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The Indian Removal acts

# Introduction

In the first half of the nineteenth century, many Native Americans were removed for America. Among them, Cherokees were also included. Cherokees have a significance and attribution to the American land. They tried to adopt the Anglo- American culture as well. They transformed themselves and adopted the culture and living pattern of the American natives. They did so all, just to receive the appreciation of the White politicians and to preserve their short-lived identity in the American land. This changed of civilizational policy forced them to totally change their religious beliefs and spiritual values. They established new schools, written new laws and totally changed their style of living just to appease the White people (Green and Perdue). Cherokee women became involved in weaving garments and men started a plantation. The historian argues that they did so all just to appease the ruling elites of that time. By adopting such a culture, they just wanted to earn respect.

In the words of a Cherokee scholar “Cherokees firmly believed that civilization was important and preferable to their way of life”. This progress of the Cherokee community astonished many White people who travelled through their countries in the early nineteenth century. In the year 1820, a Cherokee scholar wrote a new syllabus that helped his community to read and write in their own language. By 1827, they have adopted a constitutional structure like that of the United States. Their educated class people started participating in religious seminaries, in the classes of history, theology and politics. At the time of their removal from the United States, many American believe that Cherokee was among the most civilized people ever existed in the United States (Green and Perdue). What made the American people think about removing Cherokees? Why were they forced to leave? What made the circumstances for the signing of the Indian removal act of 1830? The following paragraphs will analyse the following details.

# Causes of the Indian removal act

There is disagreement among the historians about the causes of the Indian removal act. Some believe that it was adopted to make the American more intact. Some argue that this decision of Jackson administration to force the Cherokee people to leave the American land was the continuation of National policy. This policy was the practical manifestation of seizing the lands of the Native Indians which were continued from as early as the 1790s. In the last decades of the eighteenth century, seizing the land of the Indians was the policy adopted by the Republicans for civilizing the native Indian of the American land (Cave). This policy was first articulated by George Washington and Henry Knox after the treaty of Holston in the year 1791. This treaty aimed at bringing more civilization among the Native Indians. The United States authorities also promised to donate gracious donations from time to time to such native communities of that time America (Cave).

Apparently, the original purpose of the civilization policy appeared philanthropic. If any American was able to pull the civilized people out of the savages, it would have benefitted the native Americans and would have ensured the progress and wellbeing of humans in the continent. To pull Cherokee out of their land, Knox and his team announced that if Indian quit barbaric occupations, they will get surplus land which they can willingly exchange to support education and well being of their people (Bolt). Such reasons helped the white people like Knox to accelerate the coercion of Indians to occupy their lands. After coercing, the Knox and his people used to acculturate the lands left by Cherokees. After coming to the Presidency, Thomas Jefferson who supported the beliefs and views of the Knox accelerated these efforts. Jefferson uses to offer huge sums to people who were ready to leave their land. With the people who refused to accept such an offer, Jefferson used aggressive tactics. Jefferson intensified this pressure and was able to get the large tracts of land (Bolt).

This shows that the cause of the Indian removal act did not erupt in the1830s rather it existed from the early nineteenth century. However, with time the situation tilted in favour of White American and during the Presidency of Jackson, the Congress was able to pass the Indian removal act in 1830 (Grose). Other causes which contributed to passing the Indian Removal Act was the discovery of gold, silver and other precious metal on the lands occupied by Cherokees.

# Effects of the Indian removal act

The act left many things undefined. For example, there was no such mentioning of the facts that where and how the eastern Indian living in America will be repatriated. Cherokee family tribe John Ross believed doing so will put aside the years of effort, the Cherokee family have been doing to become a civilized nation (Nichols). Therefore, the Cherokee community decided to not leave the eastern land and this land belonged to them. There was another group among Cherokees which believed that if there is a war between the Americans and the Cherokee people, they will have nothing to achieve but to accept a big loss. There were then two groups in Cherokees community, one believed that it is useful to live on the land they have occupied for centuries, while others believed that leaving this land is a rational choice. In 1839, many Cherokees gathered in a wide-open place to decide about their fate but could not reach any decision. The White army, on the other hand, announced that those who want resettlement are true patriots while others are not (Nichols).

The rift between the Cherokee community intensified with time and there was enormous bloodshed which left no chances of compromise between the belligerent groups. The American whites took advantage of the rift between different groups and launched coercive measures to draw the Cherokees out of their land. The American White Army was in no position to rectify any other treaty with the Cherokee community. Many historians argue that in their own conflict, the Cherokee community lost its respect which it earned in centuries. With years of conflict in their land, the Cherokee people finally achieved peace when the United States government signed the agreement with them in Washington. The Cherokees lost many of their civilized people in their own land. Cherokee people finally managed to live on their own land, when after the treaty of Washington in 1846, they were allowed by the United States government to retain their land (Unger). The most pressing effect on Cherokee people was the loss of their economy which they made after years of struggle and they also lost their civilized culture. The Indian removal act suggests that the community upbringing takes centuries whereas it takes no days to ruin a culture.

# Conclusion

There are different causes of the Indian removal act of 1930, which are still open for interpretation. Some historians argue that Jacksonian’s policies were like Hitler’s policy, whereas some argue that Jacksonian cared for the national cause of the United States of America. The geographical separation which took place in the times of his presidency was considered the worst times of American history. The removal of Cherokees from the Northern parts of their land was the worst atrocities that could have ever committed. In the aftermath of the act, the Cherokee community showed utmost resilience and rejected the loss of their culture. This act and the discrimination attributed to it suggest that how it is impossible to separate a community which have brought itself up in centuries.

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