little Rock*, a steamboat of lighter draft that was "on the point of setting out for the upper Posts. . . The captain agreed to take the present Party as far up as possible for $5 each for the whole distance and proportionately for a less." The *Smelter* then proceeded up the river five miles and the passengers were landed for the night. The next day Captain Pennywit brought up his boat, the *Little Rock*, and the Indians were loaded on her and a keel boat in tow. He was towing another keel boat loaded with freight which sprung a leak and the captain found it necessary to run ashore to prevent it from sinking. This boat was then abandoned and after some delay the steamboat and one tow proceeded, arriving at the Lewiston Bar on the afternoon of the fourteenth. A week was consumed in the most laborious efforts to cross a succession of bars, during which the Indians were obliged several times to land and walk, and finally, it appearing that the boats would be unable to reach the Cherokee country on the existing stage of water, they were all landed at McLean's about forty-five miles below Fort Smith. Here Deas secured sixteen wagons drawn by oxen and one by four horses. After loading in the wagons the personal effects of the Indians the party started on the twenty-fourth; two days later two small children died. The party reached Fort Smith on the twenty-eighth and ferried the Arkansas river to the Cherokee country.

After traveling twenty-five miles farther they arrived at McCoy's on Sallisaw creek where they wanted to settle. The only source of annoyance upon the journey said Deas, "*has resulted from the people obtaining liquor, the use of which with Indians as far as I have observed results in rioting, fighting, or disorder of some kind. The infamous traffic of whiskey with Indians, is carried on to a greater extent at Fort Smith, than at any place I have seen. . . As far as I have observed there is never any difficulty in managing Indians when sober, provided they are properly treated; but when under the effects of liquor (in the use of which they have no moderation) they are unmanageable.*"[7]

7 Deas Journal; Lieutenant Deas so impressed the Indians by his humane consideration and intelligent attention to their welfare and comfort that they presented him with a sword as a token of their gratitude (*Army and Navy Chronicle*, VIII, 317).

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE / *A Captive Nation*

IN SPITE of the pressure upon the Indians, only about 2,000 of the eastern Cherokee had removed by May 23, 1838, the expiration of the time fixed for their departure.[1] The remaining nearly 15,000 could not believe that they would soon be driven out of the country; not from a fatuous reliance on the ultimate rectitude of the government—they had no such illusion. But their fixed habits, devoted attachment to their homes, and their unfamiliarity with any other life and country prevented their comprehension of what was soon to happen to them.

Their enforced removal was entrusted to Gen. Winfield Scott who was ordered to take command of the troops already in the Cherokee country, together with reënforcements of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, with authority to call upon the governors of the adjoining states for as many as 4,000 militia and volunteers. The total so employed was 7,000. The Indians had already been disarmed by General Wool.

General Scott established headquarters at New Echota, the capital of the Cherokee Nation, whence, on May 10, he issued a proclamation to the Cherokee people, warning them that the emigration must begin at once and in haste and that before another moon had passed every Cherokee man, woman, and child must be in motion towards the West as commanded by the president, whose orders he, General Scott had come to enforce. The proclamation concludes: "*My troops already occupy many positions. . . and thousands and thousands are approaching from every quarter to render assistance and escape alike hopeless. . . Will you, then by resistance compel us to resort to arms. . . or will you by flight seek to hide yourself in mountains and forests and thus oblige us to hunt you down?*"—reminding them that

1 By May only 500 of the Treaty Party remained in the East (*Army and Navy Chronicle*, VII, 316).

pursuit might result in conflict and bloodshed, ending in a general war.[2] Even after this Ross endeavored, on behalf of his people, to secure some slight modification of the terms of the treaty, but without avail.

"*The history of this Cherokee removal of 1838, as gleaned by the author from the lips of actors in the tragedy, may well exceed in weight of grief and pathos any other passage in American history. Even the much-sung exile of the Acadians falls far behind it in its sum of death and misery. Under Scott's orders the troops were disposed at various points throughout the Cherokee country, where stockade forts were erected for gathering in and holding the Indians preparatory to removal. From these, squads of troops were sent to search out with rifle and bayonet every small cabin hidden away in the coves or by the sides of mountain streams, to seize and bring in as prisoners all the occupants, however or wherever they might be found. Families at dinner were startled by the sudden gleam of bayonets in the doorway and rose up to be driven with blows and oaths along the weary miles of trail that led to the stockade. Men were seized in their fields or going along the road, women were taken from their wheels and children from their play. In many cases, on turning for one last look as they crossed the ridge, they saw their homes in flames, fired by the lawless rabble that followed on the heels of the soldiers to loot and pillage. So keen were these outlaws on the scent that in some instances they were driving off the cattle and other stock of the Indians almost before the soldiers had fairly started the owners in the other direction. Systematic hunts were made by the same men for Indians graves, to rob them of the silver pendants and other valuables deposited with the dead. A Georgia volunteer, afterward a colonel in the Confederate service, said: 'I fought through the civil war and have seen men shot to pieces and slaughtered by thousands, but the Cherokee removal was the cruelest work I ever knew'.*"[3]

"*To prevent escape the soldiers had been ordered to approach and surround each house, as far as possible, so as to come upon the occupants without warning. One old patriarch when thus surprised, calmly called his children and grandchildren around him, and kneeling down, bid them pray with him in their own language, while the astonished soldiers looked on in silence. Then rising he led the way into exile. A woman, on finding the house surrounded, went to the door and called up the chickens to be*

2 General Scott took their arms away from the Cherokee. In May 1843 there were still thirty-six boxes of their guns stored at Fort Gibson.

3 James Mooney, *op. cit.*, 130.

fed for the last time, after which, taking her infant on her back and her two other children by the hand, she followed her husband with the soldiers."[4]

"Camp Hetzel, near Cleveland, June 16. The Cherokees are nearly all prisoners. They had been dragged from their houses, and encamped at the forts and military places, all over the nation. In Georgia especially, multitudes were allowed no time to take any thing with them, except the clothes they had on. Well-furnished houses were left a prey to plunderers, who, like hungry wolves, follow in the train of the captors. These wretches rifle the houses, and strip the helpless, unoffending owners of all they have on earth.[5] *Females, who have been habituated to comforts and comparative affluence, are driven on foot before the bayonets of brutal men. Their feelings are mortified by vulgar and profane vociferations. It is a painful sight. The property of many has been taken, and sold before their eyes for almost nothing—the sellers and buyers, in many cases having combined to cheat the poor Indians. These things are done at the instant of arrest and consternation; the soldiers standing by, with their arms in hand, impatient to go with their work, could give little time to transact business. The poor captive, in a state of distressing agitation, his weeping wife almost frantic with terror, surrounded by a group of crying, terrified children, without a friend to speak a consoling word, is in a poor condition to make a good disposition of his property, and is in most cases stripped*

4 James Mooney, *op. cit.*, 131.

5 The Indians were "taken from their houses leaving their fields of corn, their cattle, horses and most of their moveable property for any person who pleased to take it into possession" (*New York Observer*, July 14, 1838, p. 2, col. 6). General Scott wrote to Nat Smith, superintendent of emigration: "The distress caused the emigrants by the want of their bedding, cooking utensils, clothes and ponies, I much regret as also the loss of their property consequent upon the hurry of capture and removal;" but he said the Indians themselves were to blame for having faith in the ability of John Ross to save them (Scott to Smith, June 8, 1838, OIA, "Cherokee Emigration"). From a large number of "Claims for Spoliation" afterwards filed by the Indians, now among the "Ross Papers" the following are selected as representative of the whole: Fields and crops, horses, saddles, harness, rifle guns, chickens, hogs, cows and calves, ducks, geese, hoes, money, grist mills, feather beds, blankets, quilts, pots, ovens, kettles, dishes, cups and saucers, knives and forks, pails, "one set blue edged plates" one "set blue (colored) plates" belonging to Elizabeth Cooper, "paled gardens, sowed and planted," bacon, potatoes, beans, salt, cabins, looms, shuttles, weavers reeds, spinning wheels, thread reel, bedstead, cherrywood table, chairs, cupboard, wooden spoons, ploughs, chains, baskets, a "first rate fiddle" saw, shovel, and carpenter tools.

of the whole, at one blow. Many of the Cherokees, who, a few days ago, were in comfortable circumstances, are now victims of abject poverty. Some, who have been allowed to return home, under passport, to inquire after their property, have found their cattle, horses, swine, farming tools, and house furniture all gone. And this is not a description of extreme cases. It is altogether a faint representation of the work which has been perpetrated on the unoffending, unarmed and unresisting Cherokees.

"Our brother Bushyhead and his family, Rev. Stephen Foreman, native missionary of the American Board, the speaker of the national council, and several men of character and respectability, with their families, are here prisoners. It is due to justice to say, that, at this station (and I learn that the same is true of some others) the officer in command treats his prisoners with great respect and indulgence. But fault lies somewhere. They are prisoners, without a crime to justify the fact.

"These savages, prisoners of Christians, are now all hands busy, some cutting and some carrying posts, and plates and rafters—some digging holes for posts, and some preparing seats for a temporary place for preaching tomorrow. . . The principal Cherokees have sent a petition to Gen. Scott, begging that they may not be sent off to the west till the sickly season is over. The agent is shipping them off by multitudes from Ross's Landing. Nine hundred in one detachment, and seven hundred in another were driven into boats, and it will be a miracle of mercy if one-fourth escape the exposure of that sickly climate. They were exceedingly depressed, and almost in despair.

"July 10. The work of war in time of peace, is commenced in the Georgia part of the Cherokee nation, and is carried on in the most unfeeling and brutal manner. . . The work of capturing being completed, and about 3,000 sent off, the General has agreed to suspend the further transportation of the captives till the first of September. This arrangement, though but a small favor, diffused universal joy through the camps of prisoners. . . Brethren Wickliffe and O-ga-na-ya, and a great number of members of the church at Valley Towns, fell into Fort Butler, seven miles from the mission. They never relaxed their evangelical labors, but preached constantly in the fort. They held church meetings, received ten members, and one Sabbath, June 17, by permission of the officer in command, went down to the river and baptized them (five males and five females). They were guarded to the river and back. Some whites present

affirm it to have been the most solemn and impressive religious service they ever witnessed."[6]

William Shorey Coodey was present at one of the concentration camps as the Indians prepared to march to the rendezvous where they were to organize for their departure; he wrote his friend John Howard Payne what he saw there: ". . . *At noon all was in readiness for moving, the teams were stretched out in a line along the road through a heavy forest, groups of persons formed about each wagon, others shaking the hand of some sick friend or relative who would be left behind. The temporary camp covered with boards and some of bark that for three summer months had been their only shelter and home, were crackling and falling under a blazing flame; the day was bright and beautiful, but a gloomy thoughtfulness was depicted in the lineaments of every face. In all the bustle of preparation there was a silence and stillness of the voice that betrayed the sadness of the heart. At length the word was given to move on. I glanced along the line and the form of Going Snake, an aged and respected chief whose head eighty summers had whitened, mounted on his favorite pony passed before me and led the way in silence, followed by a number of younger men on horseback. At this very moment a low sound of distant thunder fell upon my ear—in almost an exact western direction a dark spiral cloud was rising above the horizon and sent forth a murmur I almost thought a voice of devine indignation for the wrong of my poor and unhappy countrymen, driven by brutal power from all they loved and cherished in the land of their fathers to gratify the cravings of avarice. The sun was unclouded—no rain fell—the thunder rolled away and seemed hushed in the distance. The scene around and before me, and in the elements above was peculiarly impressive and singular.*"[7]

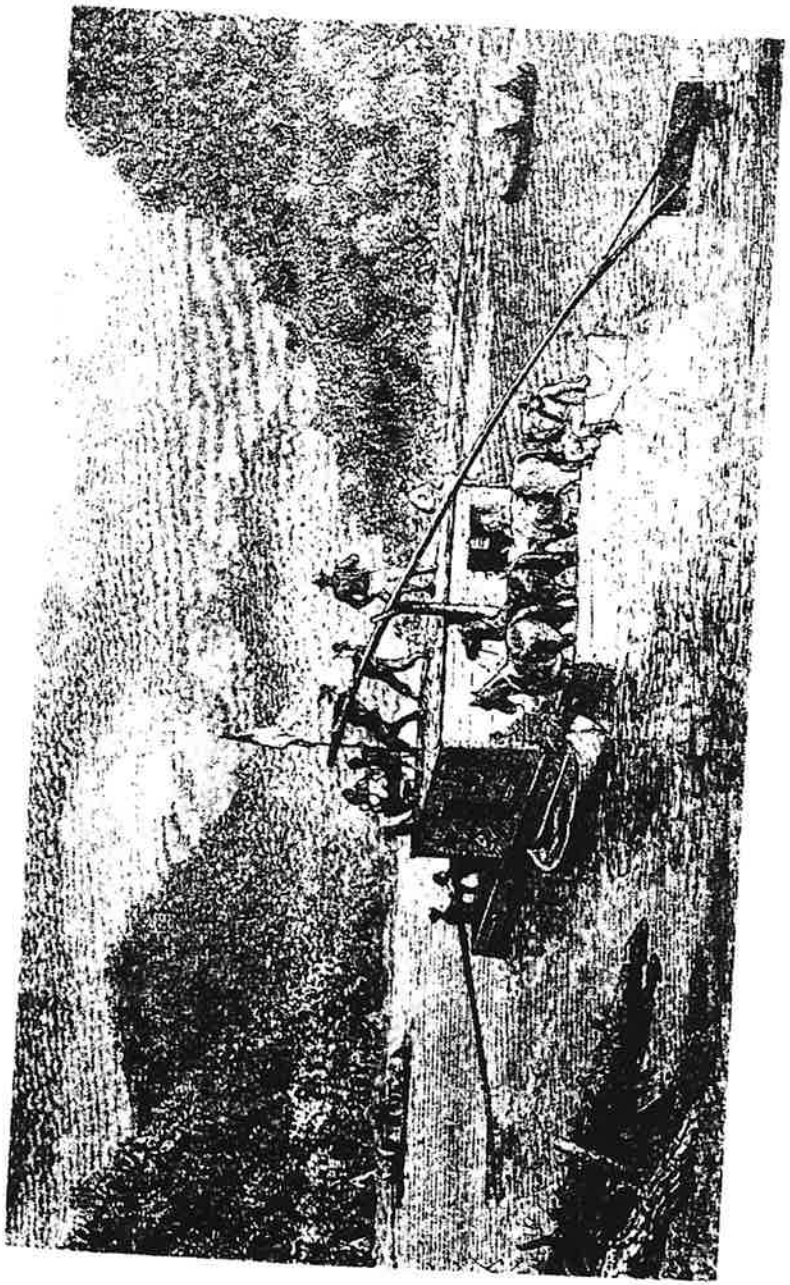
When nearly seventeen thousand Cherokee thus had been gathered into the various stockades, the work of enforced removal West began.[8]

6 Letter from the Rev. Evan Jones, in *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, XVIII, 236.

7 Coodey to Payne, August 13, 1840, Newberry Library, *Ayer Collection*, "Payne Manuscrips," VI.

8 In the anti-treaty body of Cherokee were incorporated 376 Creeks who "had long been domesticated with the Cherokees, and with whom many of their warriors fought by our side at the battle of the Horse Shoe" (Gen. Winfield Scott to Governor Gilmer, October 15, 1838 in *Army and Navy Chronicle*, November 15, 1838, p. 316). After their removal, the Cherokee Council by formal enactment November 13, 1843, admitted to full membership in the tribe all Creeks who emigrated with them in

Old Mill at Shells Ford on Collins River near McMinnville, Tennessee, site of encampment of Cherokee emigrants. Local tradition tells of the Rev. Jesse Bushyhead preaching to his people at this place



FROM HISTORIC SUMNER COUNTY BY GUY CISCO

Emigrants descending the Tennessee River

Early in June companies aggregating about five thousand persons, w
brought down by the troops;[9] part were taken to the old Agen
on Hiwassee river, at the present Calhoun, Tennessee, and Ros
Landing, (now Chattanooga) and Gunter's Landing, (now Gunte
ville, Alabama) lower down the Tennessee river, to be embark
upon boats.

Twenty-eight hundred of them were divided into three detachmen
each accompanied by a military officer, a corps of assistants and tw
physicians. The first with about 800 in the party departed June 6; th
next with 875 started on the fifteenth.[10]

The first party forcibly placed on the boats was in charge of Lieu
Edward Deas and was made up of Cherokee Indians from Georgia wh
had been concentrated at Ross's Landing. They were escorted by soldi
guards aboard a little flotilla consisting of one steamboat of 100 ton
and six flatboats, one of which was constructed with a double-decke
cabin. In the excitement and bitterness accompanying the enforce
embarking of the Indians and their crowded condition aboard th
boats, the conductors thought it best not to attempt to muster an
count them until later.[11]

The boats were lashed together, three on each side of the steamboa
and left from Ross's Landing about noon on June 6. They made fou
or five miles an hour until their arrival at a series of dangerous rapids
called "*the Suck, Boiling-Pot, the Skillet, and the Frying pan. . . The
Suck is first and most difficult and dangerous of the rapids. The river here
becomes very narrow and swift and the banks on either side are rocky and
steep, it being the point at which the stream passes thro' a gorge in the
mountains. The S. Boat with one Flat on each side passed through, the
most of the people on board, but after getting thro' the most rapid water,*

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different detachments, some of whom had been admitted to the tribe before removal (*Laws of the Cherokee Nation*, 1868 edition, p. 109).

9 "On Tuesday morning last, about 1,000 Cherokees, men, women, and children, under an escort of two companies of infantry passed through this place on their way from the Sixes to the Agency" (*Cassville Pioneer*, copied in *Jacksonville (Alabama) Republican*, June 14, 1838, p. 3, col. 3).

10 *Army and Navy Chronicle*, VII, 45; *Louisville Public Advertiser*, August 24, 1838, p. 2, cols. 2 and 3, account from the *Hamilton Gazette*, printed at Ross's Landing in Tennessee.

11 *Deas's Journal*, OIA, "Cherokee Emigration" File D 225, Special File 249.

it was found impossible to keep her in the channel, and in consequence was thrown upon the north Bank with some violence but luckily none of the people were injured although one of the Flats was a good deal smashed. The other 4 boats came thro' two by two and the party was encamped before dark as it was too late in the day to reach the rapids in daylight."

The boats succeeded without incident in passing through the remainder of the rapids and into smooth water by noon the next day. They ran all that day and night; passed Gunter's Landing at nine o'clock, stopped once "to wood" and at night landed six miles above Decatur "and such of the people as choose have gone ashore to sleep and cook." Starting early on the morning of the ninth they reached Decatur at six o'clock to take the train to Tuscumbia but were compelled to remain until the next day. Then "the Indians and their baggage were transferred from the boats to the Rail Road cars. About 32 cars were necessary to transport the Party, and no more could be employed for want of power in the [two] Locomotive Engines."

As the Indians were much crowded on the train the twenty-three soldiers were discharged. The first detachment reached Tuscumbia at three o'clock and boarded the steamboat *Smelter* which "immediately set off for Waterloo at the foot of the rapids without awaiting for the 2nd train of Cars with the remainder of the Party." When the second party reached Tuscumbia they went into camp awhile awaiting transportation by water. As the guard had been discharged, whisky was introduced among them, much drunkeness resulting, and over one hundred of the emigrants escaped. The remainder were carried by water aboard a keel boat and a small steamer about thirty miles to Waterloo.

Here the party was united and set out on the eleventh aboard the steamboat *Smelter* and two large double decked keel boats; the next afternoon they reached Paducah, Kentucky, where Lieutenant Deas left one of the keel boats which he found superfluous. He succeeded in mustering the Indians after a fashion and found that he had 489. The nights were clear and calm and the boats ran both day and night, stopping only at intervals "to wood." They passed Memphis in the evening of the thirteenth and arrived at Montgomery's Point at the mouth of White River the next afternoon. Securing a pilot here they passed through the cut-off and entered Arkansas river, and, after ascending seventy miles, tied up at the bank while the emigrants went

on shore to relax and encamp for the night. There were too many sna and sand-bars in the Arkansas river to permit their running at nigh this program was repeated each evening and they did not reach Lit Rock until the seventeenth.

Here Deas dropped the other keel boat to enable the steamboat make better speed and reached Fort Smith and Fort Coffee on t nineteenth. The boat was tied up at the north bank of the river ne the mouth of Sallisaw creek. When the emigrants went ashore to spe the night they found many of their friends who came to greet the and urge the emigrants to stop there and not continue up to Fo Gibson. After counselling together they decided to follow this advic they took their baggage off the boat and concluded to cast their fortun in this district with their friends who had preceded them to the We

After their arrival at Fort Coffee Deas "*Issued a sufficient quantity Cotton Domestic to the Indians for Tents to protect them from t weather. I have done so in consideration of their destitute condition, as th were for the most part separated from their homes in Georgia witho having the means or time to prepare for camping*[12] *and it was also t opinion of the Physician of the Party that the health of these people woul suffer if not provided with some protection from the weather.*" There ha been no deaths in the party since their departure from Ross's Landin

12 The emigrants had come with bitter feelings towards the authorities e gendered by ". . .the precipitate manner in which they were started from the O Nation, many of them being obliged to leave almost every particle of moveable propert unsold, and as they supposed, forever lost to them" (Stuart to Adjutant Genera June 29, 1838, OIA, "Cherokee Emigration").

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR / *The Trail of Tears*

On June 13 the second party of 875 captive Cherokee Indians departed from Chattanooga in charge of Lieut. R. H. K. Whiteley, with five assistant conductors, two physicians, three interpreters, and a hospital attendant. After the preceding day had been spent in organizing the party and reuniting separated families as far as possible, they were placed on six flatboats and dropped down the Tennessee river to Brown's Ferry where more prisoners joined them. For two days they remained there while clothing was purchased and offered to the Indians who refused to receive it "neither would they be mustered, as all attempts to obtain their names were without success."[1]

When they left there the flotilla was increased to eight flatboats; tied together in pairs these safely negotiated the dangerous rapids and arrived at Kelly's Ferry in the evening. On the morning of the eighteenth with four flatboats moored on each side, the steamboat *George Guess* continued the descent of the river. This day the Indians decided to take the clothing of which they stood in need. "*One death (a child) and one birth, were detained three hours wooding—Encamped on the bank of Tennessee River at 6 P. M. The hours of stopping and starting were so arranged as to give the Indians sufficient time to cook in the evenings and mornings the provision for the day.*"

On the twentieth they arrived at Decatur and the next morning departed on two trains, arriving at the boatlanding below Tuscumbia in the evening. One old woman died at Decatur and a man was killed by the cars when he attempted to rescue his hat. Before reaching Decatur twenty-five Indians had escaped from the party. The emigrants were required to remain at Tuscumbia several days before boats could

1 *Journal of R. H. K. Whiteley*, OIA, "Cherokee Emigration" File W 662.

be secured to carry them over Colbert Shoals, and during their stay two children died. They passed the shoals on the twenty-eighth and encamped opposite Waterloo, Alabama, while awaiting the arrival of the steamboat *Smelter*. During the stay here, three children died, there was one birth, and 118 Indians escaped.

The emigrants departed from Waterloo the last day of the month on the steamboat *Smelter* and one keel boat in tow. The next day another child died before the party arrived at Paducah. Stops were made to take on wood, to escape a wind storm, and to obtain supplies at Memphis and on the Fourth of July the boats entered the Arkansas river by way of the White river cut-off. Two children died this day and one child the next. On arrival at Little Rock the emigrants were transferred to the steamboat *Tecumseh* of lighter draft in order to navigate higher up the river.

They left on the twelfth but were unable to ascend higher than Lewisburg where the boat grounded on Benson's Bar. Here after scouring the country, twenty-three wagons were secured to haul the sick people, principally children, and they departed on the twentieth leaving eighty ill in camp. The next day more wagons were secured and the remainder of the party took up the march.

The weather was extremely hot, a drought had prevailed for months, water was scarce, suffocating clouds of dust stirred up the by oxen and wagons, and the rough and rocky roads, made the condition of the sick occupants of the wagons miserable indeed. Three, four, and five deaths occurred each day. To avoid the heat the marches were started before sunrise and ended at noon. Before the end of the month there were between two and three hundred ill.

On August first they were in camp at Lee's creek. "Did not move this day, the party requiring rest and being more than one half sick; notwithstanding every effort was used, it was impossible to prevent their eating quantities of green peaches and corn[2]—consequently the flux raged among them and carried off some days as high as six and seven." Four days later these miserable beings entered the Cherokee Nation and went into camp near the head of Lee's creek. Here they

2 At home the Indians ate peaches and corn with no bad results; but the hardships of the enforced marches, want of their customary diet, bad water, and many other causes contributed to the terrible mortality among them.

were delivered to Captain Stephenson, 602 of the original party, seventy having died in exactly three weeks.

"*Among the recent immigrants,*" wrote Mr. Washburn at Dwight, on July 31, "*there has been much sickness, and in some neighborhoods the mortality has been great. . . just returned from a neighborhood about ten miles from the mission where there have been fourteen deths within three weeks. . . want of medical aid. . . Since last October about 2,000 immigrants have come. Twenty-five hundred more are on their way. . . much sickness and mortality among them. One company of these originally a thousand, but. . . diminishing by some hundreds is expected to arrive today. . . expected that nearly all. . . will settle within ten miles of this station.*"[3]

A picture of Indian desolation in Georgia was sketched by the exulting Gen. Charles Floyd, militia officer in charge of operations against the Cherokee in that state, in his report to Governor Gilmer: "*Head Quarters, Middle Military District, New Echota, 18th June, 1838. Sir: I have the pleasure to inform your excellency that I am now fully convinced there is not an Indian within the limits of my command, except a few in my possession, who will be sent to Ross' Landing to-morrow. My scouting parties have scoured the whole country without seeing an Indian, or late Indian signs. If there are any stragglers in Georgia, they must be in Union and Gilmer counties, and near the Tennessee and North Carolina line; but none can escape the vigilance of our troops. Georgia is ultimately in possession of her rights in the Cherokee country. . .*"[4]

General Scott gave orders June 17, for the discharge of volunteer troops engaged in capturing the Indians.[5] The same day the third contingent of 1,070 captive Cherokee left Ross's Landing in wagons and on foot for Waterloo where they were to be embarked on boats.[6] These people were in a destitute condition, with very little clothing, but they refused to accept any from the emigration agent. Four children and one adult died before their arrival at Waterloo. After their departure they

3 *Missionary Herald*, XXXIV, 445.

4 *Army and Navy Chronicle*, VII, 57; Scott to Poinsett, June 15, 1838, OIA, "Cherokee Emigration."

5 Scott, order No. 46, June 17, 1838, OIA, "Cherokee Emigration."

6 *Army and Navy Chronicle*, VII, 45; *Louisville Public Advertiser*, August 24, 1838, p. 2, cols. 2 and 3.

learned that General Scott had suspended the removal until autumn, and they demanded to be allowed to remain with the other members of their nation.

Three days after their departure from Ross's Landing a number of their brothers addressed to Gen. Nat Smith, superintendent of Cherokee emigration, a touching petition to halt the movement of the party and either return them to their former encampment or establish them in a new one where they could share in the respite until a more healthful season and join in the movement in the autumn under the permission of General Scott. "*Spare their lives,*" they said; "*expose them not to the killing effects of that strange climate, under the disadvantages of the present inauspicious season, without a house or shelter to cover them from above, or any kind of furniture to raise them from the bare ground, on which they may spread their blankets and lay their languid limbs, when fallen prostrate under the influence of disease. . . To this may be added the voice of our white neighbors. The cries of humanity have reached the citizens of the adjoining counties, and they have stepped forth to advocate the cause of mercy. The truth is, a general and powerful sympathy for our condition has seized the attention and affected the hearts of the white citizens generally in McMinn, Monroe and Blount counties. . . Not longer ago than yesterday the citizens of Athens, your immediate neighbors, sent a strong and affecting petition to Genl. Scott on our behalf signed by upwards of sixty of the principal citizens and physicians. . . We have today heard that the citizens of Monroe and those of Blount counties are preparing similar petitions.*"[7] This appeal was not heeded.

One hundred of the party escaped along the way and when the remainder were joined on the twenty-fifth at Bellefonte, Alabama, by Smith they "*made application to me to be suffered to return to the agency and remain until fall. . . . As they would have traveled over 120 miles, there health improving and they well provided with transportation and subsistence, I determined they should go on and so informed them. Shortly after which about 300 of them threw a part of there baggage out of the waggons, took it and broke for the woods and many of the balance refused to put there baggage into the waggons, or go any further and shewed much ill nature. Many of them told the agents who were with*

7 *John Ross Manuscripts*, in possession of his great-grandson, W. W. Ross of Park Hill, Oklahoma.

them that the white men were all Lyars and bad men; and one of them come to me and made the same observation and added further that he would go back home the next morning and shoot for Jno. Ross; that he had plenty of money and he would fight for him.

"I immediately requested the Captain of the Town Company to call out his men and aid me in starting them which he very promptly did, and we succeeded in getting off all that was left about 10 o'clock. A part of those who broke off in the morning was found and made to return. I put the party in charge of Capt. Drane of the Army and called on the citizens for 30 volunteers to accompany him to Waterloo. They turned out immediately and I had the Capt. to muster them into sirvice for 30 days unless sooner discharged.

"As verry many of this party were about naked, barefoot and suffering with fatigue although they had not traveled over 9 miles pr. day, I determined to purchase some Clothing, Domestic for tents & shoes, &c., &c., and issue to them which was done on the 26 ult. They rested on that day in the evening of which I called as many of the aged and Infirm and their Families as would go by water to Waterloo and took them to the river, put them on bord of the boat engaged in the upper contract and landed them next morning at Dicatur, where I learned Leut. Whiteley's party were yet at Tuscumbia. I followed on and overtook him and party at Waterloo all dooing verry well, and getting on bored of the boats to leave which they did at 10 o.c on 30 uto. We have been detained by head winds for 1 1-2 days or we should have reached this [Memphis] *on the morning of 2d inst."*[8]

Nat Smith accompanied this party as far as Little Rock "with 722 Cherokee out of over 1,000 who left Ross' Landing; they continued to desert some almost every night until we put them on board of the Boats" at Waterloo. On the thirtieth of June, 76 deserted before their arrival at Waterloo. "*These people will have over 300 miles to travel to reach their old homes, many of them women and children and of course must suffer extremely for want of something to eat &c. Of the 3,000 which*

8 Smith to Harris, July 3, 1838, OIA, "Cherokee Emigration" S 1041. "*The Athens (Tenn.) Journal* of July 4 says: 'Several detachments of Cherokees have passed through this place within the last two or three weeks, on their way from North Carolina to the Agency, and on last Friday 1,200 passed, conducted by two companies of artillery, under the command of Capt. Washington' "(*New York Observer*, July 28, 1838, p. 2, col. 4).

I wrote you from the Agency had left in the three parties, not over 2,000 will reach their new home, and all this for want of a few armed men as a guard which I have politely asked the Military for but could not get them agreably to my wish."[9]

The *Smelter* arrived at a point about sixty-five miles below Little Rock on July 20 but because of the low stage of the river could ascend no higher. The steamboat *Tecumseh* went down to bring up the Indians and Smith returned to Waterloo on the twelfth; there he found Captain Drane still detained with his land party of Indians, "supposed to consist of 800 or 900—he not having been able to muster them from their refusal to give their names and numbers of their families; the same case happened with Lieut. Whiteley's party, he had to count them out of the boats."[10]

An observer of this emigration between Memphis and Little Rock reported in September: "Eighteen hundred Cherokees have passed here by land within the last month, and they were suffering very much with measles and fever. We have had the longest drought I ever experienced in my life, and the corn crops will be light." And he predicted the tide of white and Indian emigrants would make provisions scarce and expensive.[11]

This removal, in the hottest part of the year, was attended with so much sickness and mortality that, by resolution of the Cherokee national council, Lewis Ross and other leading men submitted to General Scott a proposition that the Cherokee be allowed to conduct their own removal in the autumn, after the sickly season had ended. On June 19 the humane general agreed[12] to the proposition on condition that they would all start by September 1, and heard himself condemned

9 Smith to Harris, July 12, 1838, OIA, *ibid.*; *Arkansas Gazette*, July 11, 1838, p. 2, col. 1.

10 Smith to Harris, *ibid.*; *Arkansas Gazette*, July 25, 1838.

11 *Louisville Public Advertiser*, September 22, 1838, p. 2, col. 1.

12 Scott to Lowery and others, June 19, 1838, OIA, "Cherokee Emigration" S 1059. General Scott's agreement with Ross aroused a storm of protest and charges from a host of office-holders and owners of steamboats and wagons and other contract seekers, who saw their anticipated profits vanish (*Nashville Whig* October 29, 1838, p. 2, cols. 1 and 2).

by the impatient whites for this evidence of compassion for the unfortunate Indians. In the meantime, however, General Scott kept the Indians under military guard in their concentration camps.[13]

However, a drought unprecedented for many years prevailed throughout the summer and autumn, rendering it impossible to move and subsist such large bodies of people and the cattle that accompanied them for food, and removal was again postponed until the next month. Officers were appointed by the Cherokee council to take charge of the emigration, the Indians being organized into detachments averaging one thousand each, with two leaders in charge of each detachment, and a sufficient number of wagons and horses for the purpose. To maintain order on the march they established in each party a sort of police organization that punished infractions of their regulations.[14]

13 *Army and Navy Chronicle*, July 19, 1838, VII, 45. There were 2,500 at Ross's Landing and 3,000 at the Cherokee Agency encampment covering nearly ten square miles; 1,250 in two camps between these points; 1,500 being escorted to these camps; two or three thousand more were prisoners at interior forts waiting to be marched to the river camps; 3,000 had been removed and General Scott estimated that there were fewer than 200 yet to be captured (Scott to Poinsett, June 22, 1838, OIA, "Cherokee Emigration" S 1059). The whole number collected in North Carolina was something more than 3,000 (Eustis to Worth, June 24, 1838, *ibid.*).

14 *Army and Navy Chronicle*, VII, 280. An effort was made to comply with the agreement to begin the emigration by September 1; two days before that date about 2,500 emigrants in two parties had traveled twenty miles on the road when they were obliged to stop and go into camp at Blythe's ferry. The long continued drought had dried up all the creeks and branches in the Cumberland Mountains making it impossible to find water for parties of more than a dozen or two men (*Knoxville Register*, September 12, 1838, p. 3, col. 3). The delay was a serious matter for the emigrants driven from their homes in warm weather with no clothing suitable for winter months (*Nashville Whig*, October 5, 1838, p. 2, col. 4). However, at Nashville the contractors engaged by Ross furnished many of the emigrants needed clothing. Stephen Foreman's party passed through Nashville November 11; they were well provided with teams, horses, ponies, and mules and some had private carriages; most of them were well clothed; many were furnished with good cloaks, bearskin or blanket overcoats, thick boots, shoes and stockings (*Nashville Union*, November 13, 1838, p. 2, col. 1). The emigrants headed by the preachers Evan Jones and Jesse Bushyhead had an agreement with the authorities that they would be allowed to rest on Sundays and conduct religious services. Bushyhead's party was camped four miles from Nashville but the owner of the camp site would not permit them to remain over Sunday and much to their regret they were obliged to march through Nashville on that day (*Knoxville Register*, November 21, 1836, p. 2, col. 6). The last detachment consisting of about 1,800 Indians reached the encampment on Mill Creek about four

Thus organized, numbering about 13,000 including negro slaves, they started after the drought was broken in October.

A party of Cherokee belonging to the treaty faction of the tribe who refused to emigrate under the leadership of John Ross, left the vicinity of the Cherokee Agency under the direction of Lieutenant Deas on October 11. Deas reported from Winchester, Tennessee on the twenty-seventh "*up to this time our progress has been necessarily slow, in consequence of the obstructions in the road over which we have passed. . . The Party under my charge numbers between 650 and 700 persons, and is composed for the most part of highly respectable and intelligent families, and there are but very few who have not made considerable advancement in civilization.*" Making ten or twelve miles a day and passing through Fayetteville, they reached Pulaski in November without incident except that a number of oxen belonging to the Indians died from eating poisonous weeds.[15]

On the twenty-fourth Deas finished crossing his Indians over the Mississippi river at Memphis and the next day they resumed their journey. As his party was made up of individuals who favored the plans of the government in the execution of the treaty, and they included some of the most highly civilized members of the tribe they were favored by a great increase in the allowances for transportation, subsistence and contingencies over those made for the other emigrants. A large quantity of their baggage was shipped up the Arkansas river by boat. This party reached Little Rock about the middle of December,[16] and arrived in their new home on January 7, 1839.

Those who emigrated under the management of their own officers assembled at Rattlesnake Springs, about two miles south of Hiwassee river near the present Charleston, Tennessee, where a final council was held in which it was determined to continue their old constitution and laws in their new home.[17]

miles from Nashville the end of November and as winter was so near at hand it was predicted that some of the detachments would be obliged to go into camp on the Ohio river until spring (*Nashville Union*, November 30, 1838, p. 2, col. 2).

15 Deas to Harris, November 3, 1838, "Cherokee Emigration," D 257.

16 *Arkansas Gazette*, December 19, 1838, p. 2, col. 1.

17 *Missionary Herald*, XXXIV, 445. Their agreement provided for subsisting them at a cost of sixteen cents per diem for each person and forty cents each for the

Crossing to the north side of the Hiwassee river at a ferry above Gunstocker creek, they proceeded down along the river; the sick, the aged, and children, with the blankets, cooking pots and other belongings in wagons; the rest on foot or on horses. There were 645 wagons and about 5,000 horses, besides a large number of oxen. "*It was like the march of an army, regiment after regiment, the wagons in the center, the officers along the line and the horsemen on the flanks and at the rear. Tennessee river was crossed at Tucker's (?) ferry, a short distance above Jolly's Island, at the mouth of Highwassee. Thence the route lay south of Pikesville, through McMinnville and on to Nashville, where the Cumberland was crossed.*"

The contingent of 1,103 Cherokee in charge of John Benge was the first to begin their journey, starting on October 1, 1838. Elijah Hicks's party of 748 started three days later and on the sixteenth reached Nashville near where they camped for several days; there they were reported as suffering sorely for the want of clothing, and it was thought that "scores of them must inevitably fall the victims of desease and death before reaching the far place of their destination. Indeed, when they passed through Nashville, 40 or 50 were on the sick list, and four or five were afterward buried near the city."[18]

500 horses it was expected would accompany each, 1,000 persons, two thousand pounds of soap for each 1,000 emigrants was included (*John Ross Manuscripts, ibid.*).

18 *New York Observer*, November 10, 1838, p. 3, col. 4. Mrs Rebecca Neugin, a half-blood Cherokee now living near Hulbert, Oklahoma, was three years old when she departed with her parents on the removal; from information given by her mother she told the author: "When the soldiers came to our house my father wanted to fight, but my mother told him that the soldiers would kill him if he did and we surrendered without a fight. They drove us out of our house to join other prisoners in a stockade. After they took us away my mother begged them to let her go back and get some bedding. So they let her go back and she brought what bedding and a few cooking utensils she could carry and had to leave behind all of our other household possessions. My father had a wagon pulled by two spans of oxen to haul us in. Eight of my brothers and sisters and two or three widow women and children rode with us. My brother Dick who was a good deal older than I was walked along with a long whip which he popped over the backs of the oxen and drove them all the way. My father and mother walked all the way also. The people got so tired of eating salt pork on the journey that my father would walk through the woods as we traveled, hunting for turkeys and deer which he brought into camp to feed us. Camp was usually made at some place where water was to be had and when we stopped and prepared to cook our food other emigrants who had been driven from their homes without opportunity

On the twenty-fourth Hicks, the first to reach there, reported from Port Royal near the Kentucky line "the people are very loth to go on, and unusually slow in preparing for starting each morning. I am not surprised at this because they are moving not from choice to an unknown region not desired by them. I am disposed to make full allowance for their unhappy movement." The venerable chief "White Path has been in the last stages of sickness for many days and has to be hauled & is helpless who cannot last but a few days. Nocowee has given himself up to the bane of death [whisky] and I have altogether lost his services. Our police has to drive him along the road sometimes fettered." A few days later near Hopkinsville, Kentucky, White Path succumbed to sickness, infirmity, and the hardships of the forced journey, and died at the age of seventy-five. He was interred near the Nashville road and a monument of wood painted to resemble marble was erected to his memory. A tall pole with a flag of white linen flying at the top was erected at his grave to note the spot for his countrymen who were following.[19] This party reached their destination on January 4, 1839, the first to arrive in their western home.

Nine contingents left at intervals through October and four during the next month. John Ross remained behind to supervise the preparations and he was the recipient of numerous reports of progress and requests for advice. Wilson Lumpkin of Georgia and John Kennedy of Tennessee were appointed commissioners to supervise and carry into effect the provisions of the treaty preparatory to the removal of the Indians. Their duties required them to examine and pass on the claims of the Indians for loss and damage to their property in connection with the removal as well as claims of the whites against them. The Indians who departed more or less voluntarily had the benefit of greater indulgence and leisure on the part of the commissioners than fell to the lot of the more than 13,000 who would not consent to leave until

to secure cooking utensils came to our camp to use our pots and kettles. There was much sickness among the emigrants and a great many little children died of whooping cough." Agents were sent in advance to select and engage camp sites at intervals of about fifteen miles; water, fuel, and grazing for their animals were essential, and the neighborhood of a water mill for grinding their corn was also an important factor in selecting a camping place.

19 Draper Collection, 26 cc 15; *Hopkinsville (Kentucky) Gazette*, quoted in *Jacksonville (Alabama) Republican*, November 22, 1838, p. 2, col. 4.

the last moment; as it was manifestly impossible to give them more than perfunctory attention before their departure, the commissioners proceeded to hear and determine them after the Indians had gone.

As these Indians now on the way were driven from their home without either their property or compensation for its loss their bitterness of spirit was greatly aggravated. At McMinnville, Tennessee, Rev. Jesse Bushyhead's party held a council and sent a message to Ross saying they had been compelled to leave without satisfaction of their claims and they feared fraudulent demands would be made to defeat them; and they urged that no further consideration of them be had while the Indians were denied the opportunity of being present or represented.

The party in charge of Rev. Evan Jones, a Baptist missionary, traveled sixteen miles on October 16 but the people were so fatigued with the effort, that they remained in camp at McMinnville several days to rest. They "paid forty dollars at the Walderns Ridge toll gate and the man agreed to let the other detachments pass at half price viz., 37 1-2 [[cents]] for four wheeled carriages and 6 1-2 for a horse. On the Cumberland mountains they fleeced us, 73 cents a wagon and 12 1-2 cents a horse without the least abatement or thanks." Rev. Jesse Bushyhead's detachment was delayed by their oxen eating poison ivy and they were passed by Jones. Bushyhead "has had a distressing time with the discontents."

Bushyhead reported from his party on October 31: "We have a large number of sick and very many extremely aged and infirm persons in our detachment that must of necessity be conveyed in waggons. Our detachment now consists of about 978 or 79 Cherokees and there are forty-nine waggons" and they would be unable to haul the corn needed for the horses. They often found it necessary to double the teams in ascending the mountain roads.

The route carried all the emigrants through Nashville where the contractors furnished them with supplies. In November it rained excessively and the roads, cut up by thousands of horses, cattle, and people and hundreds of wagons and carts, became an appalling morass through which locomotion was accomplished with great difficulty and distress. The infirm and sick suffered in the wagons and carts that pitched and jolted behind the struggling oxen and horses; and they were obliged to await until stops were made at night for the attention

C. JAS. E. THOMPSON COMPANY, KNOXVILLE, TENN.

Type of primitive turbine grist mill operated in the Cherokee country of East Tennessee and North Carolina

of their physicians, who, tired after a day of travel, spent most of the night making brief calls upon the large number of patients. After the Indians left those who had driven them from their homes, they found the white people sympathetic with them in their distress, and as the third detachment of about 1,200 camped near Hopkinsville, Kentucky, on November 13, the citizens made generous donations for their comfort.[20]

The last party conducted by George Hicks did not start until November 4. Hicks sorrowfully reported that day to Chief Ross: "*We are now about to take our final leave and kind farewell to our native land, the country that the great spirit gave our Fathers; we are on the eve of leaving that country that gave us birth. . . it is with sorrow that we are forced by the authority of the white man to quit the scenes of our childhood. . . we bid a final farewell to it and all we hold dear. From the little trial we have made in a start to move, we know that it is a laborious undertaking, but with firm resolution we think we will be able to accomplish it, if the white citizens will permit us. But since we have been on our march many of us have been stopped and our horses taken from our Teams for the payment of unjust & past Demands; Yet the Government says we must go, and its citizens say you must pay me, and if the debtor has not the means, the property of his next friend is levied on and yet the Government has not given us our spoliation [compensation] as promised; our property has been stolen and robbed from us by white men and no means given us to pay our debts.* [The Government officers will not protect us, our property is] *robbed of us in open Day light and in open view of hundreds, and why are they so bold; they know that we are in a defenseless situation. . .*"

A sympathetic traveler who met them on the road describes the appearance of these unhappy people:

"*. . .On Tuesday evening we fell in with a detachment of the poor Cherokee Indians . . .about eleven hundred Indians—sixty waggons—six hundred horses, and perhaps forty pairs of oxen. We found them in the forest camped for the night by the road side . . .under a severe fall of rain accompanied by heavy wind. With their canvas for a shield from the inclemency of the weather, and the cold wet ground for a resting place, after the fatigue of the day, they spent the night . . .many of the aged Indians were suffering extremely from the fatigue of the journey, and*

20 *Hopkinsville Gazette*, quoted in *Army and Navy Chronicle*, VII, 363.

the ill health consequent upon it . . .several were then quite ill, and one aged man we were informed was then in the last struggles of death.

". . .About ten officers and overseers in each detachment whose business it was to provide supplies for the journey, and attend to the general wants of the company. . . We met several detachments in the southern part of Kentucky on the 4th, 5th and 6th of December. . . . The last detachment which we passed on the 7th embraced rising two thousand Indians with horses and mules in proportion. The forward part of the train we found just pitching their tents for the night, and notwithstanding some thirty or forty waggons were already stationed, we found the road literally filled with the procession for about three miles in length. The sick and feeble were carried in waggons—about as comfortable for traveling as a New England ox cart with a covering over it—a great many ride on horseback and multitudes go on foot—even aged females, apparently nearly ready to drop into the grave, were traveling with heavy burdens attached to the back—on the sometimes frozen ground, and sometimes muddy streets, with no covering for the feet except what nature had given them. We were some hours making our way through the crowd, which brought us in close contact with the wagons and multitude, so much that we felt fortunate to find ourselves freed from the crowd without leaving any part of our carriage. We learned from the inhabitants on the road where the Indians passed, that they buried fourteen or fifteen at every stopping place, and they make a journey of ten miles per day only on an average. One fact which to my own mind seemed a lesson indeed to the American nation is, that they will not travel on the Sabbath. . . when the Sabbath came, they must stop, and not merely stop—they must worship the Great Spirit too, for they had divine service on the Sabbath—a camp-meeting in truth. One aged Indian who was commander of the friendly Creeks and Seminoles in a very important engagement in the company with General Jackson, was accosted on arriving in a little village in Kentucky by an aged man residing there, and who was one of Jackson's men in the engagement referred to, and asking him if he (the Indian) recollected him? The aged Chieftain looked him in the face and recognized him, and with a down-cast look and heavy sigh, referring to the engagement, he said 'Ah! my life and the lives of my people were then at stake for you and your country. I then thought Jackson my best friend. But ah! Jackson no serve me right. Your country no do me justice now!'

"The Indians as a whole carry in their countenances every thing but the appearance of happiness. Some carry a downcast dejected look bordering upon the appearance of despair; others a wild frantic appearance as if about to burst the chains of nature and pounce like a tiger upon their enemies. . . Most of them seemed intelligent and refined. Mr. Bushyhead, son of an aged man of the same name, is a very intelligent and interesting Baptist clergyman. Several missionaries were accompanying them to their destination. Some of the Cherokees are wealthy and travel in style. One lady passed on in her hack in company with her husband, apparently with as much refinement and equipage as any of the mothers of New England; and she was a mother too and her youngest child about three years old was sick in her arms, and all she could do was to make it comfortable as circumstances would permit. . . she could only carry her dying child in her arms a few miles farther, and then she must stop in a stranger-land and consign her much loved babe to the cold ground, and that too without pomp or ceremony, and pass on with the multitude. . .

". . .When I past the last detachment of those suffering exiles and thought that my native countrymen had thus expelled them from their native soil and their much loved homes, and that too in this inclement season of the year in all their suffering, I turned from the sight with feelings which language cannot express and 'wept like childhood then.' I felt that I would not encounter the secret silent prayer of one of these sufferers armed with the energy that faith and hope would give it (if there be a God who avenges the wrongs of the injured) for all the lands of Georgia! . . .When I read in the President's Message[21] that he was happy to inform the Senate that the Cherokees were peaceably and without reluctance removed—and remember that it was on the third day of December when not one of the detachments had reached their destination; and that a large majority had not made even half their journey when he made that declaration, I thought I wished the President could have been there that very day in Kentucky with myself, and have seen the comfort and the willingness with which the Cherokees were making their journey. But I forbear, full well I know that many prayers have gone up to the King of Heaven from Maine in behalf of the poor Cherokees."[22]

21 James D. Richardson, *Messages of the Presidents*, III, 497.

22 "A Native of Maine, traveling in the Western Country" in *New York Observer*, January 26, 1839, p. 4. The last detachment, numbering about 1,800 passed through Nashville December 2 and the *Nashville Banner* predicted that they would

The Ohio river was crossed at a ferry near the mouth of the Cumberland, and the army passed on through southern Illinois until it reached the Mississippi river opposite Cape Girardeau, Missouri. The drought having delayed the start so long, it was winter when the emigrants reached that great river. "*In talking with old men and women at Tahlequah, the author found that the lapse of over half a century had not sufficed to wipe out the memory of the miseries of that halt beside the frozen river, with hundreds of sick and dying penned up in wagons or stretched upon the ground, with only a blanket overhead to keep out the January blast. The crossing was made at last in two divisions, at Cape Girardeau and at Green's ferry, a short distance below, whence the march was on through Missouri to Indian Territory, the later detachments making a northerly circuit by Springfield, because those who had gone before had killed off all the game along the direct route.*"[23]

Nineteen hundred of these Indians passed through Jackson, Missouri, early in December. "Some of them have considerable wealth, and make a very respectable appearance; but most of them are poor and exceedingly dissipated."[24] Another detachment passed near Batesville, Arkansas, December 15. Of this party John Benge was conductor, George Lowery assistant, Dr. W. P. Rawles of Gallatin, Tennessee, surgeon and physician, and William Shorey Coodey, contractor. Many of them came through the town to get their carriages repaired, have their horses shod and for other reasons. "They left Gunter's Landing on Tennessee River 35 miles above Huntsville, Alabama, October 10, since which time, owing to their exposure to the inclemency of the weather, and many of them being destitute of shoes and other necessary articles of clothing, about 50 of them have died."[25] Twelve hundred

suffer intensely from the cold before they reached their new home (*New York Observer*, December 15, 1838, p. 3, col. 5).

23 James Mooney, *op. cit.*, 133. As the Indians organized and managed the movement of this great body of people and the government had nothing to do with it, there were no journals of their experiences kept so far as the author has been able to ascertain; information and descriptions of this terrible undertaking are therefore meager. James Mooney's account written from the lips of survivors of that sad migration is the most complete of any extant.

24 *Jackson Advertiser*, in *Arkansas Gazette*, December 26, 1838, p. 2, col. 1.

25 Account from *Batesville (Arkansas) News*, in *Arkansas Gazette*, December 20, 1838.

Cherokee emigrants passed through Smithville, Lawrence County, Arkansas on December 12, "*many of whom appeared very respectable. The whole company appear to be well clothed, and comfortably fixed for travelling. I am informed that they are very peaceable, and commit no depredations upon any property in the country through which they pass. They have upwards of one hundred wagons employed in transporting them; their horses are the finest I have ever seen in such a collection. The company consumes about one hundred and fifty bushels of corn per day. It is stated that they have the* measles *and* whooping cough *among them and there is an average of four deaths per day.*"[26]

Evan Jones, with his party at Little Prairie, Missouri, wrote, December 30: "*. . .We have now been on our road to Arkansas seventy-five days, and have traveled five hundred and twenty-nine miles. We are still nearly three hundred miles short of our destination. . . It has been exceedingly cold. . . those thinly clad very uncomfortable. . . we have, since the cold set in so severely, sent on a company every morning, to make fires along the road, at short intervals. This. . . a great alleviation to the sufferings of the people. At the Mississippi river, we were stopped from crossing, by the ice running so that boats could not pass, for several days. Here Br. Bushyhead's detachment came up with us, and before our detachment was all over, Rev. Stephen Foreman's detachment came up, and encamped along side us. I am sorry to say that both their detachments have not been able to cross. I am afraid that with all the care that can be exercised with the various detachments, there will be an immense amount of suffering, and loss of life attending the removal. Great numbers of the old, the young, and the infirm will inevitably be sacrificed. And the fact that the removal is effected by coercion, makes it the more galling to the feelings of the survivors.*"[27]

Rev. Jesse Bushyhead wrote from Park Hill, March 19, that his party which departed October 5, was detained by the ice in the Mississippi river for a month, and that there were eighty-two deaths among them while on the road; they reached their destination on February 23 and he expected all the other parties would be in within a week or two.[28] Several hundred of the emigrants in Jones's and Bushyhead's

26 *Ibid.*, January 2, 1839, p. 2, col. 2.

27 *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, XIX, 89.

28 *Ibid.*, 178. Just after they crossed the Mississippi river, there was born to Reverend and Mrs. Bushyhead on January 3, 1839, a daughter who, in commemoration

parties were members of their church, the Baptist; "thus enabling them to continue, amidst all the toils and sufferings of the journey, their accustomed religious services."[29]

At last their destination was reached. It was now March, 1839, the journey having occupied nearly six months of the hardest part of the year. Some of those whom sickness had prevented from emigrating by land with the main body of emigrants, were in a party of 228 Cherokee aboard the steamboat *Victoria*, which arrived at Little Rock about February 1, 1839. Among them were Chief John Ross and his family who had more cause to mourn than many at their enforced removal which was in part responsible for the death of Mrs. Ross as the boat landed at Little Rock; she was buried in the little cemetery at this village.[30]

On the march there were many deaths, a few desertions and accessions and occasional exchanges from one party to another where some by sickness were obliged to drop out on the way and join those coming after; so that an accurate statement of the number removed and of those who perished on the way became impossible. But the following particulars concerning the movements of the emigrants are available:

Elijah Hick's party increased by accessions to 858, and traveling with forty-three wagons and 430 horses, arrived in their new home January 4, 1839, the first party to reach their destination, reduced then to 744; of the missing, thirty-four were accounted for by death, but they were offset by five births on the way. The next company to arrive three days later was that which started in charge of Hair Conrad, numbering 858, and ended the journey 654 in number commanded by Lieutenant Deas. Three days after these John Benge arrived in his

of the state in which she was born, was named Eliza Missouri; she was married to David Rowe Vann in 1858, and after his death became the wife of Bluford West Alberty in 1873. Aunt Eliza Alberty, as she was affectionately called, reared a large number of orphan children, and sent others through the Cherokee and other academic and professional schools; she exercised a tremendous influence for good on the lives of many Cherokee citizens, some of whom have risen to important stations.

29 *Ibid.*, 127.

30 *Little Rock Advocate*, February 4, 1839; *Army and Navy Chronicle*, VIII, 156. Mrs. Ross was known as Quatie Martin Ross; the monument at her grave is marked "Elizabeth Ross, wife of John Ross." John Ross was married to Mary B. Stapler of Wilmington, Delaware, at Hartwell's Washington hotel, Philadelphia, September 2, 1844.

new home in charge of a party of 1,103 remaining of a total of 1,200 who began the journey. Daniel Colton arrived January 16 with 651 emigrants.

A company of 1,033 Cherokee from the Valley Towns of East Tennessee in charge of the Rev. Evan Jones arrived February 2; these were all that remained of the original party numbering 1,250, headed by Situakee, who traveled with sixty-two wagons and 560 horses. There were seventy-one deaths and five births among them. The people of this party were strongly religious and maintained their church organization and services on the road with the inspiration of their Baptist conductor. Next behind them was the party headed by Rev. Jesse Bushyhead, a Cherokee Baptist minister who interpreted for Mr. Jones. His people numbered at the beginning 950, but he lost thirty-eight by death and after accounting for six births, he delivered 898 in their new home February 23.

Rev. Stephen Foreman, also a Cherokee preacher, who had been educated at Union and Princeton theological seminaries brought the next party of emigrants made up largely of Cherokee Indians of religious attachments who arrived February 27; they began their journey in charge of Capt. Old Field 983 in number, but there were fifty-seven deaths and nineteen births on the road and after accounting for a few desertions and accessions they numbered 921 on their arrival in the West. The party of Choowalooka began their journey numbering 1,150 but on arrival at their new home in the West March first there were but 970 of them. Mose Daniel's party originally numbering 1,035 suffered forty-eight deaths on the march, but there were six births, and Captain Stevenson, the certifying agent, receipted for only 924 in their new home March 2. James Brown's contingent of 859 was reduced to 717 when it reached their destination March 5, by thirty-four deaths and other causes. George Hicks reported to Captain Stevenson, March 14, 1,039 of his original enrollment of 1,118.

John Drew delivered a small party of 219 emigrants in their new home on March 18 of 231 who started with him. Richard Taylor began his journey in charge of 1,029 emigrants and after fifty-five deaths and fifteen births in the party he brought 944 survivors to their new home March 24. Peter Hilderbrand's caravan of 1,776 emigrants extended for several miles along the highway. Eighty-eight wagons contained the young children, the sick, aged and decrepit, and the personal

effects of the emigrants. There were 881 horses in the equipment of the party, some of which were employed with the oxen in pulling the wagons; the remainder were used as riding horses for women and girls many of whom bore infants on their backs. Men, boys, and able bodied women and girls walked along in company with the wagons and horses containing members of their families and their property. Only 1,312 of this party were delivered to the agent in the West March 25, the difference, 464, being accountable probably to diversion of some of them to another party and not altogether to deaths.[31]

31 These figures were turned in by the conductors of the parties; there was much disagreement on the subject. John Ross claimed a total of 13,149 removed under his supervision. Captain Stevenson, who receipted for the Indians on their arrival, reported 11,504; and Captain Page, the disbursing officer, said there were 11,702 (C. E. Royce, *op. cit.*, 292). All told, about 4,000 died during the course of capture and detention in temporary stockades, and the removal itself. See also Emmet Starr, *History of the Cherokee Indians*, 103.

THE CHEROKEE REMOVAL, 1838

Today, over a hundred and thirty years after the Cherokee Removal, the Indians as an entire people still are not assimilated into American Life. As proof that the Indians could have been assimilated long ago the Cherokees are the prime example, not because they alone were adapting even then, but rather because they were the most conspicuously successful, and their removal aroused among white people the greatest outcry of indignation. Over all Indians, the Great Removals cast a pall of discouragement that is renewed with every abrogation by the United States of yet another Indian treaty.

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PRINCIPALS

ANDREW JACKSON – President of the United States when the Treaty of Removal was negotiated.

JOHN ROSS – Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, who refused to recognize the treaty as valid.

MARTIN VAN BUREN – President of the United States when the treaty was forced into execution.

GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT – Commander of United States Armed Forces in the removal.

GENERAL JOHN E. WOOL – Inspector General, United States Army, who repeatedly denounced the treaty as a fraud, and was reprimanded by President Jackson.

JOHN F. SCHERMERHORN – United States negotiator of the disputed treaty.

MAJOR WILLIAM M. DAVIS – Enrolling Agent, first United States official to declare the treaty a fraud.

MAJOR RIDGE – A Cherokee chief, the most important signer of the disputed treaty.

JOHN RIDGE – A principal negotiator of the treaty, son of Major Ridge.

ELIAS BOUDINOT – A negotiator of the treaty, a former editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix*, and a cousin of John Ridge.

STAND WATIE – An important member of the Ridge faction, later a brigadier general in the Confederate Army, brother of Boudinot.