

Process Paper

In Social Studies we have studied Native Americans. When we heard of the Indian Removal Act, we were intrigued. We wanted to learn more about why the Native Americans were forced to move to the western territories within the United States and its effects on Native tribes. It is hard to imagine that a country that believes in freedom and equal rights would oppress a group of people within its borders. This led us to want to discover why President Jackson and other leaders would endorse such a policy.

We began by searching the internet and books from local libraries, gathering background information. We contacted the Georgia Historical Society, Georgia University and Georgia State University libraries, The Museum of the Cherokee Indian, and the Hermitage seeking links and recommendations for sources. We then took a deeper look into the context, debate, viewpoints, and effects of removal. We accessed documents, newspapers, letters, and consulted The Papers of Chief John Ross. Ross' accounts demonstrated the feelings and hardships natives faced and their stance against removal. We also found the speeches made in Congress during the debate on the Indian Removal Act by those who both opposed and supported removal. These helped provide us an understanding of the conflict the bill produced. We located video presentations from Gayle Ross and Professor Theda Perdue. The highlight of our research was our interview with Erin Adams, Director of Education and Interpretation at Andrew Jackson's Hermitage. She provided us information about Indian Removal, why it happened, its impact in history and relevance in the United States today. The information we discovered through our research allowed us to present the various aspects of removal within our website.

We chose to create a website because we like to work with technology. We thought it would be a good way to present our research. To create our website we first decided on a color scheme. We chose a white background with our title and quotes in red. We chose red and white

because they are two colors of the Cherokee. Second, we designed our layouts and created pages. Next, we added text, photographs, and quotes to our pages. Afterward, we edited and uploaded audio and video clips. Finally, we inserted buttons for easy navigation of our website.

This topic relates to the theme Conflict and Compromise in History because the Indian Removal Act was a controversial piece of legislation that caused conflict between the government and the the Five Civilized Tribes of southeastern United States. President Andrew Jackson was determined to move native tribes to Indian territory in present day Oklahoma. Compromise between the native tribes and the federal government failed. In some cases, removal also created conflict within the tribes. Some members of tribes saw removal as inevitable and agreed to move while others resisted. The federal government showed little regard for the rights of American Indians and forced their displacement which resulted in the decimation of our native peoples.