

The Indian Removal Act of 1830

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During the 1800s, the main Native American tribes settled East of the Mississippi were the Five Civilized Tribes: the Choctaw, Seminoles, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Creek nations ("Indian Removal," *PBS.org*). All of these Native Americans had more rights to their land than the white settlers, and yet they were still driven away because of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. This Removal Act was encouraged to be passed through Congress by Andrew Jackson, who was one of the strongest supporters of Indian removal ("Indian Removal", *PBS.org*). The conflict between the Native Americans and Andrew Jackson was the Indian Removal Act. The Native Americans had a very strong claim to their lands and fought to keep them. However, Andrew Jackson and other white settlers wanted the tribes gone. The Native Americans were forced west after the US government promised to give them supplies, money, and free land ("Indian Treaties and the Removal Act of 1830," *Office of the Historian*). But in the end there was no compromise, because the Native tribes were brutally forced west after Jackson refused to listen their many innocent pleas, and the US government eventually went back on its promise of safety.

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 did not occur without reason. The first cause was the increasing American population. Many people who settled east of the Mississippi wanted to push the Native Americans off of their rightful land. The settlers who really wanted to expand were plantation owners so they could gain more profit from slavery. State governments supported them. For instance, "Georgia settlers felt they had a right to Cherokee land" (Hart et al. 255). This shows that slaveholding states, such as Georgia, ignored the rights of Native Tribes and instead felt like they had to gain more territory. Also, as stated by *WordPress.com*, "During the 19th Century the settler population was rapidly growing so they started moving into the South to expand their territory." This is significant because it proves that America's population was growing, and that settlers wanted to push Native Americans out of the South.

Racism was another huge cause of the Indian Removal Act. As stated in "Causes of the Indian Removal Act by *UK Essays*, "...Americans began to embrace a belief in white superiority...". This is meaningful because it clearly states that American settlers felt better than the Native Tribes. Since whites felt superior, they wouldn't have thought twice about pushing a "lesser" race away. Next, Andrew Jackson, one of the most racist people through the 1700s and 1800s, was elected president and succeeded in establishing the Removal Act. When he went around talking to different Native Tribes, his "...attitude toward [the] Native Americans was paternalistic and patronizing..." ("Indian Removal," *PBS.org*). This shows that even the President of the United States was very racist to the Native Americans, which helped to bring about the Indian Removal Act.

A third cause was the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. This fight was an attack led by Andrew Jackson against the Creek tribe. A quotation from "Indian Treaties and the Removal Act of

1830” by *Office of the Historian* says, “In 1814, Major General Andrew Jackson led an expedition against the Creek Indians climaxing in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend....” This is evidence for the battle, it’s sides, and the leader of the American side. The Horseshoe Bend war is a reason why the Removal Act came into play because of the effects of the battle. “Under this kind of pressure, Native American tribes...realized that they could not defeat the Americans in war...[and] adopted a strategy of appeasement” (“Indian Treaties and the Removal Act of 1830”, *Office of the Historian*). This is significant because it conveys how the battle forced the Native nations to realize that by giving up some of their belongings, and giving the Americans what they wanted, was the only way to preserve themselves. Also, *Office of the Historian* says that, “...Jackson’s force soundly defeated the Creeks...[and] forced upon the Indians a treaty whereby they surrendered...over 20 million acres of their traditional land” in a web page titled “Indian Treaties and the Removal Act of 1830”. This is meaningful because it states exactly how the Battle of Horseshoe Bend forced Native Americans to give up a vast amount of their land.

Many events occurred during the Indian Removal Act of 1830. One such event was the Congressional debate of the Indian Removal Act. “When Congress debated the Indian Removal Act there were 28 yeas [yes] against 19 nays [no]. The law was passed” (April 24, 1830 Congressional debate, *the Library of Congress*). This is evidence that backs up the fact of the Indian Removal Act going up for vote during Congress. Additionally, “In 1830, urged on by President Jackson, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act” (Hart et al. 250). This quote shows that Andrew Jackson was a big motivator for the Removal Act, and encouraged Congress to pass the new law. Lastly, a sentence from *PBS.org* says, “In 1830...Jackson pushed a new piece of legislation called the ‘Indian Removal Act’ through both houses of Congress” from a web page titled “Indian Removal”. This is further proof that the Indian Removal Act went through a congressional debate urged on by President Jackson.

A second event that happened during the Indian Removal Act is the Treaty of New Echota. This treaty was “...an illegitimate treaty. In 1833, a small faction [of Native Americans] agreed to sign a removal agreement: The Treaty of New Echota” (“Indian Removal”, *PBS.org*). This quote states that only a small portion of the Native American population agreed to cede their land to the United States. Also, it says this treaty occurred during the Indian Removal Act, thus the date of 1833. Next, “He [Andrew Jackson] obtained the signature of a Cherokee chief agreeing to relocation in the Treaty of New Echota...” (“Indian Treaties and the Removal Act of 1830”, *Office of the Historian*). This statement is significant because it explains how the Treaty of New Echota came to be.

After the Indian Removal Act of 1830, there were multiple effects. First, there was the Trail of Tears. This event is one of America’s most tragic parts in history. It scars our past so terribly because “... 4,000 Cherokee people died of cold, hunger, and disease on their way to

the western lands" ("Indian Removal", *PBS.org*). This quote proves that all because of Americans, thousands of innocent people had to suffer. As quoted by Hart et al. 251, "...more than 17,000 Cherokees were forced from their homes...and herded west by federal troops." Again, this statement declares that people from the United States treated the Cherokees like cattle as a result of the Indian Removal Act. Next, John G. Burnett was a soldier who had befriended the Native tribes. When the Removal Act came into action, he was stationed as an interpreter in Cherokee territory (John G. Burnett's Story of the Removal of the Cherokees, *Cherokee Messenger*). Years after the brutal removal, John Burnett recalled event: "I saw the helpless Cherokees arrested and dragged from their homes. I saw them loaded like cattle..into...wagons and started toward the west." This quote proves that the Trail of Tears was an effect of the Indian Removal Act, because the only reason soldiers were sent to drag the Cherokee off of their lands was because of the removal law.

Another major effect of the Removal Act was the Second and Third Seminole War. A main figure in these wars was Andrew Jackson, then a general of American troops. These wars were an effect of the Indian Removal Act because of the two sides in the battles. One side was the Native Americans refusing to cede their lands and the other was Americans trying to push the native tribes away. This is proven through a quote by *PBS.org*, "A small group of Seminoles...refused to leave. The resulting struggle was the Second Seminole War..." in the article named "Indian Removal". This shows that because the Removal Act urged white settlers to remove Native Americans from their lands, native tribes caused a war by resisting. Another statement is "The Seminole tribe in Florida resisted, in the Second Seminole War and the Third Seminole War..." ("Indian Removal", *PBS.org*). This is meaningful because it describes how the Second Seminole War came to be, which was through the resistance of the Indian Removal Act. Additionally, "...most of the Seminoles moved to the new territory. The few who remained had to defend themselves in the Third Seminole War..." ("Indian Removal", *PBS.org*). This quote has significance because it states that an effect of the Removal Act came to be as a result of a strong, unified people fighting for their rights.

The last effect of the Indian Removal Act of 1830 was about the Cherokee population. Years after the removal law was passed, their numbers eventually decreased. As said by Hart et al. 257, "Today, the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma has around 24,000 citizens. Smaller separate bands of Cherokees live in Oklahoma and North Carolina." This quote states that because of the Removal Act, the Cherokee population has been reduced dramatically. Additionally, because the Native Americans removed from east of the Mississippi were herded into a confined area in Oklahoma, most Cherokee people live there today ("Indian Treaties and the Removal Act of 1830", *Office of the Historian*). In addition to a large percent of the Native American population now living in Oklahoma, many of those people have been discriminated and live in poverty. This is reinforced in the article "Impact of Indian Removal Act" by *WordPress.com*, "About 22

percent of our country's 5.2 million Native Americans live on tribal lands. 90,000 Indians are homeless." This is important because it states that because of the Removal Act, thousands of people with a Native American heritage are now living in horrible conditions.

It's important to be informed about the Indian Removal Act of 1830, because Americans should know about white settlers' greed and the innocence of the Native Americans. People should learn about the greed of whites in the 1800s, because it could help to prevent greediness nowadays. If people are informed about why greed is bad, they would be less likely to have greed. Next, Americans should remember the innocence of the Native tribes because many people think that the Native Americans were brutal savages. This would make them think that the Natives got what they deserved. However, the Native Americans did nothing as sinful as the white settlers, so the way the Native tribes were treated was completely unfair and brutal. If people remember that's it's bad to be greedy and to hurt the innocent, there would be two less horrible things on Earth.

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