

Name _____

Forced Journey

In 1830, the United States government passed a law called the Indian Removal Act. This law allowed the government to move Native American tribes from their homelands in the southeastern United States to new areas west of the Mississippi River. The government said this would help settlers and Native Americans live separately and peacefully. But for Native Americans, it meant losing their homes, lands, and way of life.



The most famous example of this forced relocation is the Trail of Tears. The Cherokee Nation was one of the largest tribes in the Southeast. When they refused to leave their land, soldiers forced them to march hundreds of miles to present-day Oklahoma. Many people died along the way from hunger, disease, and harsh weather. Other tribes, like the Creek, Seminole, and Choctaw, also faced similar journeys.

The Indian Removal Act was based on the idea that Native Americans and settlers couldn't live together peacefully. But it ignored the fact that many tribes had already adapted to some settler ways, like farming and trading. Moving west disrupted their lives and caused great suffering. It also allowed settlers to take over the land Native Americans had lived on for generations.

Today, the Indian Removal Act is seen as a tragic part of U.S. history. It shows how unfair policies can harm entire communities. By learning about this event, we can understand the importance of respecting all people's rights and cultures.