



## The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears (Penguin Library of American Indian History)

By Theda Perdue, Michael Green

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In the early nineteenth century, the U.S. government shifted its policy from trying to assimilate American Indians to relocating them, and proceeded to forcibly drive seventeen thousand Cherokees from their homelands. This journey of exile became known as the Trail of Tears.

Historians Perdue and Green reveal the government's betrayals and the divisions within the Cherokee Nation, follow the exiles along the Trail of Tears, and chronicle the hardships found in the West. In its trauma and tragedy, the Cherokee diaspora has come to represent the irreparable injustice done to Native Americans in the name of nation building?and in their determined survival, it represents the resilience of the Native American spirit.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This compact book by eminent historians Perdue and Green moves from the time when all Cherokees lived in the southern Appalachians to their forced expulsion to the Indian Territory, as American policy morphed from civilizing Native Americans to what might today be deemed ethnic cleansing. The Indian Removal Act (1830) fixed in law a revolutionary program of political and social engineering that caused unimaginable suffering, deaths in the thousands, and emotional pain that lingers to this day. It's a tangled tale of partisan politics and Cherokee power struggles, of juridical argument and economic motive, of bitter personal disputes and changing public policy. Perdue (*Columbia Guide to American Indians of the Southeast*) and Green (*The Cherokee Removal*) have written a lucid, readable account of the legal complexities of the 18th-century right of conquest doctrine and the 19th-century emerging doctrine of state rights; the treaties, alliances, obligations and assurances involved; and the landmark cases *Cherokee v. Georgia* and *Worcester v. Georgia* (one effectively denying Cherokee self-government, one ineffectively affirming Cherokee sovereignty). Over it all hangs the disquieting knowledge that in the history of interaction between Euro-Americans and Indians, Cherokee removal [exemplifies] a larger history that no one should forget. (*July*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Perdue and Green illuminate the Cherokee experience, beginning with their first contact with Europeans, around 1540, when the De Soto expedition visited their southern Appalachian territory. Their numbers were decimated by waves of epidemics beginning in 1697, and they ceded half their land to the British in the mid-eighteenth century. The U.S. government first attempted to "civilize" the Cherokees, but after the War of 1812, the policy of removal took precedence, as the Cherokees and their allies lost the battle of tribal nationalism versus states' rights. After 1836 the Trail of Tears, as the deportation of thousands from their homeland is now called, began in earnest. Donovan, Deborah

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Review

"With a rich sense of Cherokee culture and history . . . the authors . . . recount a human story, not only tragic but also unbelievably heroic."—*Los Angeles Times*

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