CHAPTER 10

- Conflicting views
- The Creeks
- The Seminoles
- The Cherokees

Snapshot

Cherokee Removal, 1838. Forced off their historic homelands and escorted by the U.S. Army to Oklahoma on an 800-mile journey in the dead of winter, thousands of Cherokees died from cold and disease. The Cherokee would forever remember this as their “Trail of Tears.”

Conflict over Indian Lands

No matter where you live in Georgia, the land around you was once the home and hunting ground of native tribes. At first, European settlers coming to America simply asked the natives to share some of their vast lands. Some Native Americans, like Tomochichi’s Yamacraws, welcomed the white colonists, signing treaties of friendship and peace. Other tribes, however, refused to give up their land, even for a price. Still, boatload after boatload of European settlers set sail for America. The treasure they came searching for was not gold or silver. It was land—the tribal lands of America’s native inhabitants.

Only 105 years after the arrival of the first English colonists, Georgia’s native population was gone, its tribal lands totally in the hands of whites. How could this have happened?

Conflicting Views

Georgia’s early boundaries were so far apart that people originally thought there was plenty of room for both whites and native tribes to live in peace. But cultural differences between the two threatened this prospect.

Differing ideas about land ownership caused the most trouble between the two races. For the native tribes, an individual could no more own land than own air or rivers. Rather, a person could manage the land and use it. Thus, a tribe might have the right to use certain hunting grounds, and other tribes would respect that claim. But once that tribe stopped using the grounds (perhaps by moving away), it lost its special right to it.
Whites, on the other hand, held European beliefs about land ownership. Like a house or furniture, land was something that could be bought, sold, and inherited. A landowner was entitled to exclusive rights to his possession.

During the colonial period, tribal lands in Georgia were protected by the British government. After the American Revolution, however, native rights slowly eroded. At first, the issue was one of Native Americans sharing their land. But soon, Georgians became intent on removing the native people from the state entirely. After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, many whites came to believe that the Indians should move west. Twenty-five years later, Pres. Andrew Jackson announced that they had to move west.

**Tribal Leaders**

Except for some missionaries, there were few white defenders of native rights in Georgia. The best defense came from such Native American leaders as Alexander McGillivray, William McIntosh, John Ross, Elias Boudinot, and George Guess (better known as Sequoyah). Born to European men and their Native American wives, these men were fully accepted as members of their mothers’ tribes. In tribal culture, descent was traced through the mother—not the father. White fathers sometimes sent their mixed-blood sons back east for an education. Later, many of these young men became tribal chiefs or other spokesmen. As Georgia’s Native Americans attempted to understand white civilization, they turned to those who were educated and knew the ways of whites. Because of their need to live in two worlds, many of the famous Creek and Cherokee leaders had English as well as Indian names.
Before the 1800s, white settlement was permitted only in a tiny portion of Georgia’s vast expanse. Holding on to their native lands were five major groups of Native Americans—the Creeks, Cherokees, Seminoles, Choctaws, and Chickasaws.*

By 1764, about 60,000 natives lived within Georgia’s boundaries. At the same time, living on the lands ceded by the Native Americans along the Savannah River and coast were some 10,000 whites and 8,000 blacks.

Georgia’s largest tribe was the Choctaw, which had about 25,000 adults and children. They lived in what today is south Mississippi. To the north of the Choctaws were about 2,000 Chickasaws. Neither tribe played an important role in Georgia history because their lands were far to the west of Georgia’s frontier.

Controlling most of what today is Georgia and Alabama were some 17,000 Creeks. To the north of them lived more than 13,000 Cherokees. These two tribes held the lands adjoining Georgia’s frontier settlements. A third tribe in Georgia was the Seminoles, a branch of the Lower Creeks that had moved into the region stretching from southwestern Georgia into northern Florida. The number of Seminoles in Georgia was small, and eventually they lived entirely in Florida. Thus the story of conflict between the white settlers and the Native Americans in Georgia focuses on the Creeks, Seminoles, and Cherokees.

*These five tribes would later be known as the “Five Civilized Tribes” because they adopted many characteristics of white culture. They made this effort in the nineteenth century, thinking it would help them to hold on to their native lands.
The Creeks

The Creeks were not a single tribe or people but rather a loose confederation (or association) of tribes and chiefdoms. Because most spoke a variation of the Muscogean language, the Creeks were sometimes referred to as Muscogees.

There were two distinct groups. The Upper Creeks lived in towns and villages in the northern half of Alabama. The Lower Creeks located their towns in western Georgia, southern Alabama, and northern Florida.* The remainder of Creek territory—including most of Georgia—was used for hunting.

The Upper and Lower Creeks were separate parts of the confederation. Another part of the confederation was a group of Lower Creeks in south Georgia and Florida known as Seminoles.

The Creek confederation was organized around a political unit known as the chiefdom. This consisted of one or more towns or settlements, governed by a chief, known as a mico, and a tribal council. One of the mico’s most important jobs was to represent his people when dealing with other chiefdoms or when conducting treaties with whites.

Conflicts between Creeks and Whites

During the Revolutionary War, some Creeks sided with the British, carrying on frontier raids against Whig settlements. After the war, white Georgians remembered this and demanded that the Creeks give up some of their land. What they wanted was the land between the Ogeechee and the Oconee rivers.

The Creeks were divided over what to do. The Lower Creeks agreed to turn over territory to the whites, but the Upper Creeks, led by chief Alexander McGillivray, refused.

Fighting between McGillivray’s followers and white settlers on the border of the

*The Yamacraw Indians Oglethorpe encountered in 1733 were part of the Lower Creeks.
Creek nation almost became a full-scale war. Finally, in 1790, President Washington invited McGillivray to New York City, then the nation's capital. There the Creek leader was persuaded (and, perhaps, took money) to cede to Georgia lands between the Ogeechee and Oconee rivers. The 34-year-old chief died from an illness three years later. His dream of a strong Creek nation was dying, too.

After the Yazoo Land Fraud, Georgia turned over its western lands to the United States in 1802. In return, the state received $1,250,000 and the national government's promise to remove all Indians from the state *as soon as reasonably and peacefully possible*. (At the same time, the United States, in its treaties with the Indians, more or less promised to protect their lands from white takeover!)

In 1802, the U.S. government persuaded the Creeks to give up more land. For the first time, Georgia was able to expand west of the Oconee River. The next year, state lawmakers directed that a site be selected on the Oconee River for building a “permanent” state capital, to be named Milledgeville. The Creek *cession* (land given up or ceded) was then surveyed and distributed in Georgia's first land lottery.

The Creeks gave up an even larger area of land in 1805 in another treaty with the United States. This cession extended all the way to the Ocmulgee River and resulted in Georgia's second land lottery two years later.

Each time the Creeks ceded more land, they signed a treaty with the United States. In return for giving up land to Georgia, the Creeks received payments of money and other goods. Treaties also provided for settling disputes between the Creeks and whites.

In 1796, President Washington appointed Col. Benjamin Hawkins as U.S. Indian Agent. His job was to administer U.S. treaties and help promote peaceful relations with the Creeks. On the eastern bank of the Flint River (in present-day Crawford County), Hawkins established his headquarters—known as the Creek Agency. He tried to influence the lives of the Creeks, teaching them farming methods and homemaking skills. He helped keep the peace among the Creeks, a job made more difficult because of the constant pressure from white Georgians for more land. Eventually, these efforts failed when the Creeks took sides during the War of 1812.

**The War of 1812**

In 1812 the United States went to war with Great Britain. The war was fought over a variety of issues. It was partly about U.S. shipping rights and partly about Americans' desire for land claimed by the British and their allies.
The Creeks were divided about whom to support. One group, mainly Lower Creeks, decided to stay friendly with the United States. The Upper Creeks, however, saw the War of 1812 as a chance to get their lands back. They were known as the Red Sticks, because red was the color associated with war.

Supplied with British arms, the Red Sticks launched a civil war against fellow Creeks who remained friendly to the United States. Soon, the Creek War spread to attacks against white settlers on the frontier. In 1813, more than 1,000 Red Sticks overran Fort Mims in southern Alabama, killing and scalping 500 people. Among those murdered were innocent white and mixed-blood families who had fled to the fort for safety.

The next year, an army under Gen. Andrew Jackson met the Red Sticks at Horseshoe Bend on the Tallapoosa River in eastern Alabama. Fighting with Jackson were many Cherokees, as well as a force of Lower Creeks led by Chief William McIntosh. Seeking revenge for the Fort Mims massacre, Jackson’s forces killed about 700 Red Sticks before the day was over.

The Creek War continued, but it was now clear that the Red Sticks had lost. In August 1814, General Jackson called on all Creeks desiring peace to meet him at Fort Jackson in Alabama. Many friendly Creeks came, but only one Red Stick chief. Even though most of those present had been on his side, Jackson forced the Creeks to give up all their land in south Georgia and a large area in eastern Alabama.
Pressure on the Creeks Continues

After the war, the U.S. government encouraged Native Americans to go west to Arkansas and Oklahoma. Those not desiring to go could remain, but they could not continue as separate nations.

Some Creeks accepted the U.S. government’s offer of free land to the west of the Mississippi River. Those who remained realized they had too few warriors to hold the land by force. The Creeks began to adopt more and more characteristics of white culture. Less time was spent on hunting and trading, and more on raising crops and livestock. Still, the Creeks were in possession of large portions of Georgia—land the state wanted for white settlement.

Pressured by Georgia’s leaders, the U.S. government persuaded the Creeks to cede their lands westward to the Flint River in 1821. This wasn’t enough. Georgians reminded the national government of its 1802 promise to remove all Indians from the state. The government in Washington tried to bargain with the Native Americans. Most Creeks, however, had decided not to yield any more land.

Chief McIntosh

The Lower Creek towns were led by William McIntosh, one of the five great chiefs of the nation. McIntosh, son of an Indian mother and a Scottish father, was first cousin to Georgia’s governor, George Michael Troup. The Creek chief was a well-known warrior who had fought under General Jackson against other Creeks at Horseshoe Bend in 1814.

Governor Troup and representatives of the U.S. government believed they could work through Chief McIntosh to get the Creeks to sell their remaining lands. McIntosh is said to have received thousands of dollars for accepting the deal. However, he was unable to persuade other Creek leaders to agree.

Next, McIntosh, whom the Cherokees had made an honorary chief of their nation, tried to get the Cherokees to sell their lands. He offered some of the white man’s money to Cherokee leader John Ross, who turned him down. The Cherokees warned the Creeks to watch their chief closely.

The warning came too late. On February 12, 1825, Chief McIntosh and a few followers signed a treaty ceding all Creek lands to the United States. As this was done without the support of the Creek people, McIntosh’s days were numbered. Years before, the Creek National Council had passed a law condemning to death any chief who sold tribal lands without the council’s approval.

Before dawn on May 1, 1825, Creek warriors surrounded Acorn Bluff, McIntosh’s home in present-day Carroll County near the Chattahoochee River, and set it on fire. When the chief
ran from the burning building, he was shot down and stabbed to death. Several of his followers were also killed.

Governor Troup demanded that the U.S. government honor the treaty signed by McIntosh and remove the Creeks at once. He also directed that the Creek lands be surveyed to prepare for distribution to white Georgians by lottery.

John Quincy Adams, president of the United States, thought the treaty might not be legal and would not enforce it. He threatened to arrest any surveyor found on the Creek lands. But when Governor Troup threatened war with the United States, President Adams backed down. He wanted to avoid any military showdown with Georgia.

So, by new treaties, the United States forced the Creeks to sell their remaining lands in Georgia. By the end of 1827, the Creeks were gone from Georgia. Most of them were removed to Oklahoma, where their descendants (known as Muscogees) still live today.

*Conflict over Indian Lands*
The Seminoles

Living in southwest Georgia and northern Florida, the Seminoles were a source of constant and grave concern to Georgians. They accepted escaped slaves from Georgia and South Carolina and allowed them to live on their lands in freedom. Sometimes runaway slaves lived together in “maroon camps” on Seminole land.* More often, however, escaped slaves were simply welcomed and lived as new members of the tribe. Intermarriages and close friendships were common, and Black Seminoles—as they were called—were fully accepted as tribal members. By encouraging this practice, the Seminoles threatened the existence of slavery.

White slave owners were angry that the Seminoles would not return their slaves. Making the situation worse, during the War of 1812, Great Britain had encouraged the Seminoles to harass Georgia and Alabama settlements. This led to increasing conflicts between the Seminoles and whites.

Finally, in 1817, American military forces crossed into Florida. U.S. military forces under Gen. Andrew Jackson were victorious in this action known as the First Seminole War. In 1819, Spain ceded Florida to the United States. The Seminoles were forced to move from south Georgia and north Florida to a reservation in central Florida. In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, authorizing the removal of all southeastern tribes. The act required the consent of the Native Americans and offered compensation. Whether they consented or not, however, they were forced to move. Lands had been set aside west of the Mississippi River in Oklahoma and Arkansas.

The Seminoles resisted, and the Second Seminole War began. Under Osceola and other Seminole leaders, the war continued from 1835 to 1842. At great cost, the Americans won. As a result, except for 500 Seminoles who escaped to live in the Everglades, the entire Seminole nation was forced to move to Indian Territory in the west.

Next came the Cherokees.

The Cherokees

The Cherokees lived in the southern ranges of the Appalachian Mountains, extending into four states—Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. Living in the mountains, they were out of the main path of white migration to the west. This allowed them to avoid removal longer than the Creeks.

*Both the terms “Seminole” and “maroon” are derived from the Spanish word “cimarron,” which means wild or runaway.
Until the 1790s, the Cherokees frequently went to war—against not only whites but also Creeks. During the American Revolution, they sided with the British. After the war, Cherokee war parties continued their raids on frontier settlements and forts, particularly in Tennessee. In 1793, near the present site of Rome, Georgia, the Cherokees were defeated in their last major battle with American forces. The next year, the United States concluded a peace treaty with the Cherokees. It was the end of a long, bloody era of death and destruction on both sides. The next time the Cherokees took up arms, they sided with the United States during the Creek War of 1813 and 1814.

During the 1700s, the Cherokees, for the most part, lived in “towns” stretching along rivers and streams. Each town, and there were 80 or so, was an independent chiefdom. Only at the end of the century did the Cherokees move toward uniting their towns and people as a nation under a unified government.

**Progress and Setbacks in the Cherokee Nation**

In the eyes of many white Americans, the Cherokees were the most “civilized” Indians. Whites considered the Cherokees to be advanced far beyond other tribal groups because they had adopted so much of the white culture.

In the early 1800s, white Americans learned that a Cherokee named Sequoyah [George Guess] was doing something that missionaries and other whites had been unable to do. He was writing and teaching others to write the Cherokee language.

The system taught by Sequoyah was a syllabary, not an alphabet. It was a set of written characters, or symbols, used to represent spoken syllables. Using the syllabary was a way to show that the Cherokees didn't need the whites’ written English.

In an attempt to save their homeland, the Cherokees joined together to form a nation that stretched across four states. New Echota, near present-day Calhoun, became the Cherokee capital. Here, in 1827, the Cherokees wrote a constitution for their nation. Patterned after the U.S. Constitution, it provided for legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. The nation was divided into eight districts, and each sent elected representatives to the capital.

New Echota also served as the home of the *Cherokee Phoenix*, a bilingual (two language) newspaper. Its printing shop, along with other buildings of the time, still stands today.

Missionaries were allowed to operate churches and schools, and many Cherokees accepted Christianity. In many ways, the Cherokees lived just like whites. They lived in houses and made a living from farming or operating stores, mills, taverns, inns, and ferries. Some became lawyers and teachers.

*Conflict over Indian Lands*
Memorial

Of John Ross and Others, Representatives of the Cherokee Nation of Indians, 20th Congress, 2d Session, March 3, 1829

... We ... respectfully and solemnly protest, in behalf of the Cherokee nation, against the extension of the laws of Georgia over any part of our Territory, and appeal to the United States’ Government for justice and protection.

The great Washington advised a plan and afforded aid for the general improvement of our nation, in agriculture, science, and government. President Jefferson followed the noble example, and concluded an address to our delegation, in language as follows: “I sincerely wish you may succeed in your laudable endeavors to save the remnant of your nation by adopting industrious occupations and a Government of regular law. In this you may always rely on the counsel and assistance of the United States.” This kind and generous policy to improve our condition has been blessed with the happiest results: our improvement has been without parallel in the history of all Indian nations. Agriculture is everywhere pursued, and the interests of our citizens are permanent in the soil. We have enjoyed the blessings of Christian instruction; and the advantages of education and merit are justly appreciated, a Government of regular law has been adopted, and the nation, under a continuance of the fostering care of the United States, will stand forth as a living testimony that all Indian nations are not doomed to the fate which has swept many from the face of the earth.

Under the parental protection of the United States, we have arrived at the present degree of improvement, and they are now to decide whether we shall continue as a people, or be abandoned to destruction.

In behalf, and under the authority of the Cherokee nation, this protest and memorial is respectfully submitted.

John Ross Edward Gunter
R. Taylor William S. Coody

Washington City, February 27, 1829.

Indian Talk

From the President of the United States [Adapted from Rural Cabinet, May 30, 1829, Warrenton, Georgia]

Friends and Brothers—By permission of the Great Spirit above, and the voice of the people, I have been made President of the United States, and now speak to you as your Father and friend, and request you to listen. Your warriors have known me long. You know I love my white and red children, and always speak with a straight, and not with a forked tongue; that I have always told you the truth. I now speak to you, as my children, in the language of truth—Listen. . . .

Where you now are, you and my white children are too near to each other to live in harmony and peace. Your game is destroyed, and many of your people will not work and till the earth. Beyond the great River Mississippi, where a part of your nation has gone, your Father has provided a country large enough for all of you, and he advises you to remove to it. There your
white brothers will not trouble you; they will have no claim to the land, and you can live upon it, you and all your children, as long as the grass grows or the water runs, in peace and plenty. It will be yours forever. For the improvements in the country where you now live, and for all the stock which you cannot take with you, your Father will pay a fair price.

Where you now live your white brothers have always claimed the land. The land beyond the Mississippi belongs to the President and to none else; and he will give it you forever.

Friends and Brothers, listen. This is a straight and good talk. It is for your nation's good, and your Father requests you to hear his counsel.

Signed, ANDREW JACKSON
March 23, 1829

Chief Speckled Snake Replies

[Speech made at council of Indian chiefs assembled to have President Jackson's talk read to them, from Niles' Weekly Register, June 20, 1829.]

Brothers! We have heard the talk of our great father; it is very kind. He says he loves his red children. Brothers! When the white man first came to these shores, the Muscogees gave him land, and kindled him a fire to make him comfortable; and when the pale faces of the south [the Spanish in Florida] made war on him, their young men drew the tomahawk, and protected his head from the scalping knife.

But when the white man had warmed himself before the Indian's fire, and filled himself with the Indian's hominy, he became very large; he stopped not for the mountain tops, and his feet covered the plains and the valleys. His hands grasped the eastern and western sea.

Then he became our great father. He loved his red children; but said, "You must move a little farther, lest I should by accident tread on you." With one foot he pushed the red man over the Oconee, and with the other he trampled down the graves of his fathers.

But our great father still loved his red children, and he soon made them another talk. He said much; but it all meant nothing, but "move a little farther; you are too near me." I have heard a great many talks from our great father, and they all began and ended the same.

Brothers! When he made us a talk on a former occasion, he said, "Get a little farther; go beyond the Oconee and the Oakmulgee; there is a pleasant country." He also said, "It shall be yours forever."

Now he says, "The land you live on is not yours; go beyond the Mississippi; there is game; there you may remain while the grass grows or the water runs."

Brothers! Will not our great father come there also? He loves his red children, and his tongue is not forked.

Interpreting the Source

Analyze the documents by answering the questions for each of the three documents.

1. Identify the author/speaker.
2. Identify the date.
3. Identify the intended audience.
4. Summarize two important points made by each author or speaker.
Although the Cherokee government had the approval of the U.S. government, Georgia refused to recognize it. State leaders argued that the U.S. Constitution prohibited the creation of a “nation” within a state without the approval of that state’s government.

In 1828, the Georgia General Assembly decided to put an end to the Cherokee nation. It passed an act extending the laws of the state and the authority of its courts over the Cherokee territory. Cherokee laws were declared “null and void”—that is, of no effect—as of June 1, 1830. The act also provided that no Indian or descendant of an Indian could be a witness against a white person in court. An Indian could not bring a lawsuit against a white person.

The Cherokees were outraged. After all, hadn’t they signed treaties with the U.S. government? Hadn’t the United States agreed they could set up their own government and laws?

In 1829, Cherokee representatives journeyed to Washington and presented their case, known as a memorial, to Congress. The memorial was a formal statement of the facts and contained objections to actions by the U.S. government. (See pages 162–63.)

In March 1829, while Congress considered the Cherokees’ request, Andrew Jackson took office as president of the United States. He asked Congress to pass an Indian removal bill, giving him more power in Indian matters.
Then . . .

In 1828, Benjamin Parks crossed the eastern boundary of the Cherokee Nation while hunting deer. In what today is Lumpkin County, he stumbled over a stone of an unusual color. He recognized it immediately—gold!

Word spread quickly. By 1829, thousands of miners and prospectors had converged on north Georgia in America’s first major gold rush. At its height, over 10,000 people were panning for gold flakes and nuggets in streams, while others mined veins of gold in the hillsides.

The discovery of gold would seal the fate of the Cherokees. In 1830, Georgia’s legislature passed an act claiming jurisdiction over Cherokee land. The act also provided for surveying the Cherokee lands, dividing them into land lots, and authorizing a lottery to distribute the land.

In 1832, the Georgia legislature created Lumpkin County. The new settlement of Dahlonega became the county seat. In 1835, Congress authorized the building of a new U.S. mint (pictured above) for production of gold coins in Dahlonega. Completed in 1837, the mint produced its first gold coins in 1838. Over the next 23 years, it produced almost 1.4 million coins, with a total face value of over $6.1 million. After Georgia seceded from the Union in 1861, the mint closed, never to reopen.

... and Now

During a restoration of Georgia’s capitol in 1957, a Dahlonega-born engineer proposed covering the capitol dome with Georgia gold. Dahlonega citizens donated 43 ounces of native gold for the project. In August 1958, a caravan of seven covered wagons delivered the gold to Atlanta. After it was hammered into gold leaf and applied to the capitol dome, Georgia joined eight other states with gold-domed capitols.

Twenty years later, however, much of the gold had worn off. Once again Dahlonega citizens came to the rescue. A “Make Georgia a Shining Example” project was launched to raise money for new gold. Schoolchildren throughout the state donated nickels and dimes for the project. In November 1979, a wagon train carrying 60 ounces of gold dust and nuggets left Dahlonega on a three-day trip to Atlanta. A mile-long procession of wagons and riders passed through downtown Atlanta to the state capitol where Gov. George Busbee was waiting to accept the gold.

Afterward, the gold was refined and molded into fine leaf in preparation for gilding. The dome was stripped completely bare of its old gold, and using a secret process, new gilding was applied. By 1981, the project was complete. Once again, Georgia had a beautiful capitol dome covered with gold and keeping alive memories of Dahlonega’s golden past.
Jackson also addressed the native people directly. His message, aimed specifically at the Creeks still in Alabama, let Georgia Cherokees know exactly where he stood. Speaking to the Creeks as his “red children,” he told them to move to land in the west. Chief Speckled Snake’s reply reveals that he no longer trusted President Jackson to keep his promises to native people.

Discovery of Gold Brings Trouble to Cherokees

In 1828, gold nuggets were discovered in several creeks on the eastern boundary of the Cherokee Nation. Then came word of gold mines near the present-day site of Dahlonega. The news spread quickly, and by 1829, America’s first gold rush was under way. Thousands of gold seekers, many of them wild and lawless men, rushed into north Georgia. The Cherokees appealed to the national government for help. U.S. soldiers were sent in to drive the miners off Indian lands.

Rather than being pleased with the help of federal troops, Georgia officials were upset that the federal government was interfering in state affairs. As of June 1830, the state claimed there no longer was a Cherokee nation. Rather, all territory occupied by the Cherokees was now part of Georgia and subject to its laws. Georgia called on President Jackson to withdraw federal troops from the gold region. The president agreed to allow the state to handle the matter, and the soldiers were pulled out.

Georgia then directed any whites living in the Cherokee country to sign an oath pledging to uphold the laws of Georgia. This law was aimed not at gold miners but at Protestant missionaries living and working among the Cherokees. These missionaries opposed Georgia’s efforts to take over native land and urged the Cherokees to resist.

Several white missionaries refused to take Georgia’s oath and were arrested. In 1831, they were tried, convicted, and sentenced to four years at hard labor in the Georgia prison at Milledgeville. When Georgia’s governor, George Gilmer, offered to pardon them, they refused. “After all, if we committed no crime, how could we be pardoned for it?” the missionaries asked.

The missionaries’ situation gained national attention. Their case, Worcester v. Georgia, was carried to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1832, Chief Justice John Marshall announced the Supreme Court’s decision: Georgia laws did not apply in the Cherokee nation. The missionaries should be freed.
The Cherokees celebrated. They believed the decision meant that their laws and their nation would be saved. It was not to be.

Georgia’s newly elected governor, Wilson Lumpkin, paid no attention to the Supreme Court. President Jackson, no friend of the Cherokees, sided with the state of Georgia. Said the president, “John Marshall has made his decision; now let him enforce it.”

The Cherokees and Their Lands Divided

The Cherokee cause now was hopeless. In sadness, they watched as the state surveyed their land, preparing to distribute it to whites in a great land lottery in 1832. Ten counties were mapped out and Governor Lumpkin urged white settlers who had drawn land in the lottery to occupy it. Cherokee families were forced from their homes by the new owners.

Most of the Cherokees continued to resist. Early in 1834, in a statement to President Jackson, they even offered to give up their own government and some of their territory. They wanted only to stay as citizens of the United States. However, Jackson replied, “The only relief for the Cherokees is by removal to the West.”

Like the Creeks earlier, the Cherokees were divided. Most followed Chief John Ross in resisting any move west. Another group followed the leadership of Major Ridge, his son John, and Elias Boudinot, the first editor of the Cherokee Phoenix. These men sincerely believed it was better for their people to move west.

In 1835, at New Echota, the Cherokee capital, the Ridge faction signed a treaty with the United States. By this treaty, they agreed to give up their lands and move west in return for $5 million. The majority of the nation, led by John Ross, opposed this treaty.

Some Cherokees left for Arkansas across the Mississippi. Those who rejected the New Echota treaty stayed in Georgia. Within a few years, they were driven from their farms by white settlers. They continued to present their case in Washington, with no success.

The Trail of Tears

In 1838, U.S. Army troops, under Gen. Winfield Scott, rounded up the last 15,000 Cherokees in Georgia. Almost all the Cherokees resisted, and a few did escape to the mountains of western North Carolina. Eventually, they were allowed to live there in
Before being forced to march to Oklahoma, Cherokees were rounded up and held in stockades. The trails for Cherokee removal included river as well as overland routes.

Locating the Main Ideas

1. Define: faction
2. Identify: John Marshall, John Ross, Treaty of New Echota, Trail of Tears
3. Describe what happened in north Georgia when gold was discovered.
4. Did the Supreme Court rule in favor of the state of Georgia or the Cherokees in the case of the missionaries and the oath?
5. What did Major and John Ridge and Elias Boudinot believe the Cherokees in Georgia should do?

peace. Today, their descendants live on the Qualla Reservation, just outside Cherokee, North Carolina.

Although General Scott ordered his men to treat the Cherokees humanely, many did not. One Georgia soldier wrote many years later, “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.”

The last group of Cherokees left on November 4, 1838. A young Cherokee leader reported to Chief John Ross the following:

We are now about to take our final leave and farewell to our native land, the country that the Great Spirit gave our fathers. It is with sorrow that we are forced by the authority of the white man to quit the scenes of our childhood. We bid farewell to the country which gave us birth, and to all that we hold dear.

The Cherokees were forced to march to the west on foot in the dead of winter. Exposed to bitter cold and disease, thousands of men, women, and children died. The Cherokees’ suffering was so great that the route they took became forever known as the “Trail of Tears.”

At last, total removal of Georgia’s Indians was complete. Well, almost complete. In December 1838, the Georgia legislature granted full citizenship to 22 well-to-do Cherokee families of mixed blood. But to continue living on a piece of their land, these families had to buy it back from the fortunate drawers who had won it in the lottery.
Reviewing the Main Ideas

1. Compare the way Native Americans were treated by the British government during the colonial period to the way they were treated later by the government of the state of Georgia.
2. Why did President Washington appoint a U.S. Indian Agent for Georgia? Why was his job difficult?
3. How did Andrew Jackson reward the Lower Creeks for their assistance during the Creek War?
4. During the War of 1812 how did the British involve the Upper Creeks? the Seminoles?
5. Why was Chief William McIntosh killed by his own people?
6. Why was the development of a syllabary important for the Cherokee people?
7. Describe the government of the Cherokee nation established in 1827.
8. List rights the Georgia General Assembly took away from the Cherokees in 1828.
9. Why did Georgia officials object to U.S. troops protecting Cherokee lands from white gold miners?
10. What happened to the Cherokees who did not leave Georgia under the treaty of 1835 agreed to by Major and John Ridge and Elias Boudinot?

Give It Some Extra Thought

1. Develop an Outline. Use the chapter subheads to develop an outline of Georgia’s conflict with the Indians under two major headings: I. The Creeks and II. The Cherokees.
2. Recognizing Differing Positions. At first the United States and Georgia took different positions toward the Cherokee government. What were they? How did the U.S. government’s position change after Jackson became president?

Sharpen Your Skills

1. Reading a Map. Using the map of the Creek Confederation: (a) list the names of the Native American tribes; (b) list the names of the states; (c) use cardinal and intermediate directions to describe the relative location of each tribe within the state or states it inhabited; and (d) count the number of cities within Georgia’s present-day boundaries.

2. Map Study. Use the map of the Cherokee nation, or the map key or legend, to answer the following questions.
   a. Into what present-day states did the Cherokee nation extend?
   b. What are the names of three Cherokee towns, three Creek towns, a white town or fort within the boundaries of the Cherokee nation, the Cherokee capital, and a white mission in each of the four states occupied by the Cherokees?

3. Understanding Other Viewpoints. To understand others’ points of view, write briefly how you would feel or what you would do if—
   a. you were Georgia’s governor and citizens were demanding that you get rid of Indians occupying the land they wanted.
   b. you were a tribal leader who knew that, no matter what, you and your people eventually would have to leave your traditional lands.
   c. you were an army officer who witnessed mistreatment and cruelty toward the Indians on “The Trail of Tears.” Some of it was even ordered by your commanding officer.

Going Further

1. Sequence of Events. Copy the time line at the opening of the unit. Use information in this chapter to add dates and events in Creek and Cherokee history to the time line.
2. Write a Headline. Write a newspaper headline announcing the discovery of gold in Georgia. Write a headline that might have appeared in the Cherokee Phoenix the same day.