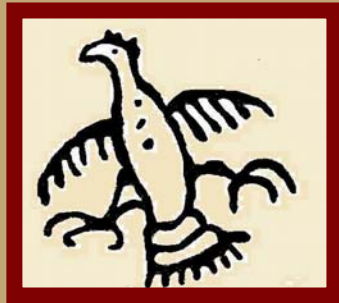


# U.S. Forest Service



# The Trail of Tears in Southern Illinois

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Heritage Program  
Archaeology and History  
Shawnee National Forest



# *Nunaihi-Duna-Dlo-lilu-i:*

## The Trail Where They Cried

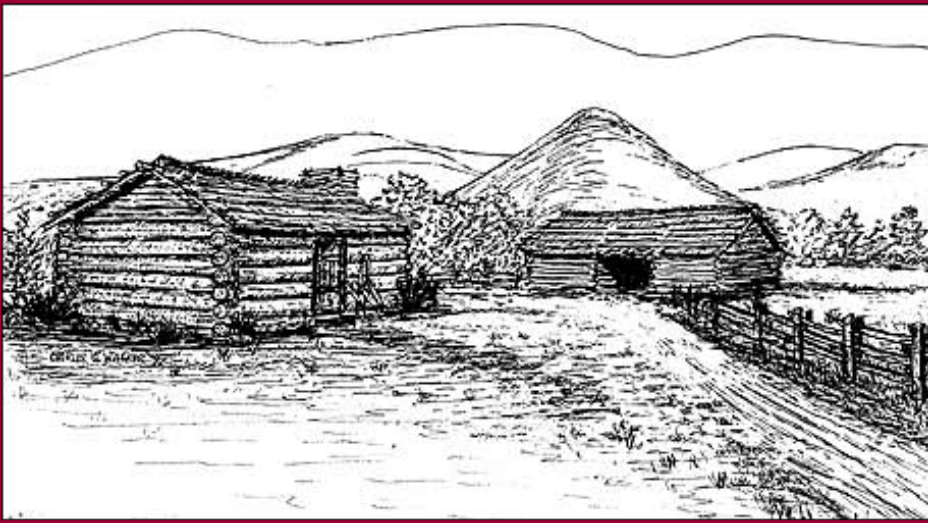
During the harsh winter of 1838-1839 over 15,000 Cherokee Indians passed through southern Illinois on their *Trail of Tears*. Many perished from cold and hunger on this long, painful journey from their home in the Smokey Mountains to new government-designated lands in eastern Oklahoma. It took almost three months during the winter to cross the 60 cold and rainy miles between the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers in southern Illinois.

This is the story of the Cherokee's journey from their beloved home in the mountains to their new government-assigned territory in Oklahoma.





# The Cherokee Before Removal: Cherokee Lifeways



National Park Service

This illustration shows the homestead of Lying Fish, located in a relatively remote valley in northern Georgia. In the early 1830s, Lying Fish's homestead included a 16 by 14 foot log house with a wooden chimney, another house of the same size, a corn crib, a stable, 19 acres of cleared bottom land, of which six were on the creek, 30 peach trees and 3 apple trees.

By the 1820s, many Cherokees had adopted much of the white settlers culture, including housing, new crops and farming techniques. Indeed, some Cherokee farms grew into small plantations, worked by African slaves.

# The Cherokee Before Removal: Cherokee Homes



Many Cherokee lived in homes like this prior to their removal from the hills of North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia.

# The Cherokee Before Removal: Cherokee Homes

...while other lived in houses like these.



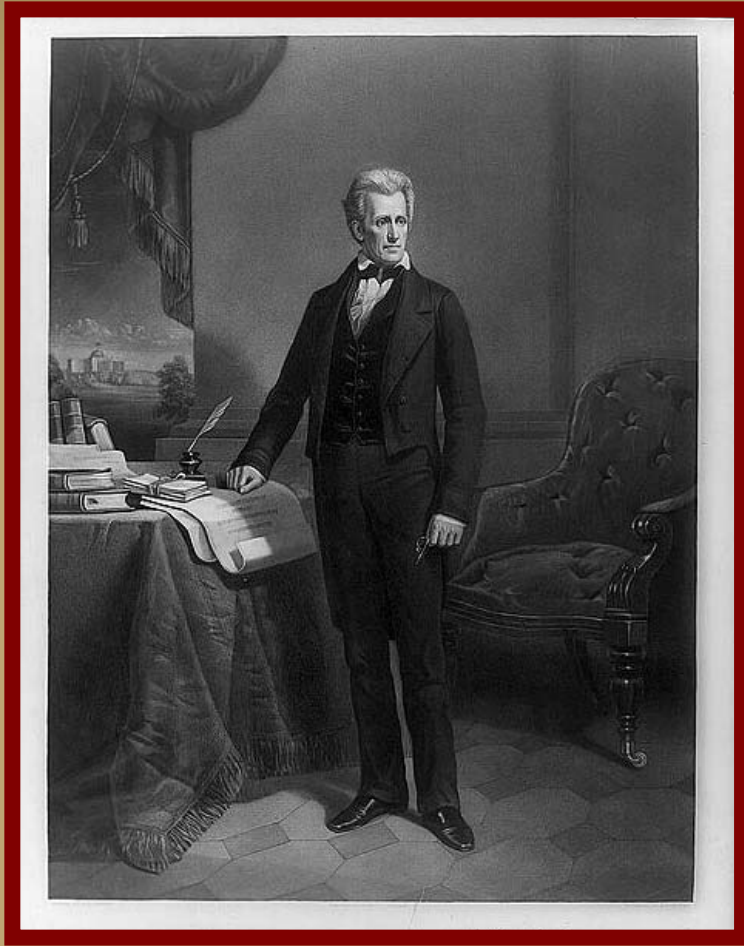
This house was part of a 223-acre plantation including a ferry, a store, and a toll road, and 30 slaves. The earliest part of this house included a log cabin of two rooms separated by an open breezeway. By the time of the relocation, Major Ridge had enlarged the cabin into a fine house, with eight rooms, 30 glass windows, four brick fireplaces, and paneling in the parlor.



National Park Service

The John Ross House was built by his grandfather in the 1790s. Ross's property also included a large farm, worked by slaves.

# Andrew Jackson and Indian Removal



The Louisiana Purchase added millions of acres of open land west of the Mississippi River to the United States. President Jefferson suggested that the eastern American Indian tribes might relocate to the new territory voluntarily, preferring to live in peace without interference from whites. A voluntary relocation plan was enacted into law in 1824 and some Indians chose to move west. The 1828 election of President Andrew Jackson, who made his name as an Indian fighter, marked a change in federal policies. As part of his plans for the United States, he was determined to remove the remaining tribes from the east and relocate them in the west.

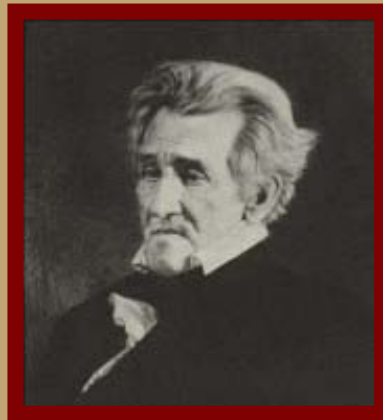


# Indian Removal Act of 1830

The Indian removal Act of 1830 led to forced removal of all remaining Indian groups east of the Mississippi River on what became known as **Nunaihi-Duna-Dlo-lilu-i** or "The Trail Where They Cried"

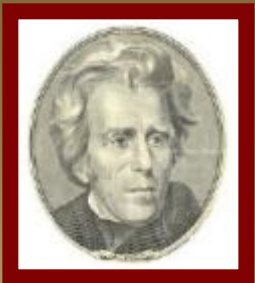
*"... no state could achieve proper culture, civilization and progress, as long as Indians remained within its boundaries.*

*I suggest for your consideration the propriety of setting apart an ample district west of the Mississippi... to be guaranteed to the Indian tribes as long as they shall occupy it."*



Andrew Jackson

President Andrew Jackson



## A Letter from President Jackson

*My Friends: ...For many years I have been acquainted with your people, and under all variety of circumstances in peace and war. You are now placed in the midst of a white population. Your peculiar customs, which regulated your intercourse with one another, have been abrogated by the great political community among which you live; and you are now subject to the same laws which govern the other citizens of Georgia and Alabama.*

*I have no motive, my friends, to deceive you. I am sincerely desirous to promote your welfare. Listen to me, therefore, while I tell you that you cannot remain where you now are. Circumstances that cannot be controlled, and which are beyond the reach of human laws, render it impossible that you can flourish in the midst of a civilized community. You have but one remedy within your reach. And that is, to remove to the West and join your countrymen, who are already established there. And the sooner you do this the sooner you will commence your career of improvement and prosperity.*

Andrew Jackson, 1835



# A Speech from Major Ridge on the Treaty of New Echota

*I am one of the native sons of these wild woods. I have hunted the deer and turkey here, more than fifty years. I have fought your battles, have defended your truth and honesty, and fair trading. The Georgians have shown a grasping spirit lately; they have extended their laws, to which we are unaccustomed, which harass our braves and make the children suffer and cry. I know the Indians have an older title than theirs. We obtained the land from the living God above. They got their title from the British. Yet they are strong and we are weak. We are few, they are many. We cannot remain here in safety and comfort. I know we love the graves of our fathers. We can never forget these homes, but an unbending, iron necessity tells us we must leave them. I would willingly die to preserve them, but any forcible effort to keep them will cost us our lands, our lives and the lives of our children. There is but one path of safety, one road to future existence as a Nation. That path is open before you. Make a treaty of cession. Give up these lands and go over beyond the great Father of Waters.*

Major Ridge,  
Treaty Party, 1835

# The Treaty of New Echota

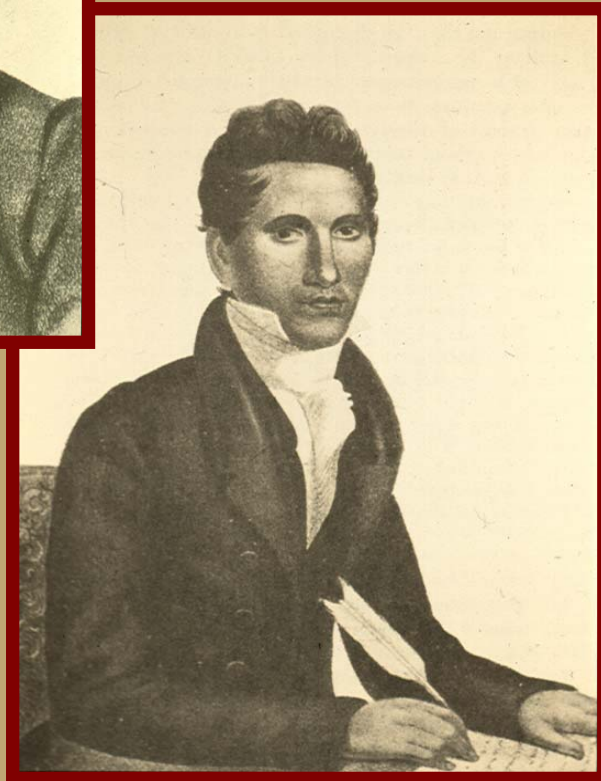
Signed December 29, 1835

Ratified May, 1836

- Sold all Cherokee lands in the East for only 5 million dollars

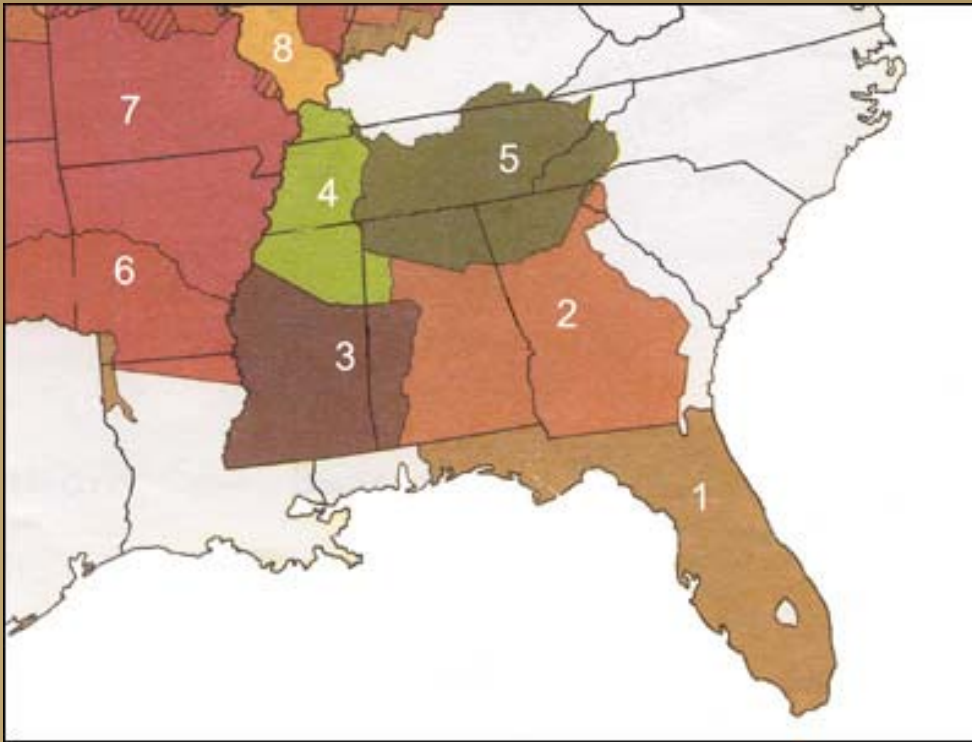


- Gave Cherokees two years to vacate their land.



- Was signed by 20 members of the Treaty Party such as Major Ridge and his son John Ridge, but not by any officials of the Cherokee Nation.

# American Indian Removal

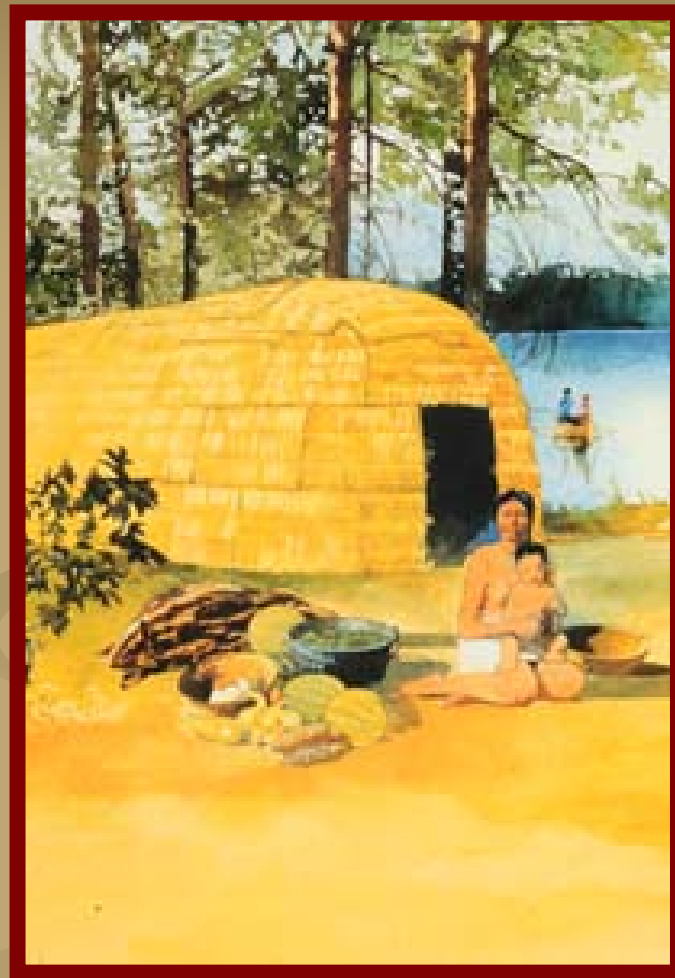


National Park Service

The Cherokee were not the only tribe to be removed by force. Between 1830 and 1850, approximately 100,000 American Indians living east of the Mississippi River, were forcibly relocated westward to Indian Territory in what is now Oklahoma. Among the relocated tribes were the Seminole (1), Creek (2), Choctaw (3), Chickasaw (4) and Cherokee (5), as well as the Quapaw (6), Osage (7), and the Illini Confederation (8).

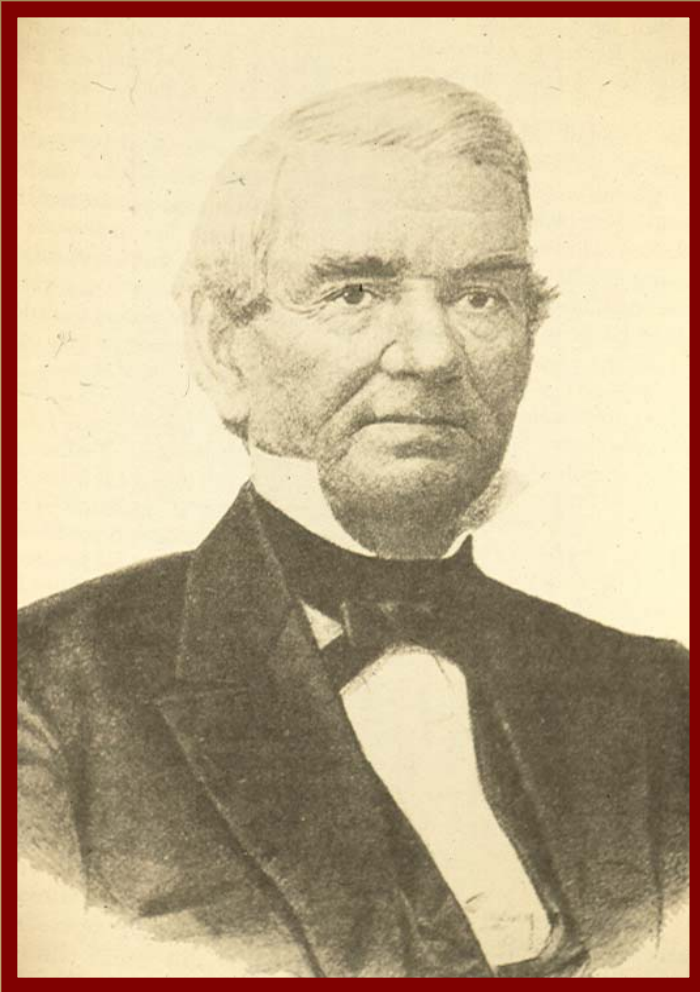
# One by one ....

"One by one Indian peoples were removed to the West. The Delaware, the Ottawa, Shawnee, Pawnee and Potawatomi, the Sauk and Fox, Miami and Kickapoo, the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole. The Cherokee were among the last to go. Some reluctantly agreed to move. Others were driven from their homes at bayonet point..."



Close-up of Illinois woman,  
Illinois State Museum

# Our hearts are sickened...



We are overwhelmed! Our hearts are sickened, our utterance is paralyzed, when we reflect on the condition in which we are placed, by the audacious practices of unprincipled men, who have managed their stratagems with so much dexterity as to impose on the Government of the United States, in the face of our earnest, solemn, and reiterated protestations.

Chief John Ross,  
Red Clay Council Ground,  
Cherokee Nation, September 28, 1836

# *Cherokees!*

*...every Cherokee man, woman and child . . . must be in motion*

On May 10, 1838, General Scott issued the following proclamation:

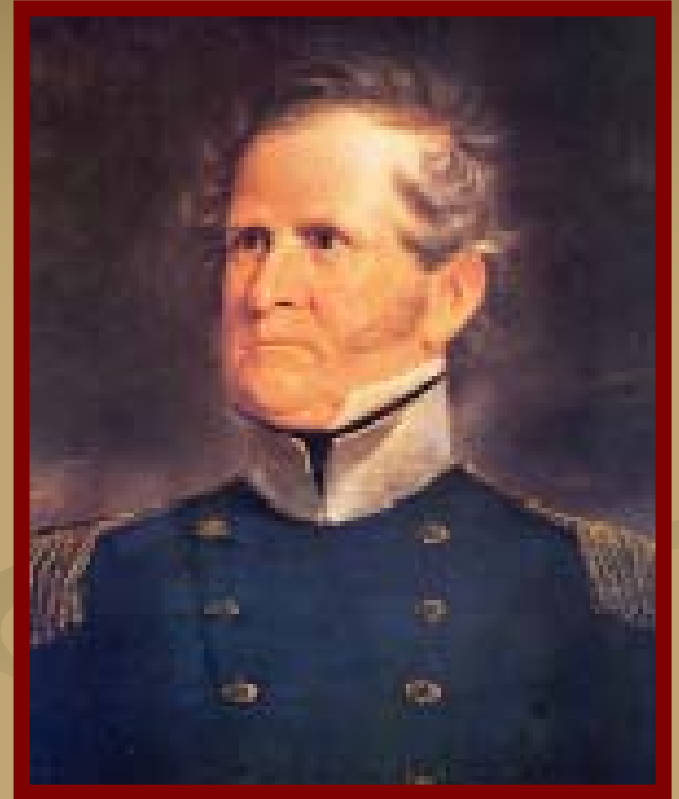
*Cherokees! The President of the United States has sent me, with a powerful army, to cause you, in obedience to the Treaty of 1835, to join that part of your people who are already established in prosperity, on the other side of the Mississippi. . . . The full moon of May is already on the wane, and before another shall have passed away, every Cherokee man, woman and child . . . must be in motion to join their brethren in the far West.*



# Forced Removal of the Cherokee

When it became obvious that the majority of the Cherokee Indians, numbering some 17,000, did not intend to emigrate on their own, General Winfield Scott led an army of 7,000 soldiers into the Cherokee territory.

*“The commanding officer of every fort...will first cause to be surrounded and brought in as many Indians, the nearest to his fort or station, as he may think he can secure at once, & repeat the operation until he shall have made as many prisoners as he is able to subsist and send off, under a proper escort, to the most convenient of the emigrating depots, the Cherokee Agency, Ross Landing, and Gunter’s Landing...”*



Winfield Scott

Cherokee Agency

May 24, 1838

*...it is the work of war in time of peace.*

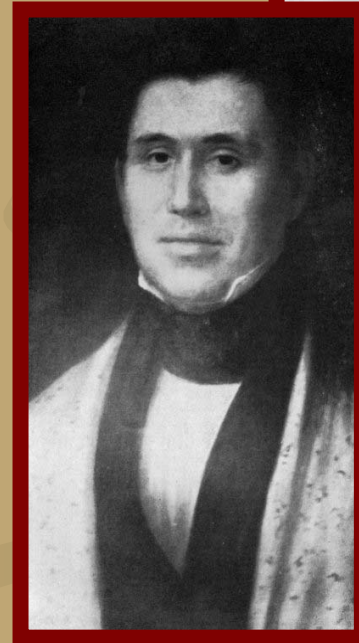
*Without warning "...the Cherokee...(were) dragged from their houses and encamped at the forts and military places, all over the nation. Multitudes were allowed no time to take anything with them except the clothes they had on. Females...are driven on foot before the bayonets of brutal men...it is the work of war in time of peace."*

Evan Jones,  
Baptist Minister  
June 1838

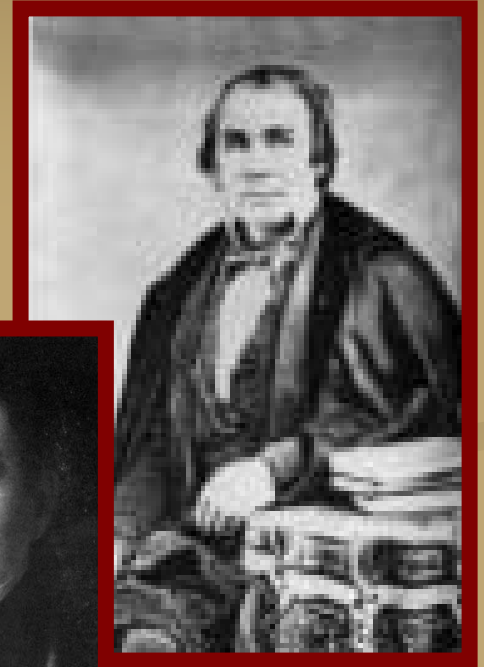


"The Cherokees are nearly all prisoners . . . our brother Bushyhead and his family, Rev. Stephen Foreman . . . and several other men of character and respectability, with their families, are here prisoners . . ."

Evan Jones  
June 16, 1838



Rev. Jesse Bushyhead



Rev. Stephen Foreman

# 28 May 1838.—From the Officer in Charge, Fort Hetzel, Georgia to HQ:

..I commenced on the 26<sup>th</sup> securing the Indians. I have made prisoners of 425 or perhaps 450. I think by the time I get in the outstanding members of the families I have broken up I will have as many as I can manage...They run in every instance where they have the best opportunity ...It will take me a few days to collect their little plunder as we captured them in the mountains I could not bring off their property at the same time.

Captain William Derrick



Fort Hetzel marker, Gilmer County, GA  
National Park Service/Georgia Department of Natural  
Resources, Historic Preservation Division

*... all was in readiness. . .*

*At noon all was in readiness for moving. The teams were stretched out in a line along a road through a heavy forest, groups of persons formed about each wagon...At this very moment a low sound of distant thunder fell on my ear--in almost an exact western direction a dark spiral cloud was rising above the horizon and sent out a murmur I almost thought a voice of divine indignation for the wrong of my poor and unhappy countrymen...the thunder rolled away and seemed hushed in the distance.*

William Shorey Coodey

1838



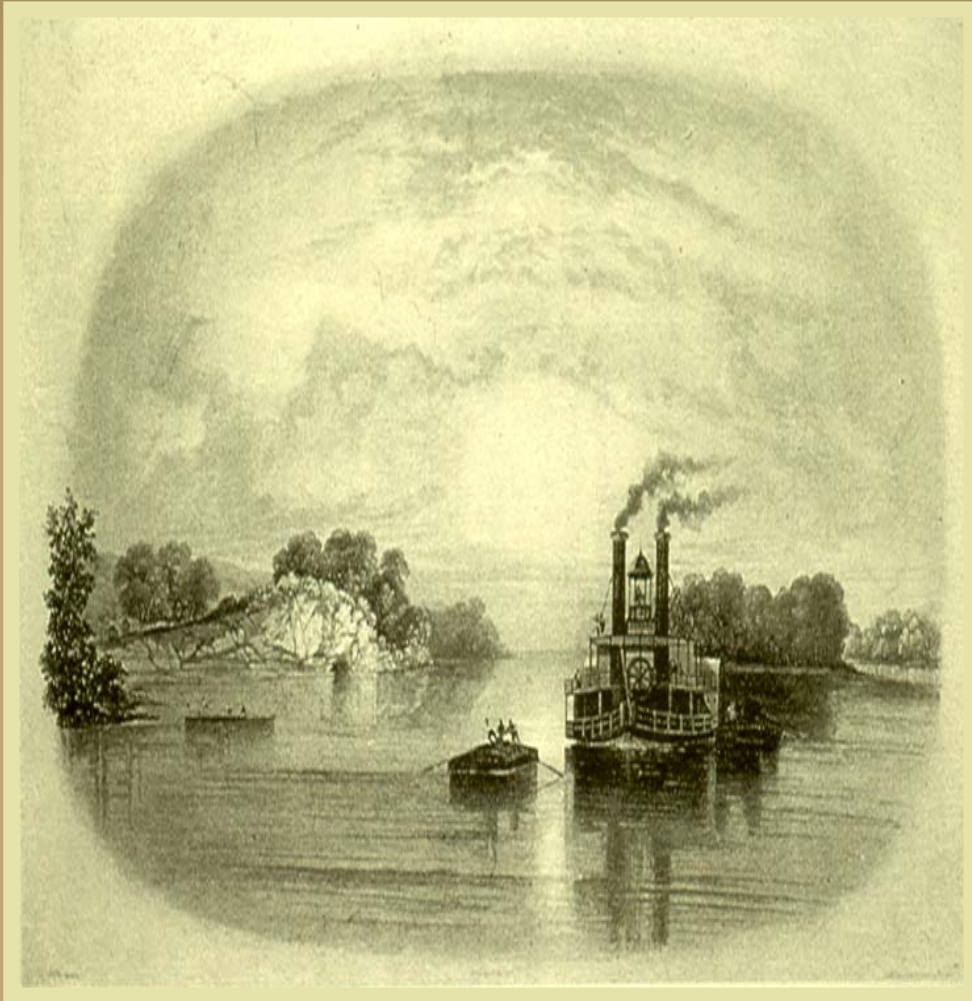


# CHEROKEE REMOVAL ROUTES



Trail of Tears National Historic Trail: .....Land Route    ———Water Route    ———Other Major Routes

# Travel by steamboat



Some Cherokees were wealthy enough to pay passage on a steamboat on the water route for the trip west to their new home, by way of the Tennessee, Ohio and Arkansas Rivers. This was the route recommended by The Cannon's party physician Dr. G.S. Townsend because the Cherokee would only have to travel 200 miles overland, rather than the 800 miles completed by the Cannon group. This recommendation fell on deaf ears. In addition, for a variety of reasons, many Cherokee resisted traveling by water.

# Traveling West on the Trail of Tears

Although some Cherokees were able to afford the trip west by steamboat, the great majority made the long, bitter walk to their new western lands on foot. They were divided up into 12 detachments of about 1,000 each. The major route traveled led from Rattlesnake Springs near present-day Chattanooga, through Nashville and Clarksville, on through Hopkinsville, and entered Illinois after crossing the Ohio River at Golconda, IL.





# ...there was a stillness...

The caravan was ready to move out. The wagons were lined up. The mood was somber. One who was there reported that "there was a silence and stillness of the voice that betrayed the sadness of the heart." Behind them the makeshift camp where some had spent three months of a Tennessee summer was already ablaze. There was no going back.

A white-haired old man, Chief Going Snake, led the way on his pony, followed by a group of young men on horseback. Just as the wagons moved off along the narrow roadway, they heard a sound. Although the day was bright, there was a black thundercloud in the west. The thunder died away and the wagons continued their long journey westward toward the setting sun. Many who heard the thunder thought it was an omen of more trouble to come.



# The great majority of Cherokee made the long, bitter walk on foot

*On Tuesday evening we fell in with detachment of the poor Cherokee Indians... 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.*

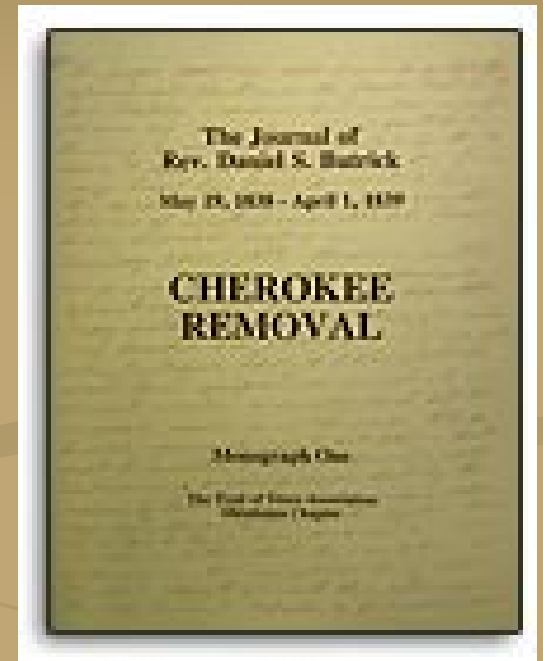
New York Observer,  
January 26, 1839



# The Journal of Daniel Butrick

*O what a year this has been! O what a sweeping wind has gone over, and carried its thousands to the grave; while thousands have been tortured and scarcely survive, and the whole nation, comparatively thrown out of house and home during this dreary winter. And why? ...For what crime then was this whole nation doomed to perpetual death?*

Daniel Butrick,  
January 1, 1839



# Trail of Tears Group Leaders

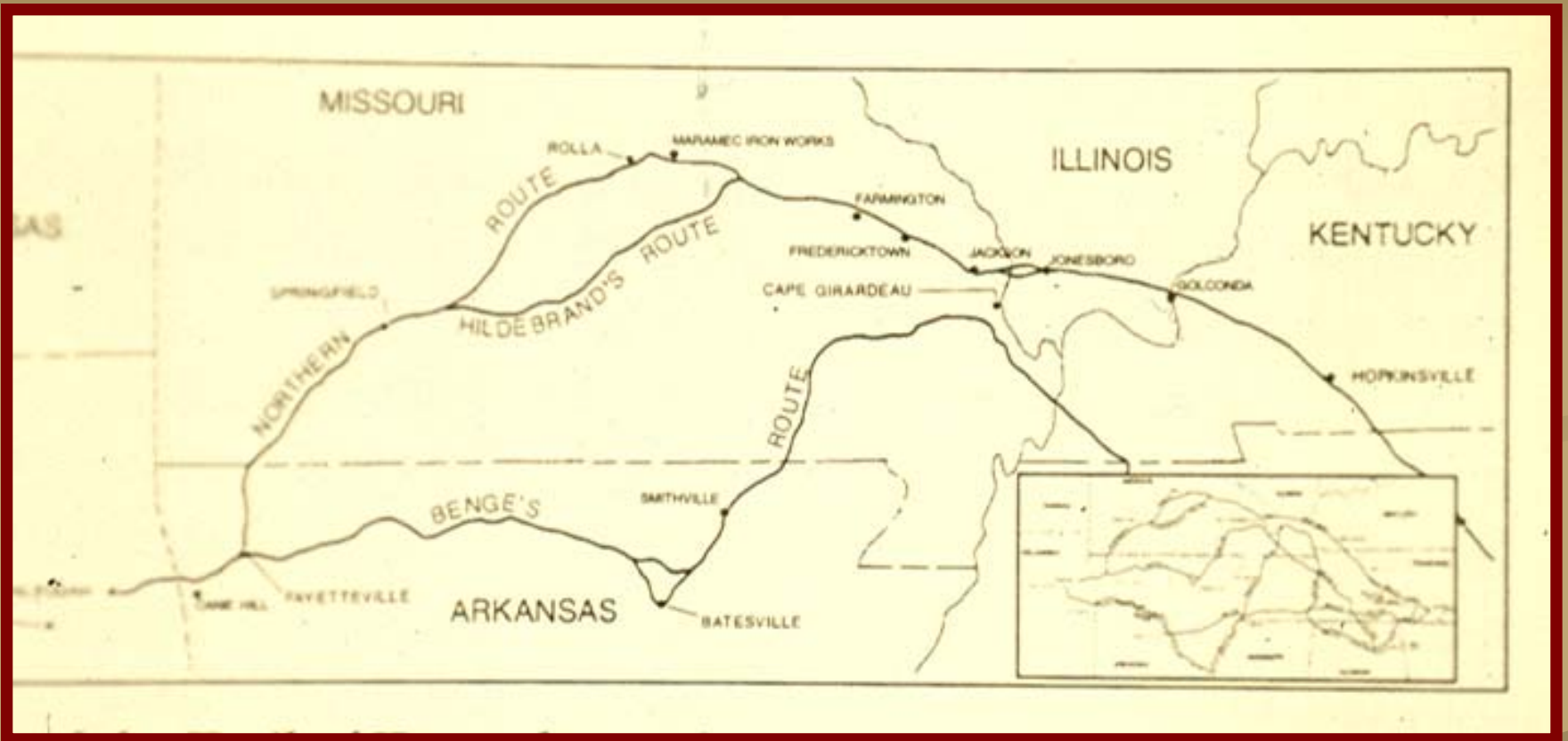
## Ross Directed Emigration Detachments

Detachment	Departure	Number	Arrival	Number
Hair Conrad	8/23/1838	729	1/17/1839	654
Elijah Hicks	9/1/1838	858	1/4/1839	744
Jesse Bushyhead	9/3/1838	950	2/27/1839	898
Situwakee	9/7/1838	1,250	2/2/1839	1,033
George Hicks	9/7/1838	1,118	3/14/1838	1,039
James Brown	9/10/1838	850	3/5/1839	717
Choowalooka	9/14/1838	1,150	3/?/1839	970
Richard Taylor	9/20/1838	1,029	3/24/1839	942
Moses Daniel	9/20/1838	1,035	3/2/1839	924
Old Field	9/24/1838	983	2/23/1839	921
John Benge	9/28/1838	1,200	1/17/1839	1,132
Peter Hildebrand	10/23/1838	1,766	3/24/1839	1,311
John Drew	12/5/1838	231	3/18/1839	219

(King and Evans 1978: 186-187; Thornton 1991:81)

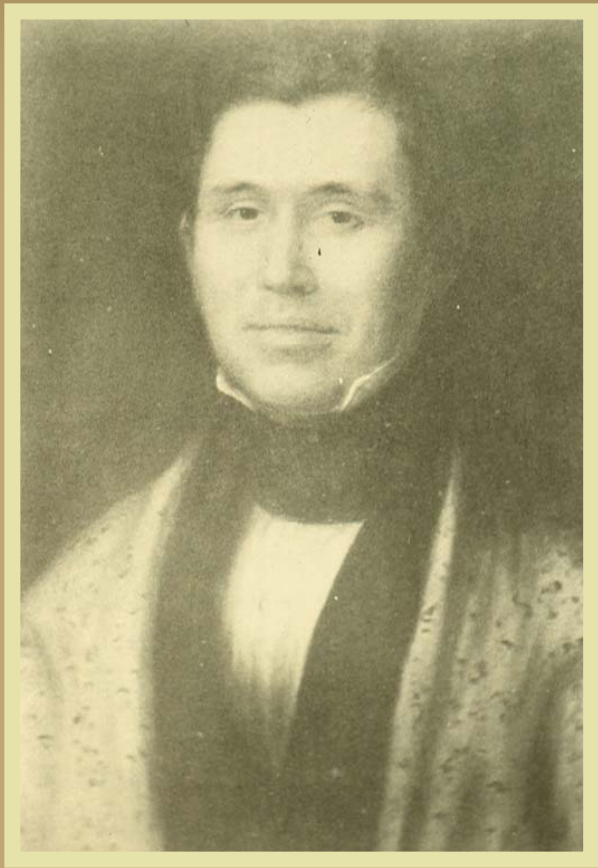


# The Land Routes



These are the land routes of the forced removal extending from east Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama across southern Illinois to their government assigned lands in Oklahoma.

“The detachment which was placed  
under my charge....



*...left the old nation for the west,  
on the fifth of October last, and  
we landed at the place of our  
destination on the twenty-third  
of February. We were detained  
one month on the road at the  
Mississippi, by the ice. There  
were eighty-two deaths in the  
detachment while on the road.*

Rev. Jesse Bushyhead,  
March 19, 1839, Park Hills,  
Cherokee Nation

# The winter of 1838 was bitter cold mixed with rain and snow in southern Illinois.

The days and weeks spent in crossing southern Illinois were the most brutal for the Cherokee Nation. Many landowners would not allow the Cherokee to camp on their land or cut firewood for warmth and hot food. Only adding to the Cherokee's misery, the Mississippi was frozen solid far out from the river bank and in the center were blocks of ice as big as houses. As the water flowed, the huge ice blocks crashed down the current, rear on edge and crash down with mighty shocks. This fearful noise went on day and night for a month as the Cherokee watched the mighty Mississippi in awed wonder as they waited to cross into Missouri.



*Nunaihi-Duna-Dlo-lilu-i:*

“The Trail Where They Cried”

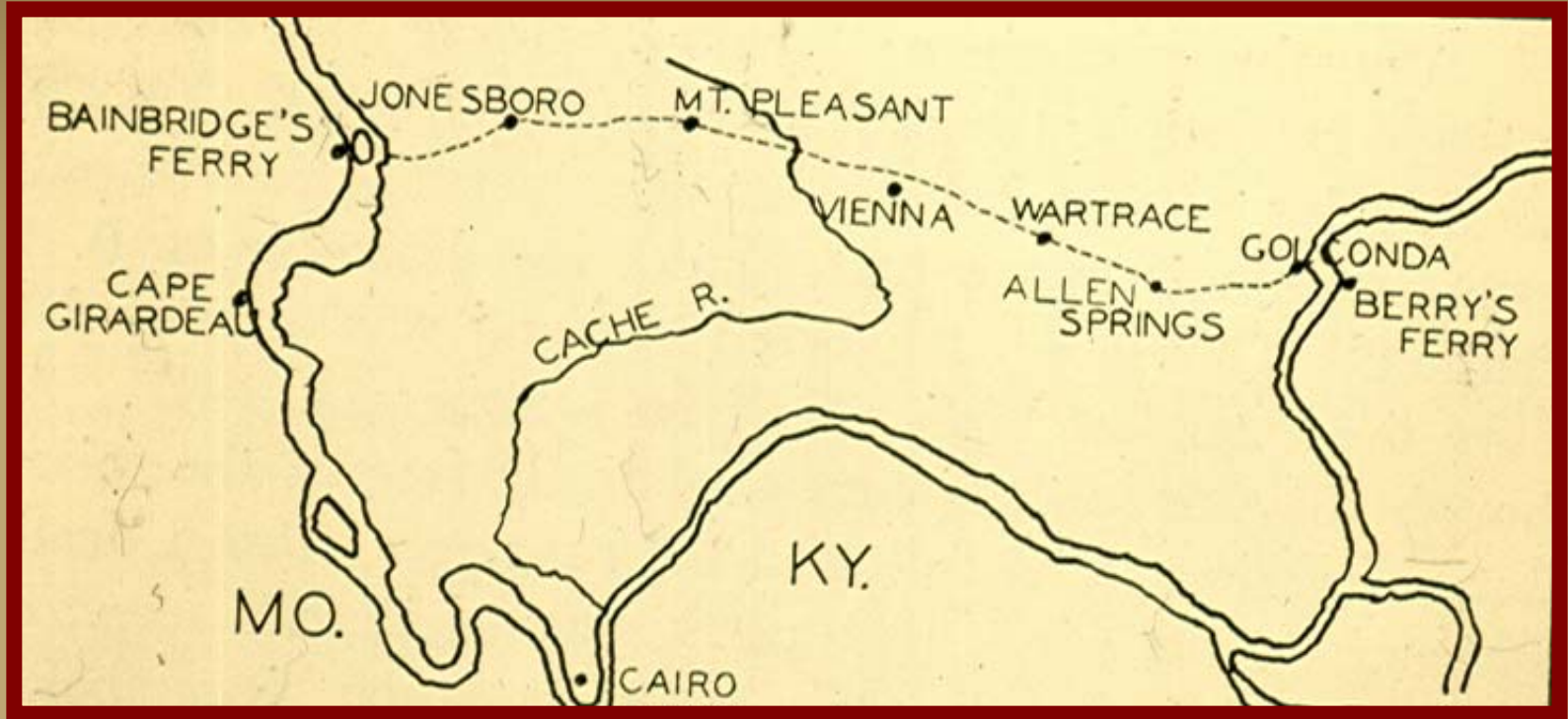


Robert Lindneaux, 1942  
The Granger Collection, NY

**The Cherokee Trail of Tears**



# The Cherokee Trail of Tears In Southern Illinois



The land routes across southern Illinois, from the Ohio River to the Mississippi.

Thompson 1951.

The miles the Cherokee traveled in Illinois were few compared to what lay behind them, being only 60 miles, but here they suffered the most deaths. During the winter of 1838 and 1839, where it had only taken Cannon's group eight days to cross the southern tip of the state, five detachments took 11 week (Gilbert 1996).

# An Excerpt from Lt. B.B. Cannon's Journal

“Nov. 6th, 1837.

Marched at 7 o'clock A.M., arrived at Berry's ferry (Golconda opposite on the Ohio river) 9 o'clock A.M., every thing in readiness to commence ferrying, but prevented on account of the extreme high winds and consequent roughness of the river, which continued the remainder of the day, encamped in the evening, Issued corn & fodder, 5 ½ miles to day.”

Lt. B.B. Canon led approximately 360 Cherokee from the Cherokee Agency near Charleston on October 14, 1837. Cannon's journey was an important one because the majority of Cherokee traveling in 1838 followed his northern overland route.

# The Ohio River at Golconda, IL



This is where the Cherokee crossed into southern Illinois from Kentucky on their Trail of Tears.

# The Buel House on the western bank of the Ohio River, in Golconda, IL



The Buel House, along with much of Golconda, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976, as part of the Golconda Historic District.

The Buel House, according to local tradition, was a significant site on the Cherokee Trail of Tears. The family of tanner Alexander Buel (?-1894) was said to have fed pumpkin to hungry Cherokee Indians being driven west by the federal government in 1838. There are indications that over the years Cherokee stopped at Golconda to trade while journeying to visit their former homes in Georgia.

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

# The Old Golconda Road



Sometimes, place names remain fixed on the landscape. In this case, the Old golconda Road has been in existance since at least the 1798 when Major James v. Lusk founded Golconda on the Ohio River.

# The Old Golconda Road



A view of the Old Golconda Road, looking back toward Golconda and Ohio River. In order to attract travelers, Major Lusk cut a new road through the wilderness from the Ohio River to another ferry on the Mississippi River.

# The Cherokee Lighthorse

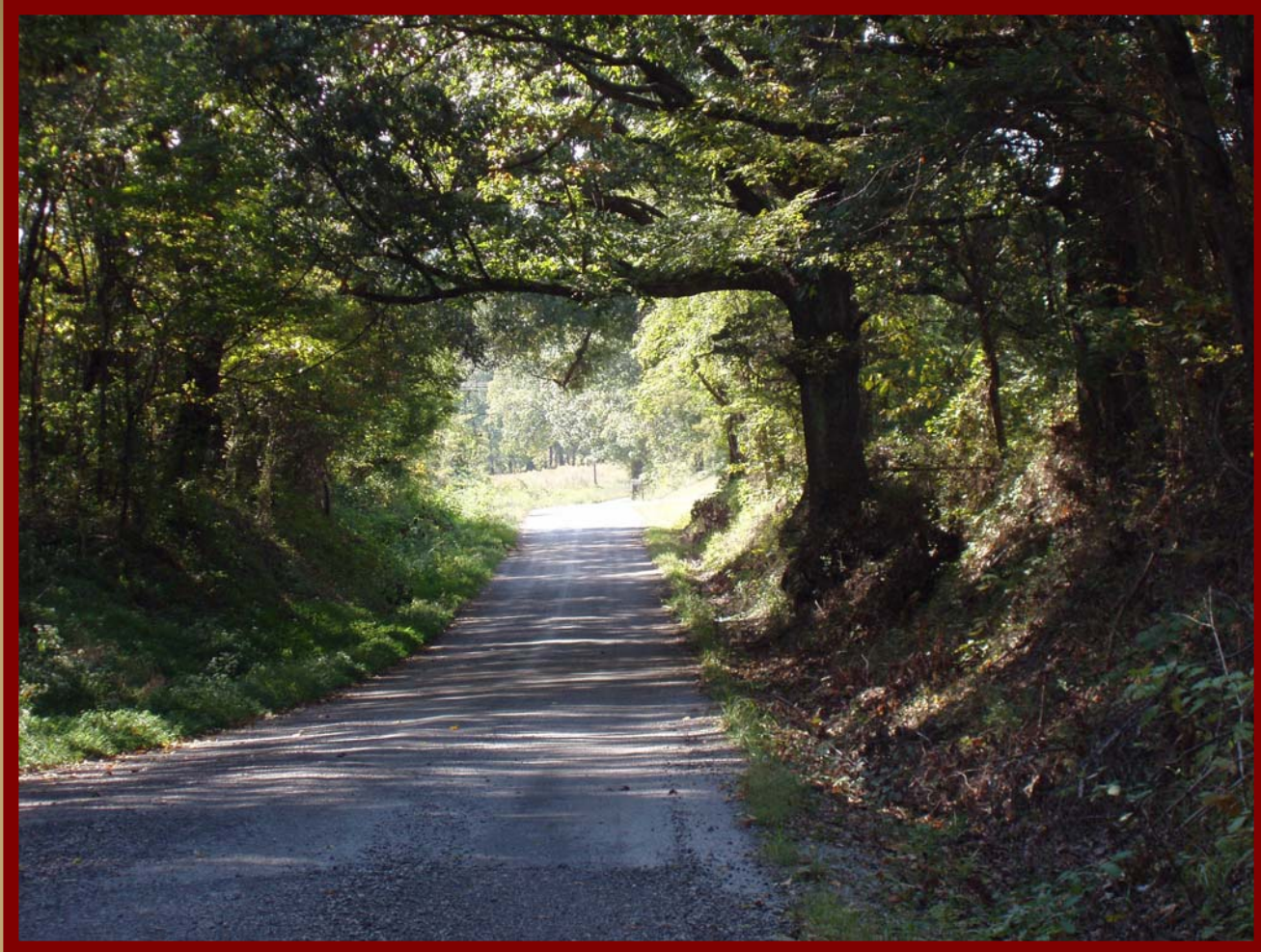
The Cherokee Lighthorse, reportedly in existence as early as 1799, but was officially organized in 1808 were responsible for maintaining order on the Trail of Tears. According to Daniel Butrick, John Ross depended upon the mounted police force to maintain discipline on the western journey. Shortly after arriving in Illinois

“Two or three Cherokee came in last night drunk—cursing in an awful manner, one of them returned raging like the infernal spirit, but was soon seized by the Cherokee lighthorse & bound.”



Chickasaw Lighthorse

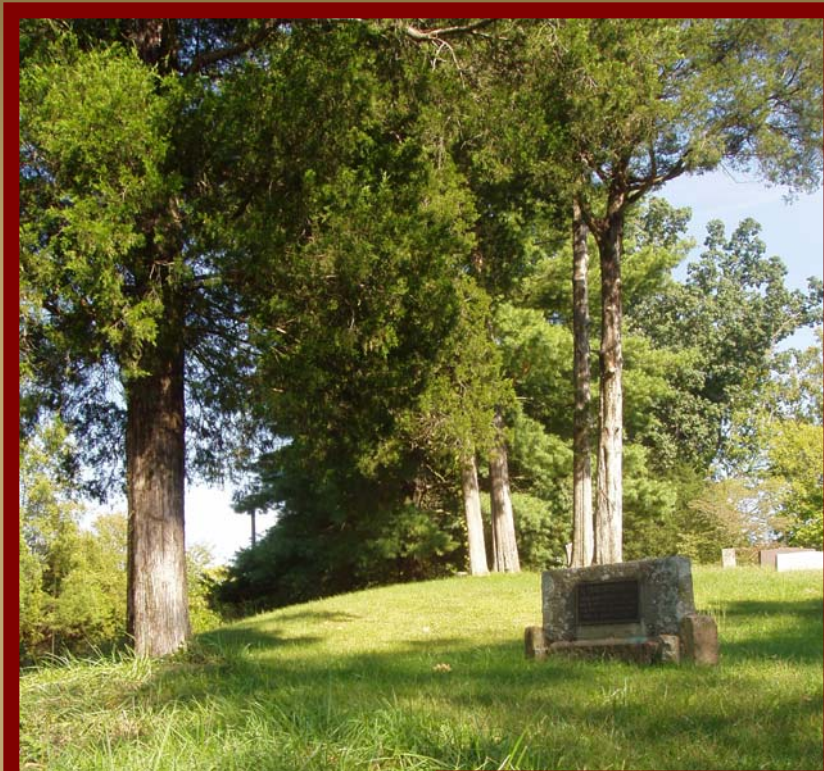
# The Old Golconda Road



The Trail of Tears in Pope County, IL



# The Old Brownsfield Cemetery



This is the Trail of Tears Memorial Marker at the Old Brownsfield Cemetery, in Pope County, IL. According to local tradition, the Cherokee found a warmer welcome in the Brownsfield community than elsewhere and unfortunately, many Cherokee also found their final resting place here as well.



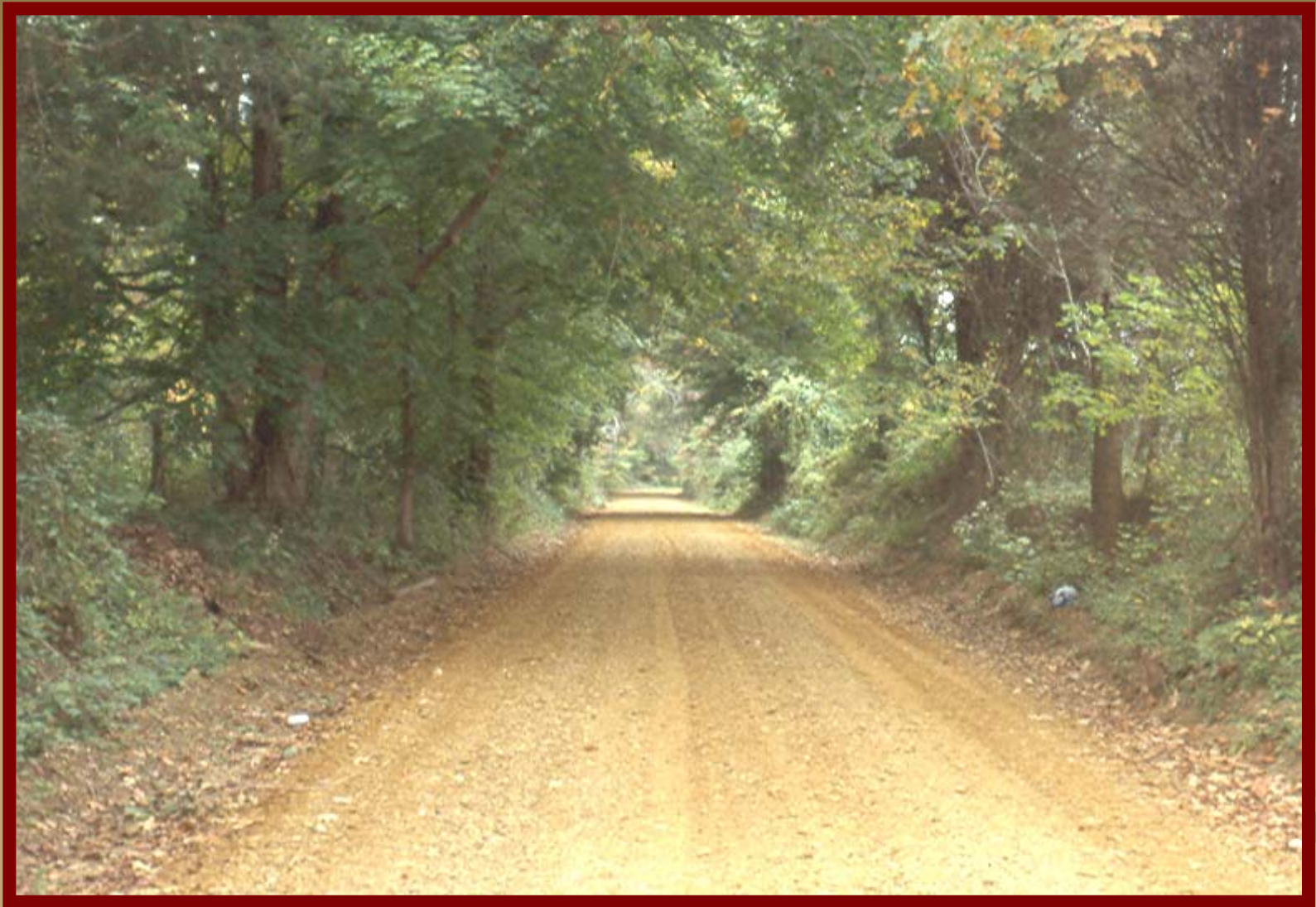
# The Legend of the Cherokee Rose



Understandably, many Cherokee women were grief stricken on the Trail of Tears. The tribal elders gathered together and prayed to the Great One, who answered, “I have seen the sorrow of the women and I can help them keep their strength for the children. Tell the women to look back to where their tears have fallen to the ground.”

In the morning, the women watched as each tear they shed had spring up as a rose. By evening they saw blooms as far as the eye could see, marking the path they had traveled along the Trail of Tears.

# The Old Golconda Road



The Trail of Tears in Pope County

# The Grantsburg Swamp



The Grantsburg Swamp is located west of Golconda in present-day Pope and Johnson Counties. Traveling around the wet swamp during the winter only added to the Cherokee's many hardships they had already faced after they left their eastern homelands.

# A Wilderness

In the area of the meandering Cache River, Rev. Butrick wrote: “Tuesday, Jan. 1, 1839. Thus we enter a new year in the wilderness, about 25 miles from the Mississippi. I say



wilderness. Because, though many people are settled around us, yet we, as Indians, have a little spot of woodland assigned us, in which we must reside, . . . as though all the region were a wilderness.”

# The Campground Church in Union County, IL



The Campground Church was used as campground by many travelers on the road from Golconda on the Ohio River and the ferries on the Mississippi River, including the Cherokee. Oral traditions suggest that many Cherokee were also buried here.

The Campground Church in Union county, IL has been designated a Certified Trail of Tears Site.

# Priscilla's Hollyhocks

While traveling with the Cherokee on the Trail of Tears, a young African American girl held in slavery by the Cherokee was purchased by a wealthy benefactor Barzilla Silkwood of Franklin County, IL. According to census records, Priscilla was between 9 and 18 at the time of her journey through southern Illinois. She had brought pink hollyhocks from her home in the southeast and planted them in southern Illinois where they can still be seen around her old home in Mulkeytown.



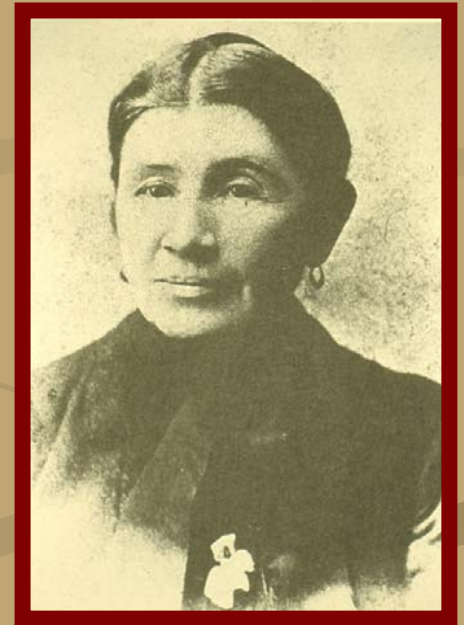
# Union County



Anna and Winstead Davies

In Union County, many of the Cherokee found kindness and hospitality where before they had been taken advantage of and subjected to rude and harsh language and treatment. Anna and Winstead Davie offered hospitality to Rev. Jesse Bushyhead and his family as Mrs. Bushyhead was expecting a child.

Eliza Missouri Bushyhead was born soon after in southeast Missouri on Jan 3, 1839 after her mother had crossed the Mississippi River.

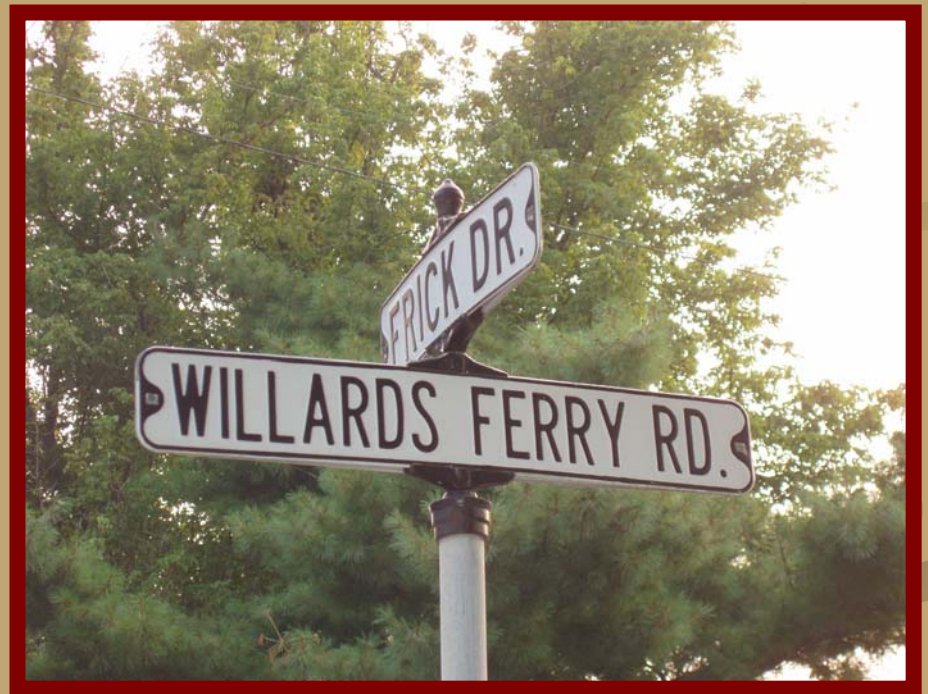


Eliza Missouri Bushyhead



# Willard's Ferry Road

Willard's Ferry Road led travelers west of Jonesboro to Willard's Landing on the Mississippi River. Elijah Willard developed an older Ferry, Green's Old Ferry into a major Mississippi River port for Union County in 1837. He apparently knew the Cherokee would be passing through Union County on their westward journey and was eager to take advantage of the opportunity to contract with the government to ferry the Indians across the river. Willard constructed a turnpike across the often overflowed Mississippi River floodplain, that was improved by the county for years thereafter.



This sign is located on Highway 146 west of the center of Jonesboro

# Hamburg Hill, Union County, IL



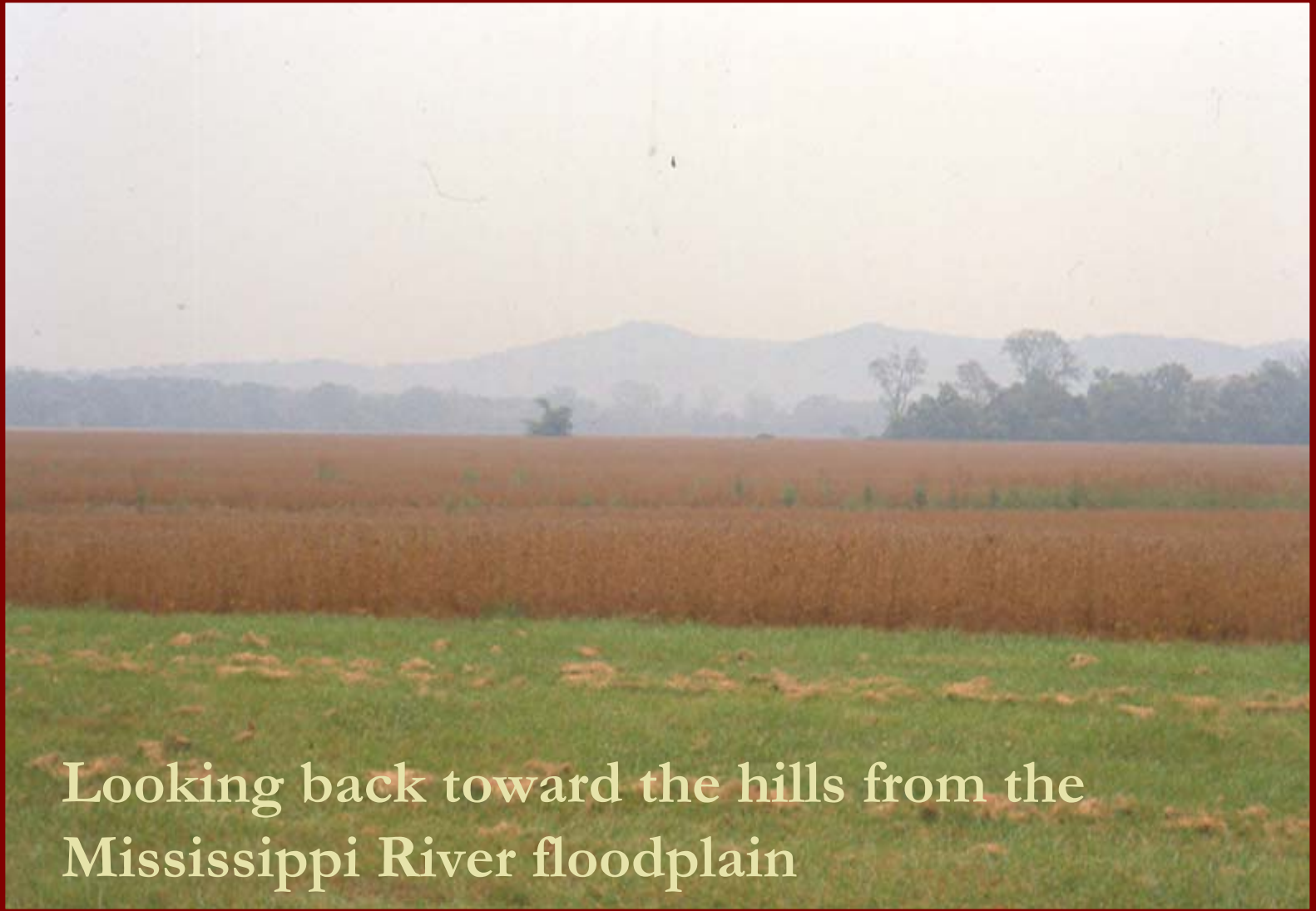
A deep road-cut on Hamburg Hill west of Jonesboro in Union County. This is a remnant of the road actually traveled by the Cherokee on the Trail of Tears.

# Hamburg Hill, Union County, IL



The road down to the Mississippi River and the awaiting ferries.

# The Mississippi River Floodplain



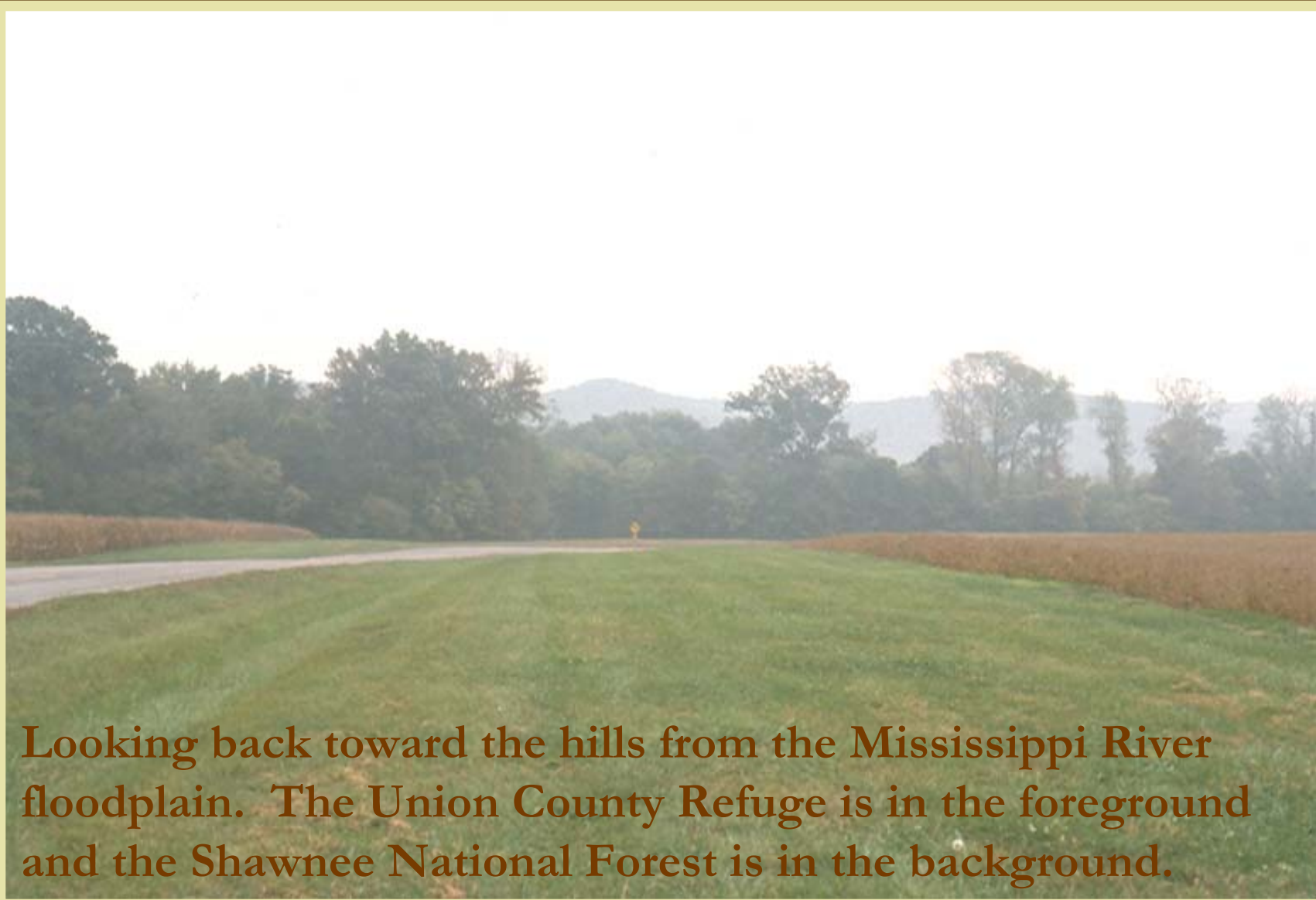
Looking back toward the hills from the  
Mississippi River floodplain

# From the banks of the Mississippi...

*"We are told the detachment will probably be able to proceed on the journey tomorrow. It will then have been three weeks since our arrival on the other (west) bank of the river....During this time five individuals have died, viz. one old Cherokee woman, one black man, and three Cherokee children, making in all since we crossed the Tennessee River twenty six deaths."*

~Reverend Daniel S. Buttrick~





**Looking back toward the hills from the Mississippi River floodplain. The Union County Refuge is in the foreground and the Shawnee National Forest is in the background.**

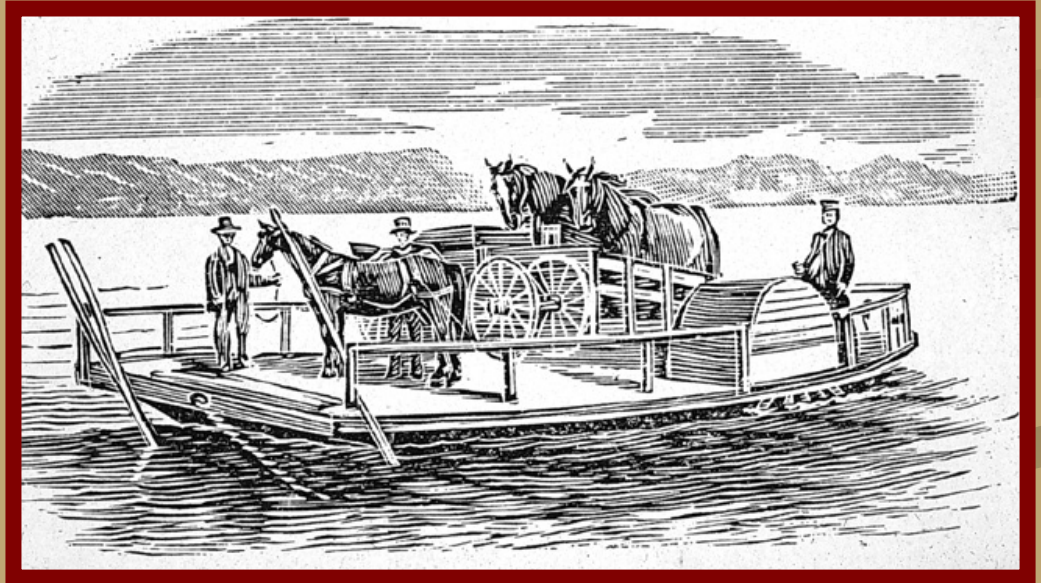
# Old Mississippi River Ferry Landing



This is all that remains of one of the Mississippi River ferries used by the Cherokee in 1838-1839. This is the site of Willard's Ferry, which was in one of many ferries in operation during the Trail of Tears.

# Union County Ferries

The western end of the Golconda to Cape Girardeau Trace that was used on the Trail of tears terminated at the Mississippi river in Union County, Illinois. There the Cherokee boarded ferries for transportation across the river to Missouri. They used three ferries to cross the river, Green's Upper and Lower Ferries, and Littletons Old Ferry also known as Wilbourn's Ferry was located at Hamburg Landing. All were either flatboat current powered or perhaps horse powered. Flatboat ferries were attached to a rope strung across the river—the boat was rowed or pulled across the river using a windlass. Horse-powered ferries consisted of flat-bottomed scows with paddle wheels attached to treadmills powered by horses or mules.





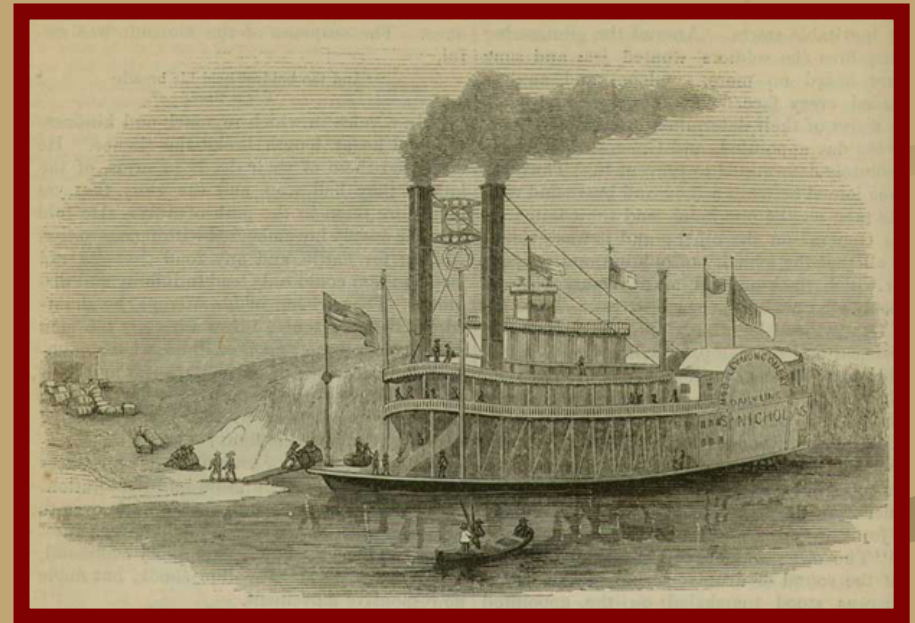
# At this place....

“We fixed our tent on the bank of the Great River, one of the wonders of creation. Soon after we arrived, our attention was arrested by the passing of a large beautiful & grand steamboat.

Neither my dear wife, nor myself had ever seen one before...

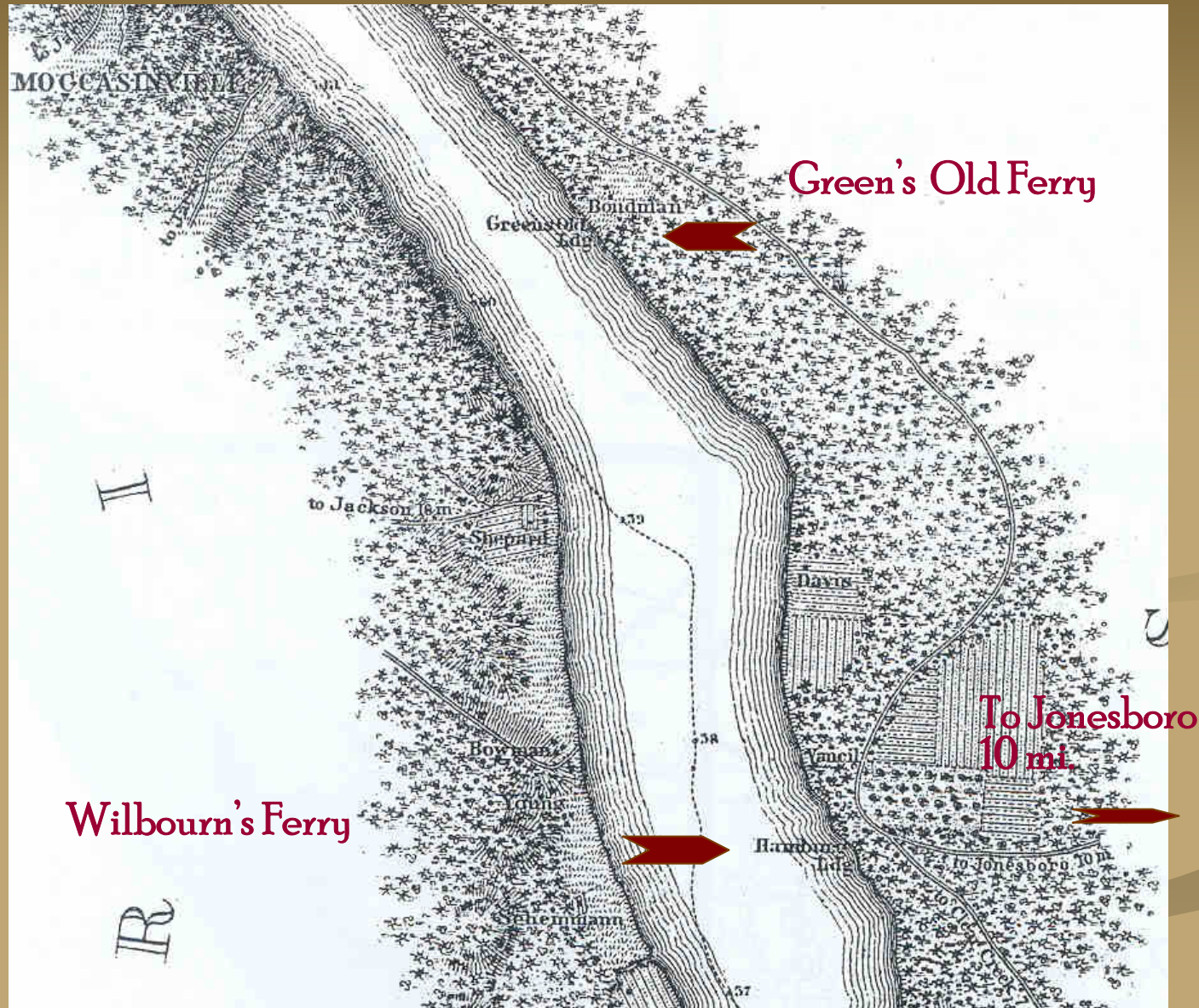
Rev. Daniel Buttrick

January 25, 1839



# Union County Ferries

Greens Old Ferry and Wilbourn's Ferry at Hamburg Landing are shown on this 1865 map.

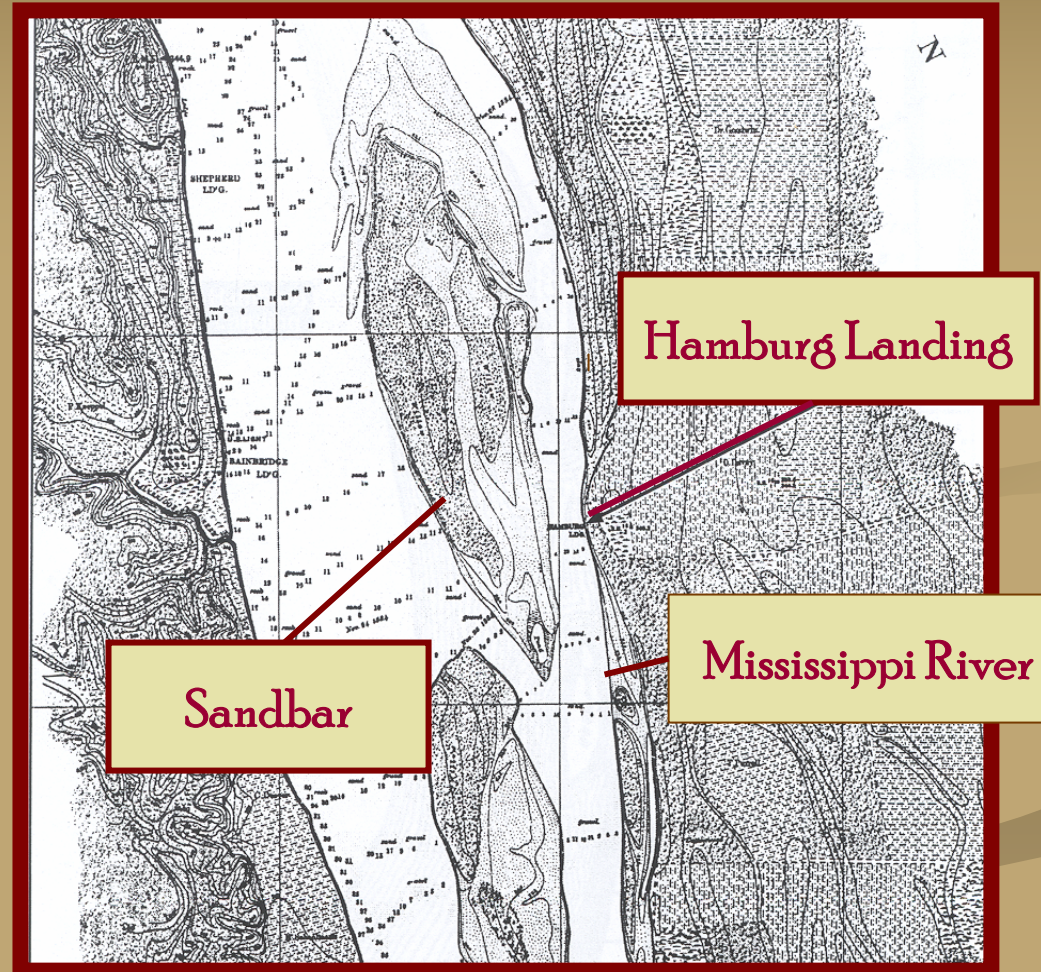


# At this place....

“At this place a sand bar in the middle extends, probably half across the bed of the river....therefore it is like two rivers, crossed by two ferries, that is, two sets of boats, one conveying passengers to the bar, and one from it.

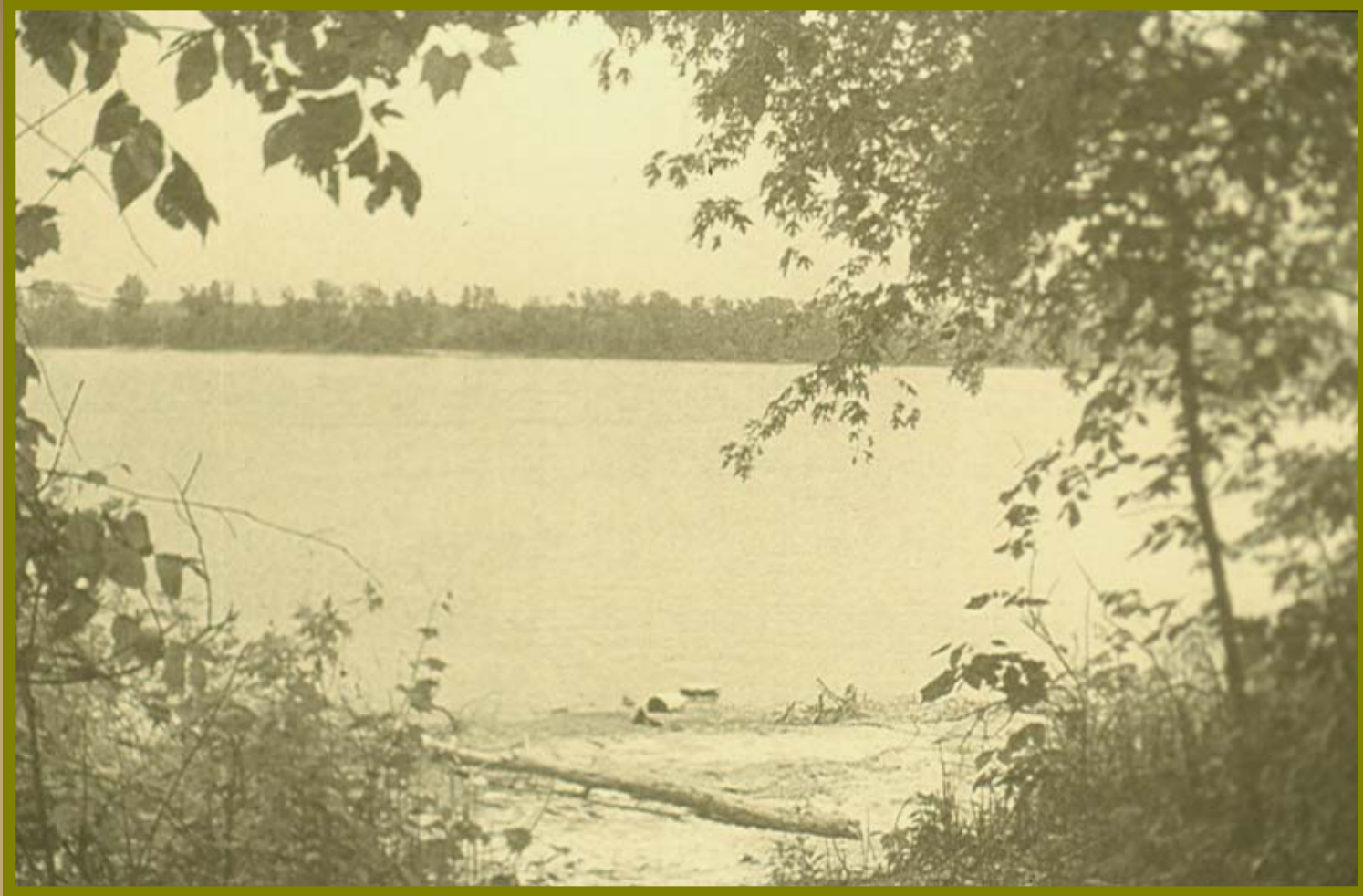
Rev. Daniel Buttrick

January 25, 1839



Hamburg Landing in 1880-1881

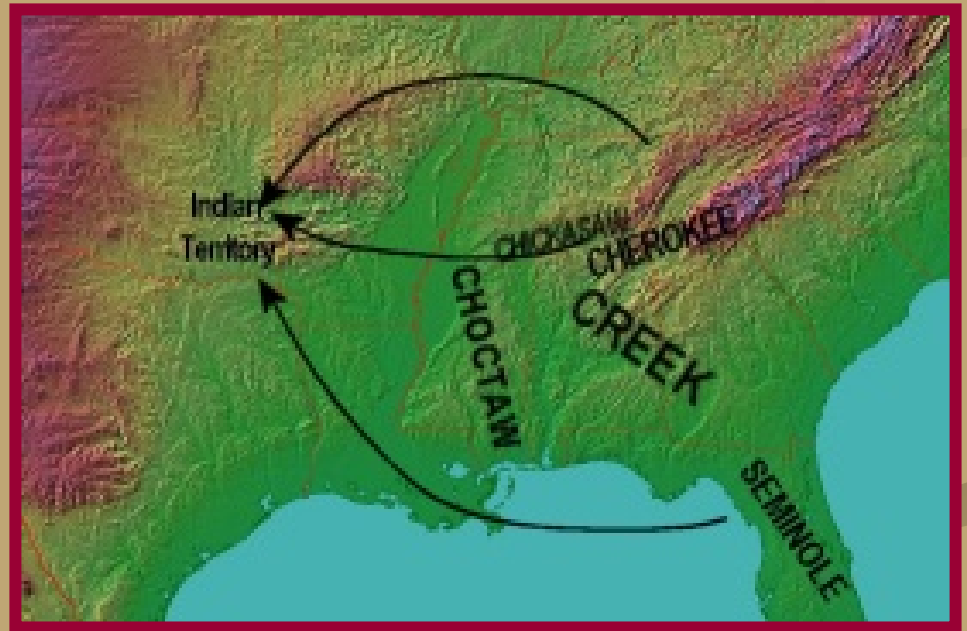
# The Landing at the Trail of Tears State Park in Missouri



This is where the Cherokee crossed from southern Illinois and landed in Missouri on the last leg of their tortured journey.

# Indian Removals

Between the 1830 Indian Removal Act and 1850, the U.S. government used forced treaties and/or U.S. Army action to move about 100,000 American Indians living east of the Mississippi River, westward to Indian Territory in what is now Oklahoma. Among the relocated tribes were the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole. The Choctaw relocation began in 1830; the Chickasaw relocation was in 1837; the Creek were removed by force in 1836 following negotiations that started in 1832; and the Seminole removal triggered a 7-year war that ended in 1843.



# Tahlequah

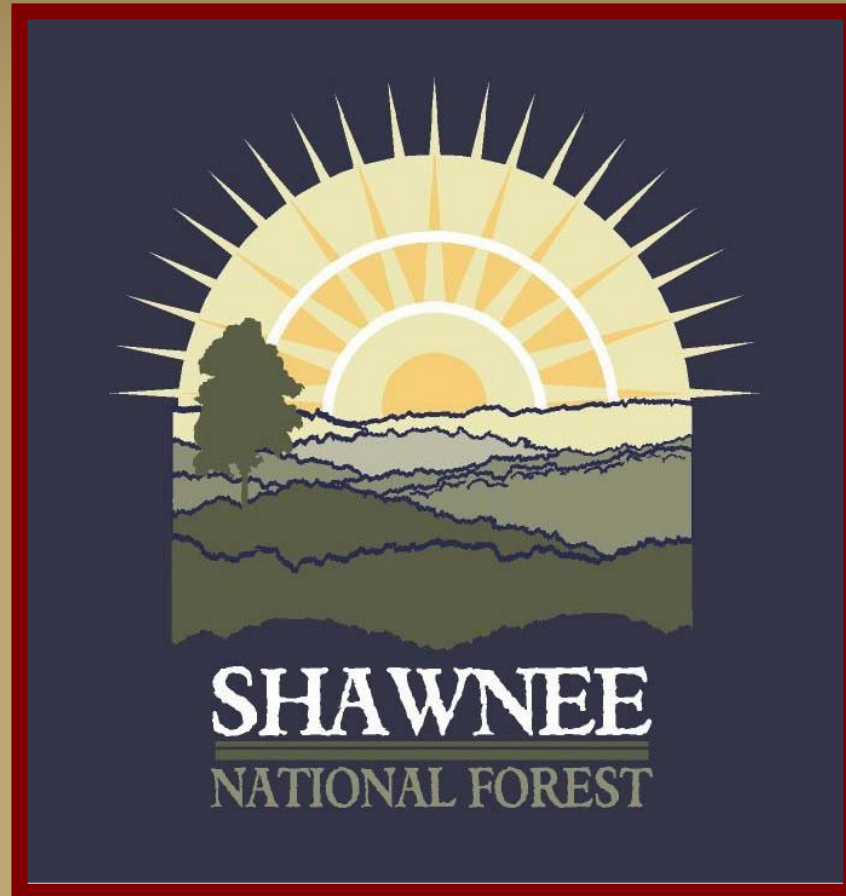
All the surviving Cherokee eventually made it to Oklahoma by the Spring of 1939 where they began to rebuild their lives and their culture.

Although there were difficulties, the Cherokees adapted to their new homeland, and reestablished their own system of government, modeled on that of the United States. The new tribal government was headquartered in Tahlequah and included a constitution and an elected principal chief and legislature known as the National Council. The also maintained a bilingual school system.

Throughout the years, the Cherokees have sought to maintain much of their original cultural identity. To increase public awareness of their heritage, many of them have advocated the designation of the Trail of Tears as a historic trail.

Their experiences are commemorated on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

# Thank You!



We hope you enjoyed this arm-chair travelogue about a very important episode in the story of our nation's.