THE CHEROKEE NATION

Of all the Native American tribes, the Cherokee nation is the most documented and well known. The Cherokee tribes were one of the of the largest in North America. They were a part of the Southeastern tribes and were considered a member of the “Five Civilized Tribes”, which included the Creek Indians as well.

Cherokee means “people of a different speech” and was given to them by other tribes. In the Cherokee language, the name means “Principal People”.

The Cherokee capital was located at New Echota, which means “New Town” in Cherokee. Unlike the other Native American tribes, the Cherokee nation adapted to the European culture by 1800. The Cherokee people used many of the same farming techniques and built homes the same way European settlers did. They also began wearing clothing similar to the Europeans.

The creation of a Cherokee alphabet by Sequoyah allowed for the Cherokee people to learn to read and write. Because they could read and write, the Cherokee people were able to preserve much of their history.

The Cherokee alphabet also helped to create a Cherokee constitution and government that was based on the United States Constitution and government.

The Cherokees, like many of the other Southern tribes, were subject to the loss of much of their land to European settlers. When gold was found on Indian lands, more and more white settlers came onto their lands. By 1839 all of the Cherokee people had been driven out of Georgia on The Trail of Tears.

Let’s Review

1. What does Cherokee mean in the Cherokee language? _______________________________

2. What was the name of the Cherokee capital? ______________________________

3. What was the Cherokee constitution based on? ______________________________

4. Why were the Cherokees forced off their land? ________________________________