

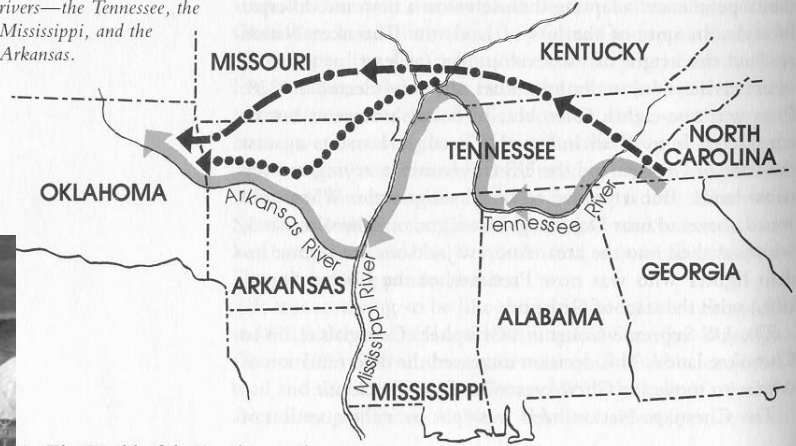
THE TRAIL OF TEARS



The Trail of Tears was a period of time from 1838 to 1839 when the Cherokee Indians that were left in Georgia were forcibly removed from their lands. The Supreme Court ruling made in 1832 in the *Worchester v. Georgia*

The Cherokee Trail of Tears was actually three routes. One route used rivers—the Tennessee, the Mississippi, and the Arkansas.

In May 1838 the forced removal, known to the Cherokees as the Trail of Tears, began. John Ridge, with his family and



6 The World of the Southern Indians

Map of the routes taken by the Cherokees.

case said that the Cherokee nation was its own nation, but President Andrew Jackson ignored it. He sent soldiers into Cherokee lands to send the Cherokee people to the area that is now Oklahoma. On this journey over 4,000 Cherokees lost their lives due to starvation, disease, or exposure.

WORCHESTER V. GEORGIA

Supreme Court Ruling of the United States, 1832

This court case involved a Christian missionary, who was living on Cherokee lands but had not obtained a license by the state to live there. The state sued the missionary for not following the law. The missionary said that he was living on Cherokee lands, not state lands and did not need to obtain a license from Georgia. After trials in the lower courts the case was heard by the Supreme Court. The court had to decide whether or not the Cherokees were their own nation with their own laws.

The Supreme Court decided five to one with one judge not voting (there were only seven judges on the Supreme Court in 1832, two more were added in 1837) that the Cherokee nation was a sovereign nation and “completely separated from the...states.” Therefore, Georgia’s laws were invalid on Cherokee lands.

Georgia, along with President Andrew Jackson, ignored the Supreme Court ruling and continued to forcibly remove the Cherokee people from their native lands. The continued removal of the Cherokee people, especially in 1838 and 1839, became known as the Trail of Tears.