

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT
The question of Indian Removal or What to do with the Red Man?
From David Chassanoff

Grade – 8

Length of class period – 51 min.

Inquiry – Why did people in the 1830s support Indian Removal?

Objectives - Students will analyze various materials pertaining to Indian removal in the 1830's and answer sourcing, context and close reading questions to develop a better understanding of opinions about Indian removal.

Materials - 3 edited primary source documents, a painting, a map and a timeline. See attachments and works cited page.

Activities - Students will begin by looking at the slides (powerpoint) of a painting and a map of various tribes removed. Next, students will pair up and examine the three primary source documents (which have been edited and revised for an 8th grade reading level) using the worksheet given. Lastly, the teacher will facilitate a discussion on the worksheet and other themes regarding Indian removal.

Discussion questions:

- Why did Jackson or Boudinot think Indian Removal was in the best interest of the Cherokee?
- Do you believe them? What parts sound sincere/ believable?
- Why might some people at that time have believed that Indian Removal was a reasonable policy?
- How have our attitudes changed/ stayed the same since the 1830s?
- Overall, how do you think Americans felt about Indian removal?

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson? This lesson, when combined with others dealing with the Trail of Tears, will be assessed on a Westward Expansion test. One of the questions on the test will have them analyzing a painting. Another has them identify the Trail of Tears on a map. There is also a multiple choice question on Jackson's policy towards Indians.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –

2.1 – Access and gather information from a variety of primary and secondary sources. 1.
(High School) Find relevant and accurate info. From a variety of sources to answer a
history/ social studies question.

Doc. 1 Andrew Jackson (Modified)

It gives me great pleasure to announce to Congress that the Government's benevolent policy of Indian removal has almost been achieved.

We have wept over the fate of the natives of this country, as one by one many tribes have disappeared from the earth. However, we must accept this the way we accept when an older generation dies and makes room for the younger.

We would not want to see this continent restored to the condition in which our forefathers found it. What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and occupied by a few thousand savages to our great Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms, decorated with art and industry, occupied by more than 12,000,000 happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization, and religion?

The United States will pay to send the natives to a land where they may live longer and possibly survive as a people.

Can it be cruel when this Government offers to purchase the Indian's land, give him new and extensive territory, pay the expense of his removal, and support him for the first year in his new home? How many thousands of our own people would gladly embrace the opportunity of moving West under such conditions!

The policy of the Government towards the red man is generous. The Indian is unwilling to follow the laws of the States and mingle with the population. To save him from utter annihilation, the Government kindly offers him a new home, and proposes to pay the whole expense of his removal and settlement.

Vocabulary

Benevolent - kind Annihilation - destruction

Source: Andrew Jackson, State of the Union speech. December 30, 1830.

Doc. 2 Elias Boudinot (Modified)

I see here nothing but certain death, and at the West a probable way to escape. I will not debate on the morality of what the United States is requesting of the Cherokee Nation, that is useless. But, the Cherokees do have a right to save themselves from destruction. That bears no question in my opinion; and such is the dictate of wisdom and sound reason.

To debate whether the United States of America is doing us an ethical service is useless since we are being abused at home. Many in our country have sought out our most intelligent leaders to answer the questions of removal for us. And many of them have set us on a destructive policy. To remain here at all events until we are forced away, as though that would add credit to our character, and disgrace and infamy to the oppressors is a mistaken policy.

Taking all views under consideration, I was convinced to sign the Treaty of 1835. I was fully satisfied that it was the best that could be done for the Cherokees, and that it was far preferable that they should go, however reluctantly, with the advantages of that Treaty, than that they should be driven away degraded and impoverished.

Degraded - reduced far below ordinary standards of civilized life and conduct Impoverished - represented by few species or individuals Oppressors – people who burden by abuse of power or authority
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Source: Elias Boudinot signed the Treaty of New Echota in his home in 1835. He was representing the minority of Cherokee who favored removal / relocation. This is a letter written on August 1, 1837 to David Green, explaining why he signed the treaty.

Doc. 3 Chief John Ross (Modified)

By the stipulations of this instrument (treaty), we are spoiled of our private possessions and property We are stripped of every attribute of freedom and eligibility for legal self-defense. Our belongings may be plundered before our eyes; violence may be committed on our persons; even our lives may be taken away, and there is none to regard our complaints. We are denationalized; we are disfranchised. We are deprived of membership in the human family! We have neither land nor home, nor resting place that can be called our own. And these actions are being done under the name of 'treaty'.

We are overwhelmed! Our hearts are sickened, our response is paralyzed, when we reflect on the condition in which we are placed, by the audacious practices of unprincipled men, who have managed to strategize every move in the favor of the United States government against our protests of foul dealings.

The instrument (treaty) in question is not the act of our Nation; we are not in agreement with the pacts made and it has not received the sanction of our people. The makers of it sustain no office nor appointment in our Nation, under the designation of Chiefs, Head men, or any other title, by which they hold, or could acquire. They do not have the authority to enter into a bargain for the sale of our rights, our possessions, and our common country. We now see the forced acceptance of this treaty, against our will as an act of injustice and oppression, perpetrated by the United States government. We are asking the heads of this government to have compassion and negate this unfair treaty as it was signed by those who have no agency.

Audacious – a recklessly bold maneuver

Agency - a person or thing through which power is exerted or an end is achieved

Source: Despite two favorable Supreme Court decisions, the Cherokee Indians faced forced evictions from their ancestral homelands. In 1835 two commissioners appointed by President Andrew Jackson convinced a small group of Cherokees to sign the Treaty of New Echota, which gave all remaining Cherokee lands to the U.S.. The Cherokees who signed the treaty clearly did not represent the wishes of the majority of the Cherokee people in whose interest they claimed to act. Jackson nevertheless submitted the treaty to the Senate,

which gave it its approval in March 1836. Months later, on September 28, 1836, the Cherokees led by John Ross went to Washington to argue their case before the House of Representatives. Ross brought with him a memorial (petition) signed by more than two thousand Cherokees.

Guiding Questions

Name: _____

Document #1 Jackson

1. Thinking back to the War of 1812, what do you already know about Jackson's feelings towards Indians? What types of things did you expect him to say in his speech? Did anything surprise you?
2. Why does Jackson think the U.S. was better in 1830 than back in Washington's time?
3. Why does Jackson think that the Cherokee will be better off in Indian Territory?
4. Why does Jackson think his policy is kind and generous?

Document #2 Elias Boudinot

1. Who is Elias Boudinot? What do you expect him to say about removal?
2. What was Boudinot observing of Cherokee life in Georgia?
3. Why does Boudinot believe he is doing the right thing? What happens if they stay?

Document #3 Chief John Ross

1. Who does Ross represent? Who is his audience?
2. How does Ross feel he and his tribe are being disrespected?
3. How can Ross make the argument that the treaty signed is invalid?

Letter from Chief John Ross, "To the Senate and House of Representatives"
(two versions)

<http://www.pbs.org/kcet/andrewjackson/edu/letterbychiefross.pdf>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4h3083t.html>

Jackson State of the Union. Dec. 6, 1830.

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=25>

Letter from Elias Boudinot to David Green

<http://www.paulridenour.com/elias.htm>

Map of Indian Removal

<http://www.google.com/imgres?q=indian+removal&hl=en&safe=active&biw=1024&bih=542&gbv=2&tbn=isch&tbnid=LehUSCXxaw02XM:&imgrefurl=http://www.onthisdeity.com/26th-may-1830-%25E2%2580%2593-the-indian-removal-act/&docid=YpYxas9clu4LTM&imgurl=http://www.onthisdeity.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/map-indian-removal-1.jpg&w=1024&h=826&ei=g7fnTrG9HKrX0QHWy5yaCg&zoom=1&iact=rc&dur=78&sig=110118586963764775914&page=1&tbnh=168&tbnw=206&start=0&ndsp=8&ved=1t:429,r:1,s:0&tx=81&ty=64>

Robert Lindneux painting 1942

<http://www.google.com/imgres?q=Robert+Lindneux+in+1942&hl=en&safe=active&gbv=2&biw=1024&bih=542&tbn=isch&tbnid=85GoFcAFgtUYVM:&imgrefurl=http://www.snowowl.com/histandrewjackson.html&docid=cJkYawWwb4YDxM&imgurl=http://www.snowowl.com/images/andrewjackson/image003.jpg&w=416&h=316&ei=XLjnTuKNBYL40gGp2Y36CQ&zoom=1&iact=hc&vpx=112&vpy=161&dur=1500&hovh=196&hovw=258&tx=155&ty=93&sig=110118586963764775914&page=1&tbnh=164&tbnw=206&start=0&ndsp=8&ved=1t:429,r:0,s:0>

Optional timeline:

<http://wsharing.com/WScherokeeTimeline.htm>