

*His-tory! Not Her-story, Not Their-story
Native Americans Place in History Books*

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Introduction

“The earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it.”

Chief Joseph

Our history books represent only one side of our collective story. We seldom hear of revolutionary women and their accomplishments. Minority groups struggling for equality are dotted throughout the narrative of the past. Those whose ideas of cooperation, equity, respect and stewardship have been all but eradicated from documentation over time. The heroes portrayed to us have been wealthy, educated, white men. Men who believed in “Manifest Destiny”. Men who desired ownership and mastery of their domain.

In this unit we will explore this idea and show students the other sides of history. I recently read an article in the Highlander by Colette King where it stated that, “People want to paint a picture of the past that is filled with pride and patriotism”, but ultimately the stories do not correlate with the actual past. She goes on to say, “The idea that history of the United States is being taught by our government should sound off an alarm. The one piece of information that should be taught in history class is to question everything and to research topics beyond the classroom setting.”

I want to introduce and instill this idea with my students: “question everything.” We will start by looking at history experienced through the perspective of Native Americans. My goal is to supplement my Westward Expansion unit about pioneers to add components from the perspective of Native Americans and the loss of their homelands. I want my students to learn to question what they are taught at a young age, so they can strive to learn from multiple perspectives in order that they may obtain true understanding of their studies. This is crucial for today’s society and, as we are an English Language Learner (ELL) school, pertinent to my students.

West Park Place Elementary School is a small suburban school in the Christina School District. We have about 400 students from kindergarten through fifth grade. We are located in close proximity to the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware. West Park is a diverse school, hosting the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, Delaware Autistic Program and REACH –Realistic Educational Alternatives for Children

with Disabilities. According to the annual report generated by the Christina School District, about a third of our students are ELLs: representing about 25 different countries. About 45 percent of our population are free/reduced lunch students. Our demographics are 20% African American, 26% Asian, 46% Caucasian and 4% Hispanic. I am a third grade, self-contained teacher and therefore teach all subjects: math, reading, writing, science and social studies. A typical school year provides me with 22 students, a third of whom are usually active or recently dismissed ELL.

A strength of our students is attendance and a desire to learn. Additionally, West Park is a mile from the University of Delaware, so we have many resources available. At times, we have many college students doing placements, tutoring and student teaching. Based on the data from Christina School District annual report, the teachers at West Park are predominately Highly Effective and Highly Qualified and have many years of experience with most of the educators having obtained at least a Master's degree. As a staff, we work in Professional Learning Communities to analyze data and provide appropriate instruction for our students.

The areas of struggle for West Park are no different than any other typical school. The most obvious concern is lack of funding. A third of our students and their families are ELLs: with many parents not able to speak English at all. As a result, we have low parental involvement. Additionally, many families are reeling from the current economic situation. Many of our families are of low socio-economic status.

Rationale

My rationale for teaching this unit is to immerse my students into our past and the way in which history is taught in schools. I want to expose my students to the idea that history is not always a factual, chronological record of events. They need to understand that "his"-tory is just that. A story from the perspective of men- wealthy, white men. "His"-tory is only part of the story. Real HISTORY comes from multiple perspectives.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) make this unit important because students need to be college and career ready. The state test (Smarter Balance) will require students to produce writing responses, and complete math and reading tests. With children arriving at my doorstep with fewer and fewer skills, coupled with the state and federal government requiring more and more from these students, I have a tough road ahead. I need to develop lessons that will address reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. These skills need to be supported by helping students to become critical thinkers who will question materials taught to them in history classes.

This unit will be appropriate for any elementary grade, but is designed for third grade to add to an existing Pioneer/Western Expansion unit. The students will participate in three main branches of activities. First, we will learn that history is predominately

recorded by men and represents their European beliefs and views. Then we will use picture books and classroom activities to learn more about the plight of the American Indians' loss of land during Westward Expansion. Finally, the students will complete a culminating project representing what they have learned from the unit.

The unit fits perfectly into my curriculum in all subject areas. It addresses almost all the reading and writing standards and the speaking and listening standards. Within this unit, I will cover many of the Common Core Standards that are essential for student success, but I will focus on three main standards. I will select one standard from reading, writing and speaking/listening:

- *Reading Literature 3.2: Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson or morale and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.*
- *Writing 3.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.*
- *Speaking and Listening 3.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.*

Objectives

This unit's objectives are threefold and address each of the listed standards. First, I want to introduce the concept of biased reporting of history. In teaching history, a national sentiment is being promoted. This bias came from a European perspective. Students will learn that current history does not represent the whole picture. Then we will explore Colonialism and how Native Americans were mistreated throughout history, but specifically during Westward Expansion. They were viewed as savages or a people subservient to the "white man". Finally, after introducing the key concepts and information, the students will each create their own culminating project that will be shared within the classroom.

Essential Questions

What does "*perspective*" mean in stories (or in history)?

How did Westward Expansion alter the Native Americans way of life?

How can we apply the lessons learned to our present day life and learning?

Caveat: My research is extremely generalized. I have painted Native Americans with the same brush, so to speak. Of course each tribe is different from each other, with their own customs, belief and histories. I am not an expert in the various tribes of Native Americans. When able, tribes will be identified by name in my research. The background information included merely provides general information and history about

many different groups of Native American people purely to demonstrate their intellectual or cultural advancements. This general information, supports my assertion that Native Americans were not “savages” as they were viewed by the colonists and pioneers. The only group covered in depth for this unit will be the Cherokee because the lessons will focus on the removal of the Cherokee tribes and the Trail of Tears.

Background Information/Content

Native Americans Were Not “Savages”

Native Americans and other tribal people from the Ainu to the Zulu have a legacy as important to the modern world as any great power of Europe, Asia, or America. However, too often their stories are marginalized as regional and unimportant in the greater sweep of history and world events. We overlook the contributions they have made. Many Native American tribes were ecologists, respecting Mother Earth and the resources around them. They studied and utilized their environment, without depleting the resources available to them. For thousands of years, until the end of the nineteenth century, some native people also followed the seasonal movements of the great herd of bison that flourished on the short-grass prairies that stretched eastward.¹ Although they hunted pronghorn, deer, elk, bear and other smaller animals, for these people, bison was their staple. Additionally, the Indians learned to burn the grasses of the prairie and the plains, creating new growth. In so doing, they somewhat controlled the migration of the buffalo. Through burning the plains, they controlled the spread of forests. This in turn increased the areas in which the buffalo grazed and lured the buffalo closer to their villages. Hunters could devote more time to cultivating their crops.² These large fire cleared areas maintained a corridor through the forests such as those in the Shenandoah Valley, which later served as a major migration route for the European settlers. Ironically, this arrival of settlers later led to the decline in the Indian populations.³ Yet, the ingenious practices ensured a steady food supply for the community and provided the Native Americans more time to other needed activities, such as farming.

Native American culture respected the natural resources available to them. The Indians used resources for subsistence, but the settlers came to America for more. They wanted to turn the forest into a marketable commodity.⁴ Some Indians taught the settlers to gather pecans, hickory nuts, pine nuts, acorns, and walnuts, as well as, wild fruits such as paw paws and cranberries.⁵ Europeans did not know about maple syrup and its by-products. Once this resource was shared with the settlers, this quickly became an important part of colonial economy and cuisine.⁶ Other Native Americans foraged for turnips, ground nuts, sunflowers and artichokes. None of these resources proved to be an item the settlers could trade with Europe. With the Native American’s help, settlers did eventually find sassafras and ginseng, which became profitable. Sassafras was a “miracle drug”, curing many ailments, including syphilis. Ginseng was also used as a medicine.⁷ While the Native Americans had spent the last millennia becoming great farmers and

pharmacists, the people of the Old World had spent a similar period amassing the world's greatest arsenal of weapons, including ships.⁸ When settlers came to America, these opposing perspectives collided. Settlers were not respectful of the Native American viewpoint as being stewards of the earth. As one example, settlers discovered the white pine trees which grew taller than any other known tree. These taller trees meant that they could construct larger commercial ships to carry more cargo.⁹ These, along with many other commodities, were exploited by the European settlers.

Native Americans actively participated in trade. The Plains Indians had a long history of trading with one another and also with the settlers. They saw that the white settler's metal axes, kettles and guns would make their lives easier.¹⁰

A key component of trade for Indian society was the fur trade. Profits from the fur trade financed much of the development of the early settlements into national and international cities.¹¹ Indian furs paid for the building of wharves and docks and warehouses. The taxes and tariffs from trade were an important source of revenue for the colonial government.¹² The fur trade began in North America with the first explorers and continued as one of the major economic forces until the middle of the nineteenth century, until American agriculture and the newly emerging industrial sector developed. From its start to its decline, the fur industry depended on Indian hunters and trappers.¹³ The Indians knew the land, they knew the behavior of the animals and possessed the skill and the technology to capture them.¹⁴ The men trapped and transported the animals to camp. The Indian women processed the skins. The enterprise depended on Indian knowledge, skill and technology.¹⁵

Native American women made major contributions to their community as well. The women made buckskin leather from deer, caribou and elk. They manufactured clothing for the hunters and voyagers. They understood the specialized clothing for the human body in the cold climates.¹⁶ Women sewed hides for the canoes and kayaks that transported people, especially in the Inuit society. They made other items such as baskets and bark containers.¹⁷ Many Native American societies were egalitarian, sharing the tasks among all the people in the community.

Additionally, some Native Americans tribes were great farmers. If humans ever invented a miracle food, it must have been corn. Corn was the only staple grown in both the northern and southern hemispheres. It grows everywhere!¹⁸ Corn proved higher in nutrition than most other grain crops and gave higher yields.¹⁹ From corn, the settlers were able to eat corn chowder, cornbread, corn tortillas, corn tamales, hominy and grits. They could also use the corn to feed their chickens, turkeys and pigs. As a result of better-fed animals, settlers had more meat in their diets than Europeans.²⁰ Europeans did not show an interest in corn themselves, but did appreciate the corn-fattened livestock. Corn became so important that it was substituted for money when there was a shortage of silver coins.²¹

These native people have domesticated and developed the hundreds of varieties of corn, potatoes, cassava and peanuts that now feed the world. Other crops such as tobacco and cotton became valuable as well. Like corn, tobacco grows in diverse climates. Virginian colonists concentrated on Indian tobacco as a source for the highest profits from their fields.²² The colonists had experimented with other tobacco crops, but none were as successful as Indian tobacco. They were the true colonizers of America who cut trails through the jungles and the deserts, made the roads, and built cities upon which modern American is based.²³

Infrastructure was not the only element of a civilized society exhibited by Native people. One tribe developed their own written language. Sequoyah, a Cherokee, developed signs for 86 Cherokee syllables to introduce a written language in 1821. Soon after in 1828, the Cherokee published a newspaper called the *Cherokee Phoenix*.²⁴ Education was important to the Native Americans as well. Schools were established for their children to attend. These “savages” had every component of a civilized society.

The world has yet to utilize fully the gifts of the American Indian. Thousands of plants such as amaranth and quinoa are hardly known, much less fully utilized.²⁵ Native Americans were viewed by the white settlers as “savages”. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Indian civilization crumbled not because of any intellectual or cultural inferiority. They simply succumbed in the face of disease and brute strength.²⁶

Andrew Jackson and the Indian Removal Act (1830)

Nearly every early American president, at one time or another, considered the possibility of moving the Indians to areas outside the United States.²⁷ With the outcome of the Revolutionary War, the new nation simply adopted the conquered-nations policy, whereby Britain ceded all claim to the lands north of Florida, east of the Mississippi and south of the Great Lakes.²⁸ George Washington accepted the assertion in the United States Constitution that Native Americans tribes were sovereign nations. He instructed his Secretary of War, Henry Knox, to make treaties with them. Washington gave the Native Americans the right to make and enforce their own laws within their borders.²⁹ However, by the time we were electing our seventh president, things began to change.

During Andrew Jackson’s presidency, the United States was growing and more room was needed for new Americans to settle and farm. Jackson viewed the notion of the Indian tribes as being a sovereign nation as “absurd”.³⁰ His view was that the Native Americans were in the way. In 1827, anticipating Jackson’s election, the Cherokee Nation wrote a new constitution modeled after the United States Constitution, within it declaring themselves as a sovereign nation.³¹

Once Jackson took office, he offered the Indians two choices: Migrate west of the Mississippi or stay put and be subject to the laws of the states. To Jackson, the idea of

the tribes establishing separate governments and laws was unacceptable.³² In 1829-1830 The Indian Removal Act was presented. President Jackson, a known Indian fighter, designated land west of the Mississippi River to which the Native Americans would relocate in exchange for their land in the east. His solution was to set aside a vast expanse of land that did not belong to any state or territory. (However, he did not concern himself with the notion the land may already be inhabited by other people.) The relocated tribes would then be able to enjoy the freedoms they had prior to the white man arriving.³³ The case went to the Supreme Court, which resulted in the Marshall Trilogy. The decision of the case supported the Cherokee. The state of Georgia lost this case. (I am not getting into this with my class, but more information can be researched for older students.) Jackson wanted the Indians out of Georgia and the other Southern states. He never intended to follow the rulings of the Supreme Court. He proceeded with the Removal of Native Americans. Jackson's failure to enforce the law handed down from the Supreme Court was an impeachable offense, but it was not questioned. Soldiers were instructed to start evictions.

Some historians and writers equate Jackson's removal policy with Adolph Hitler's Final Solution. It is referred to as a genocide because many Indians lost their lives in the process.³⁴ By the end of Jackson's term in January of 1837, tens of thousands of Indians had been removed from their land.³⁵

The Trail of Tears

The nineteenth century would bring about the most severe obstacle yet for Native Americans. There would be disease, battles, and bloodshed, but there would be laws that would come close to extinguishing the American Indian culture for good.³⁶ A Calvary man, John Burnett said, "In the chill of a drizzling rain on an October morning, I saw them loaded like cattle or sheep into 645 wagons and started toward the west. One can never forget the sadness of that morning".³⁷ Jackson's desire was coming to fruition.

The Indian Removal Act was passed in 1830. Thousands of Native Americans were rounded up at gunpoint, separated from their families, forced into stockades, made to travel on foot, by wagon and by boat to a foreign land and compelled to start their lives over virtually from scratch.³⁸ The Choctaws were the first to go en masse. Seventy thousand Indians died of exposure, starvation or marauding by whites during their trek of more than five hundred miles (upwards of 1,000 miles).³⁹ Eventually, physicians and interpreters were hired to attend to the sick at the camps. Illnesses were rampant. As a result, vaccinations were given to fight small pox, since in the previous group over 500 Choctaws and Chickasaws died.⁴⁰

Ultimately, the Chickasaws agreed to go, but first insisted on a site report by their elders. The elders found that the new land was lacking. The climate was unlike what they were accustomed to for their existence. Still they were forced to vacate. They ended

up purchasing the right to live among the Choctaws. About two decades later, they were able to become their own nation once more.⁴¹

We have discussed the Choctaws and Chickasaws, however, the Creek, Seminole and Cherokee were included as well. The Cherokee were stubborn and they refused to move west. They refused to give up their lands which today would include Tennessee, Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina and South Carolina. According to Cherokee traditions, land could not be owned by an individual, it belonged to the whole tribe. In fact there was a law enacted in 1821 that placed a fine for selling land. In 1829, the death penalty was passed for anyone selling land.⁴²

The Cherokee nation had become very different from the other Native American tribes in ways that made many Americans think long and hard about the fairness to the Indian Removal Act. As stated earlier, the Cherokee had their own written language, a constitution, newspaper, and their own schools. Many worshipped in Christian churches. Their homes and style of clothing were similar to that of the white settlers who lived on the frontier.⁴³ The Cherokee urged their people to continue to adopt aspects of white culture, believing that would make it more difficult to force them out.⁴⁴

The Native Americans had influential men such as Henry Clay and Daniel Webster on their side. These two men believed that the Indian claims were right. They took the case to the Supreme Court in a case called Worcester vs. Georgia. Samuel Worcester was a missionary teaching and preaching Christian doctrine to the Native Americans. As discussed earlier, even though Marshall ruled in their favor, President Andrew Jackson proceeded with the removal. The soldiers instructed the Native Americans to “take whatever you can carry and leave the rest.”⁴⁵ The Cherokee people, who had lived side-by-side with white settlers for decades, were being forced to move from their lands.⁴⁶

By June, there were more than 5,000 Indians waiting to be relocated.⁴⁷ Stockades were built to house all those waiting to be moved. The soldiers assured them that everything they would need for the journey would be given to them when the time came. However, for a number of reasons, including bad weather and poor planning, that would not be the case.⁴⁸ The journey did not begin until October of 1838. The first group of Cherokee were evacuated by steamer ships. Ten percent would die from dysentery or other diseases.⁴⁹ In the winter of 1838-1839, approximately 15,000 Cherokee were forced to move. They trekked through the mountains and snow covered passes fighting the cold, starvation and sickness. In the mornings, the soldiers would count the dead. Their supplies soon ran out and the wagons that carried their belongings had difficulty with road conditions. The roads were either muddy or covered in snow. The wagons could not hold up.

As they reached the Mississippi River they were forced to wait when they reached the ice-choked river. Many died waiting and their bodies were buried under piles of rocks,

since the ground was too hard for digging. These people suffered appalling losses. Those who survived it called it Nunna daul Isunyi, or The Trail Where They Cried, now called The Trail of Tears.⁵⁰

After walking in excess of 500 miles through Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri and Arkansas, they finally reached Oklahoma.⁵¹ There were reports of many illnesses and deaths after the Cherokee reached their new lands in the west. Most had left their belongings in the east and were now destitute. Many had to start over from scratch by using their skills from earlier days.⁵² Few of the Native American tribes removed to the west thrived in their new home. The terrain and the climate were drastically different from their former homelands.⁵³ However, the Cherokee leaders quickly set about rebuilding their nation. Children went to school, trees fell to open up pastures and farm, Cherokee re-established their press. They even established their institutions for higher learning.⁵⁴

Today almost seven million American Indians inhabit the United States, about two percent of the nation's population. There are more than 500 different federally recognized Indian groups. Fifteen million American people have a discernible degree of Indian blood.⁵⁵ More than three quarters of a million people trace their heritage to the Cherokee Nation, making them the largest group of Native Americans in the country.⁵⁶

Cities and states have already encouraged the importance of preserving sites along the Trail of Tears and of developing interpretive centers. The Cherokee Trail of Tears has become a symbol of the oppression of all Native Americans in the United States expansion to the west.⁵⁷ Approximately a third of those who started the journey did not live to see their new home.⁵⁸ No one can deny that the impact of European arrivals on Indian tribes and individuals has mostly been tragic. Removal may have looked like a simple matter on paper, but the reality of making the policy work proved almost impossible.

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 marked a dark chapter in American history and created a scar that has never fully healed. The law went against the founding notion of the United States that all men are created equal.⁵⁹ Looking at history through another lens allows us to see our history as it truly happened, through more than just one perspective. One soldier who witnessed the carnage of the US Civil War said the Cherokee Removal was the 'cruellest thing he ever saw'.⁶⁰ John Burnett wrote "the long painful journey to the west ended March 26, 1839 with 4,100 silent graves reaching from the foothills of the Smoky Mountains to what is known as Indian Territory in the west. And covetousness on the part of the white race was the cause."⁶¹

Enduring Understandings

Students will understand that:

Native American culture was complex and well developed intellectually. Political influences affected the Native American way of life, primary through the Indian Removal Act. The Trail of Tears was a shameful act the government perpetrated on the Indians.

Essential Questions:

Were the Native Americans “savages”, as the white men thought?

Who and/or what initiated the idea of Indian removal from their lands?

What is the Trail of Tears?

Classroom Activities

These additional lessons will be added to a pioneer unit I have taught each fall for many years. In this unit, I use several children’s books to teach about Western Expansion. The first book I use is *Pioneer Cat* by William H. Hooks. This is a historical fiction, second grade reading level book that accounts the journey of the Purdy family and their journey west. Kate tells the story of her Pa with “itchy feet” moving their family from the Midwest to Oregon. The family faces many difficulties such as forging raging rivers, buffalo stampedes, and being tracked by Indians. The trip is made bearable by a new addition to the family, a small cat Kate names Snugs that she stows away in the wagon. In this book, when the Purdy family encounters the Indians, the tribe is not named. The reader is privy to the apprehension and fear the pioneers have in regards to the Indians. However, the Indians just want to trade items with the pioneers and pose no threat. Unfortunately, one of the pioneers lets his fear get the better of him, which causes a situation for the people on the wagon train. Eventually, the Purdy family makes it to Oregon.

The second story we read is *Buffalo Before Breakfast*, a Magic Tree House book by Mary Pope Osborne. This story tells of Jack and Annie traveling back into time to the plains. The children are not sure if they have returned to a time when the pioneers and Indians peacefully coexist, or if they have arrived to the time in history when conflicts between the Indians and the “white man” occur. The children come across a Lakota boy. He takes the children back to his family, where Jack and Annie learn a bit of the Native American way of life. This story specifically details the Lakota tribe’s respect for nature and animals. If we have time, we also read another Magic Tree House book called *Twister on Tuesday*. I added this book because the children attend a school in a dugout, which was a common home for the pioneers.

The last main book we read for the pioneer unit is *Wagon Wheels* by Barbara Brenner. This story is exceptional because it gives an account of an African American family traveling west. This story relays the narrative of a father and his three small boys settling in Nicodemus, Kansas. The mother passed away along the journey. They arrive just before the extremely harsh winter. As things are getting desperate in their dugout, Osage Indians bring food and supplies to the town and rescue the pioneers from starvation. Surviving the winter, the father decides to move on to find land away from the prairie where there are trees. He does not want to live in a hole like a rabbit. He leaves the boys alone in Nicodemus to scout land elsewhere. The father tells his sons he will send for them. The older boys are left to tend their baby brother. They encounter wolves, a rattlesnake, brush fires and other obstacles along their way. Eventually, the boys do find their father and establish a new home together.

I read several other stories to the children just to provide additional background information. Some stories they enjoy are *Pioneer Bear* by Joan Sandin. This provides a look into a log cabin living, it shows the clothing they wore and the “new” technology of a camera. *Apples to Oregon* by Deborah Hopkinson and Nancy Carpenter is another story the children enjoy. This book depicts a family bringing fruit tree sapling to the West. Another story is called *Boom Town* by Sonia Levitin tells of a family who has followed their father who is a gold miner. While he is off during the week panning for gold, the family establishes a household. Nothing exists there until the daughter makes a pie for her father one weekend when he returns. This one pie is the start of a Boom Town. The children learn about livery stables, general stores, and other necessities people of that time needed. The Boom Town develops over time. We also read about Annie Oakley, the Gold Rush, The Louisiana Purchase, and the Pony Express and many other great books about this time period.

In all the years I have taught this unit, the mention of Native Americans has been cursory. They are met with apprehension by the pioneers in each story. However, in each book the Native Americans appear in a time of need and are helpful to the pioneers. I have always portrayed them as the unsung heroes and of stewards of nature, but in a superficial manner. I had never considered supplementing the unit with the Native American perspective of Westward Expansion and the pioneers. Not until now...

Day I- Lesson 1 The Native American Perspective

Concept of Civilization

We will start this lesson by discussing “**What is civilization?**”. It is defined in the dictionary as “an advanced state of human society, in which a high level of culture, science, industry, and government has been reached”. Some believe that civilization means having a centralized government or ruling body, religion, job specialization, and

social classes, arts, agriculture, infrastructure and writing. Using these definitions, the Native American tribes certainly qualify as a civilized group.

We will also discuss the opposite concept of “savages”. I will introduce the idea that the colonists referred to the Native American people as savages. Quoting Thomas Jefferson when he stated that the Native Americans could “become our equals”, insinuating that they were not already equal. The Constitution also supported this notion stating only “free, white land-owning men had rights. However, as outlined in the background information, Native American tribes were highly developed in these areas: trade, religious beliefs, agriculture, arts, job specialization, social order, and infrastructure.

We will watch a four minute video called, *The History of Civilization for Kids: How Civilization Began* on You.tube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAQAAJo1fi0>). This will explain concepts such as hunter/gathers, specialization, agriculture, trade, written language, shared values or religion and arts/architecture. I will make vocabulary cards to display in the classroom for all those new vocabulary words.

Following the video, we will discuss Native Americans and see if they were civilized or savages. Then I will show them a quick video on You.Tube called Native Americans for Kids (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxNDKlh-Vjo>) The video shows many aspects of Native American life showing their various types of homes, arts, clothing, tools and so on. The children will have to discuss and decide as a group if we can categorize Native Americans as a civilized culture. I believe they will determine that they were NOT savages.

Day II- Lesson 2 Andrew Jackson and Politics

Once we have established that the Native American tribes were well established cultures, we will begin to discuss Andrew Jackson. At this point, I do not want to reveal the actions that Jackson takes with the Native Indians with the Indian Removal Act. I merely want to establish some background information about Jackson and what seemed to motivate him. This is important because I do not want to sway the students’ ideas in the next parts of the lessons when they are reading *The Trail of Tears*. Remember that one main objective is for the children to be questioning and formulating their own ideas throughout this mini-unit. To introduce the children to Andrew Jackson, we will read a chapter book called *Who is Andrew Jackson?* By Douglas Yacka.

This biography begins by relaying that Andrew Jackson was born on March 15, 1767 in the Carolinas. His parents were immigrants from Scotland who came to America to find a better life. The book accounts how there were thirteen colonies and describes the battles fought for independence from England. This book shows the many aspects of Jackson. It depicts his temper and tendency to get into fights or duels. But it also shows

his love for and dedication to his wife. Jackson was a victorious war general, and the text describes his unbelievable triumph over the British in the Battle of New Orleans in 1815. He became a wealthy plantation owner, owning many slaves. Jackson even adopts a Native American boy, which will seem so counter-intuitive to the children after they learn about Jackson's political positions later in the unit.

As we read the story, the class will make an anchor chart about Andrew Jackson. We will record all the important information learned from the text. Stopping at the end of chapter six, we will discuss our opinions of Jackson. What we have learned to this point is that he is a passionate man about everything; his love for his wife, military service, politics, and so on. He is considered a difficult man at times, but still a national hero.

The children will hopefully see that "history" portrays Jackson as a hero. He is brave. He is a patriot. He is difficult, but the ends justify the means. That is until chapter seven of *Who Was Andrew Jackson?*. This is where things begin to change.

Chapter seven discusses Jackson's stance on the Native American lands. The book mentions the Supreme Court ruling that Jackson ignored. Then the text explains the Indian removal Act. Ultimately leading to the trail of Tears. Even though the book covers these topics, it does so in a cursory manner. However, it does provide another side to Andrew Jackson. Following our reading and discussions of *Who Was Andrew Jackson?*, we will read *The Trail of Tears* by Joseph Bruchac.

Day III- Lesson 3 *The Trail of Tears*

We will start this lesson by playing a game of Musical Chairs. I will divide the children into four groups: 2 groups of red and 2 groups of blue. I will set up a set of chairs for each half of my class, so that I can run two games simultaneously. This will make the game faster, but also involve more students with the red armbands. While we play the game, if a person with the red armband "wins" the chair, I will replace them with a child with the blue armband. We will continue to play until the only people or person left have on the blue armbands.

As an exit ticket, I will ask the children to record what emotions they are feeling directly following the game, along with an explanation of why they are feeling that emotion. Then we will have a brief discussion about how the red children felt about being pushed out of the seat that they had won, a seat that was rightfully theirs. The blue armband children will also share what they felt following the game. Ultimately, I will ask the children to read and discuss the story with me and make the connection between the story and the game of Musical Chairs in which they just participated.

For this part of the unit, we will read Joseph Bruchac's *Trail of Tears*. This may take two or three days to read and discuss this book with the students. In the beginning of the text, there is a map to show the Cherokee land. Cherokee land was present day Kentucky, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama and parts of Georgia and West Virginia. The text tells the reader that in the Cherokee etiological tale, they believe two people emerged from the earth: Kanati and Selu, the first man and woman. All the Cherokee are their children. As a result of this belief, the Cherokee feel extremely connected to their land. This will be an important point to communicate with the students. At a later date, I will illustrate how losing their seat in Musical Chairs felt and compare that to being pushed off the only land you have ever known, and losing everything, sometimes including even the people whom you love.

The story tells how the Cherokee lived in peace alongside the English colonists. They traded and interacted with them for over one hundred years. Then came the American Revolutionary War. When the colonists defeated England, they wanted more. They wanted the land occupied by the Cherokee. After fighting and the destruction of a thousand Cherokee towns, the Cherokee ceded some of their land for the promise that the United States would protect the Cherokee tribe.

The Cherokee adopted many of the ways of the colonists: their clothing, homes, worship, even owning slaves. Many of the Cherokee became wealthy through owning sawmills, plantations or herds. As a group, they assimilated well and even developed their own language in 1821. A man named Sequoyah invented the Cherokee alphabet and proceeded to teach this new language to his daughter, Akyokah first. He understood the benefit that writing and communication offered to the colonists and wanted the same advantage for his people. They set to educating the Cherokee people, until almost everyone knew how to read and write. In 1827, the Cherokee Nation established their own newspaper, selecting the Cherokee Phoenix as its name. However, it seems the more successful the Cherokee became, the more foes they made.

Thomas Jefferson wanted to protect the Cherokee. He believed that through removing them and moving them to a designated "Indian Territory" west of the Mississippi River they would be safe from dishonest white people. The Cherokee land would then open up for the settlers. Jefferson's intention was for the land to be Indian land "for the thousand years it would take to settle the West". However, the "open land" being promised to the Cherokee, already belonged to other Native American tribes. The Cherokee settled in Arkansas for about ten years, and eventually were moved again to Oklahoma. The Cherokee territory in the east was only one tenth its former size. Approximately 17,000 Cherokees remained in the east. Once again, we can tie these events back to our game of Musical Chairs.

I will stop here in the book and have the children write a response to their reading. I want them to summarize what we have read and discussed to this point. Then I want them to give their opinion about Thomas Jefferson's designated "Indian Territory" idea.

I will remind the students about the etiological tale of Kanati and Selu, coming up from the earth. I will raise the idea of ancestral burial grounds, where Native Americans lay to rest their departed. I will have them recall all the life-sustaining benefits the Native Americans reap from the climate of the southeastern area that was Cherokee land. Would they agree or disagree with Jefferson's practice and explain why.

I may show the students the beginning three minutes of a Crash Course video called *The Natives and the English* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTYOQ05oDOI>). This explains how the Native Americans and the Colonists were mutually beneficial to one another. This video uses a lot of vocabulary that may be unknown to third graders. Before showing this video to third graders, work would have to be done to define vocabulary and preview some of the ideas laid out in the video, such as what does "mutual beneficial" mean? (***)Please consider the video fully before you decide to utilize it in its entirety, In the middle of the video, there is discussion of some grotesque and inappropriate topics that may want to be edited out. The middle has little to do with what I wish to present to my students, so I plan to skip to the end.)

At about ten minutes and seventeen seconds into the video, the discussion of history being "cleaned up" and skewed to conform to what we want to believe is addressed. I will show this portion of the video to demonstrate that sometimes the "history" we learn may not be the truth, the total truth. We have to look at the perspective from which the history is being told. Multiple perspectives are especially needed when studying history.

We will continue to add information to our Andrew Jackson anchor chart. I would now pause to take the pulse of the class. What kind of character is Andrew Jackson? What is our opinion of him? What impression has been presented to us through these history books thus far? We would discuss and record our thoughts about this "Great American Hero".

Day IV- Lesson 4 *The Trail of Tears*

The next day, we would continue to read Bruchac's *Trail of Tears*. The book continues to tell us that in 1828, Andrew Jackson was elected president of the United States. His first act was to remove the Indians, sponsoring the Indian Removal Act. Jackson had been a General during the war with Britain. Cherokee fought alongside Jackson: Sequoyah and a man named John Ross being among them. But Andrew Jackson did not repay their loyalty. Additionally, gold was discovered in Cherokee land in Georgia. Georgia was divided into land lots and put up for lottery. The United States government did not protect the Indians.

John Ross and the Cherokee fought for their rights. In 1832, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Cherokee Nation. Andrew Jackson sided with the Southern states and disregarded the Supreme Court ruling. When Ross returned from Washington, to his plantation, he found it had been claimed by a lottery winner. He was told he could stay the night in his own house for a fee. The next day, Ross found his wife and daughter on their way to Tennessee.

There was dissent between the Cherokee. Some thought they should stay and fight for their land, others thought it best to move west. A small group gathered with representatives from the United States government and signed a treaty agreeing to removal to the west. John Ross said the treaty was illegal, but it was passed by a single vote. President Andrew Jackson signed the Treaty of New Echota into law. Removal would begin in 1838.

At this point, the children will view maps showing Cherokee Territory prior to the Indian Removal Act. Then some maps of Cherokee lands as they were moved. Additional artifacts from other areas of the United States and tribes will be shared with the students. An example is the picture of the buffalo skull pile showing the hardships of the Crow tribe in the plains. As a tactic to rid the Crow Indians off of lands, the government utilized techniques of overhunting the bison, in order to starve the Native Americans. The Crow tribe was caught between starvation and the reservations that were being proposed to them. Upon viewing the various techniques that Jackson and the government imposed on the Natives to remove them from the land, the students should be ascertaining their own ideas about how the depiction of the Westward Movement is romanticized. The students should be understanding that there is always more than one perspective.

The new President, Martin Van Buren, sent General Winfield Scott to round up the Cherokee for removal. They were placed in stockade forts with just what they could carry. Families were separated. There was little food and water. Many became sick, then died. All because white people wanted their land.

Ross bargained with General Scott to allow groups to organize their own treks west. Scott agreed because he was upset by what was happening to the Native people. This enraged Jackson. Each Cherokee was given \$65.88 to pay for the use of roads, food, soap, clothing, bedding, and the cost of the wagons and livestock. The trip was over 1,000 miles and would take months. The last Indian group arrived on March 25, 1839. The journey took 139 days. Many died, including John Ross' wife.

The trials were not over. Once they arrived in Indian Territory, they discovered that the supplies promised by the government were not there. People were suffering from small pox. There was division among the Cherokee. However, Ross and others worked

to unite the people. As a result, they rebuilt their community. They established stores, schools, courts, a newspaper, and many other elements of a civilized society, thriving within a couple of decades.

This story portrays the horrors inflicted on the Cherokee people, however it serves another purpose as well. Learning about the Cherokee offers a cautionary tale of what happens when people try to dominate others or their property. Yet it also offers a story of hope and tenacity of spirit. It shows the power of determination and survival. Learning about situations in the past from a different point of views provides a more accurate depiction of history, making everyone feel included and important in our common story.

At this point, the students will view a few video clips. One shows demonstrators from this past fall (2020) trying to tear down a statue of Andrew Jackson in a park in Washington D.C. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D551NResaEs>). We will discuss the pros and cons of memorializing people in history with statues and in other ways. Is it fair to judge people years after the time period? Should we honor people like Andrew Jackson? Can any individual live up to the scrutiny of time? I will also show them a video of Andrew Jackson and the Indian Removal Act. We will discuss how these practices have been repeated with Japanese following Pearl Harbor and even today with Trump's stance on immigration. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3E4f_oekpzI).

The final video the students will view gives a negative view, one could argue a more honest view, of Andrew Jackson and his policies/actions as President. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtZPwlThJTM>) Again, this video needs to be edited to some degree. I will show the beginning four minutes only. This discloses the "other side" of Jackson.

As a class, we will discuss what would happen to our knowledge if we only heard one side or the other. I will provide examples such as Christopher Columbus arrival on the shores or the First Thanksgiving. Telling the students what really happened to those colonies upon the arrival of foreign explorers, will enlighten them to a part of history that has been "patriotized" and glossed over with European bias and perspective.

Day V- Select End of Unit Project

Following the completion of *The Trail of Tears*, I would explain our final project to the students. I like to offer many choices to the students because when I do not put limits on them, they tend to surprise me with an excellent project. They may select from any of the following to demonstrate what they have learned through this mini-unit.

Final Project: Offer multiple options for students to demonstrate what they have learned

- a. Pretend you are a Native American and write a five paragraph (or more) letter to Andrew Jackson explaining what happened to you when they enforced the Indian Removal Act. Or you may create journal entries about your experiences as a Native American during your time of removal from your home lands.
- b. Write an essay explaining what would you have done if you had been in charge?
- c. Create a poster, diorama, song or other artistic presentation representing the Trail of Tears.
- d. Now that we have learned that history is often one-sided, research another topic from another point of view.
Examples: Jamestown settlement, the First Thanksgiving, the right to vote in America, segregation of schools, Black Lives Matter and social injustice, 60's civil right movement, women's equality movement...
- e. Other- must be presented and granted permission before you proceed with this additional idea.

It may take a week or so for the students to complete their projects. When all the projects are completed, we will present the projects to one another. The projects will then be displayed in the library for the school to see.

Resources

Cornelissen, Cornelia. *Soft Rain: A Story of the Cherokee Trail of Tears*. Delacorte Press. 1998. Print

This is a historical fiction chapter book about Soft Rain and her experiences on the Trail of Tears.

Harkin, Joy. *The New Nation 1789-1850*. Oxford University Press. New York, New York. 2003. Print

This is a comprehensive book on the history of America.

Katz, Susan. *When the Shadbush Blooms*. North Delta Book. Batesville, Mississippi. 2007. Print

This book relays a Lenape Indian girl's reflections of how her family and her ancestors from long ago celebrate the changing of the seasons.

Page, Jack. *In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000 Years of American Indians*. Free Press. 2003. Print

This book details the violent and fatal encounters of the native people with Europeans.

Rozema, Vicki. *Voices from the Trail of Tears*. John F. Blair Publishing. Winston Salem North Carolina. 2003. Print

This book provides information about the Trail of Tears.

Smith, Cynthia Leitich. *Jingle Dancer*. Morrow Junior Books. New York, New York. 2000. Print

This is a picture book about a young Indian girl preparing for her first Native American dance.

Stewart, Mark. *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocation*. Compass point Boks. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 2007. Print

This book has information about the Indian Removal Act.

Terry, Michael. *Daily Life in a Plains Indians Village*. Clarion Books. New York, New York. 1999. Print

This book give illustrations and information about the daily life of a Plains Indian.

Weatherford, Jack. *Indian Givers: How Native Americans Transformed the World*. Broadway Books: New York, New York, 2010. Print

This text has information about many tribes of Indians or indigenous people and their contributions throughout history.

Weatherford, Jack. *Native Roots: How the Indians Enriched America*. Fawcett Books: New York, New York, 1991. Print

This book discusses the forced assimilation of the Native Americans.

Weatherford, Jack. *Savages and Civilization Who Will Survive?*. Crown Publishing, Inc. New York, New York. 1994. Print

This book shows history from the Native American point of view.

Notes

¹ Jack Weatherford, *Native Roots: How the Indians Enriched America*, (Fawcett Book. 1991), 42

² *Ibid*, 42

³ *Ibid*, 43

⁴ *Ibid*, 51

⁵ *Ibid*, 52

⁶ *Ibid*, 51

⁷ *Ibid*, 51

⁸ Jack Weatherford, *Indian Givers: How Native Americans Transformed the World*, (Broadway Books. 2010), 323

⁹ Jack Weatherford, *Native Roots: How the Indians Enriched America*, (Fawcett Book. 1991), 53

¹⁰ Michael Terry, *The Daily Life in a Plains Indian Village*, (Clarion Books. 1999), 17

¹¹ Jack Weatherford, *Native Roots: How the Indians Enriched America*, (Fawcett Book. 1991), 85

¹² *Ibid*, 85

¹³ Jack Weatherford, *Native Roots: How the Indians Enriched America*, (Fawcett Book. 1991), 77

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 78

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- ¹⁵ Ibid, 78
- ¹⁶ Ibid, 93
- ¹⁷ Ibid, 96
- ¹⁸ Ibid, 113
- ¹⁹ Ibid, 113
- ²⁰ Ibid, 113
- ²¹ Ibid, 114
- ²² Ibid, 117
- ²³ Jack Weatherford, *Indian Givers: How Native Americans Transformed the World*, (Broadway Books. 2010), 324
- ²⁴ Jack Page, *In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000 Year History of the American Indians*,(Free Press. 2003), 252
- ²⁵ Ibid, 326
- ²⁶ Ibid, 323
- ²⁷ Vicki Rozeman, *Voices From the Trail of Tears*, (John F. Blair Publishing. 2003) 6
- ²⁸ Jack Page, *In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000 Year History of the American Indians*,(Free Press. 2003), 225
- ²⁹ Mark Stewart, *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocations*, (Compass Point Books. 2007), 29
- ³⁰ Jack Page, *In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000 Year History of the American Indians*,(Free Press. 2003), 253
- ³¹ Mark Stewart, *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocations*, (Compass Point Books. 2007), 49
- ³² Jack Page, *In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000 Year History of the American Indians*,(Free Press. 2003), 254
- ³³ Mark Stewart, *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocations*, (Compass Point Books. 2007), 52
- ³⁴ Vicki Rozeman, *Voices From the Trail of Tears*, (John F. Blair Publishing. 2003), 10
- ³⁵ Ibid, 10
- ³⁶ Jack Page, *In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000 Year History of the American Indians*,(Free Press. 2003), 244
- ³⁷ Mark Stewart, *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocations*, (Compass Point Books. 2007), 10
- ³⁸ Vicki Rozeman, *Voices From the Trail of Tears*, (John F. Blair Publishing. 2003) xiii
- ³⁹ Jack Page, *In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000 Year History of the American Indians*,(Free Press. 2003), 256
- ⁴⁰ Vicki Rozeman, *Voices From the Trail of Tears*, (John F. Blair Publishing. 2003), 29
- ⁴¹ Jack Page, *In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000 Year History of the American Indians*,(Free Press. 2003), 258
- ⁴² Vicki Rozeman, *Voices From the Trail of Tears*, (John F. Blair Publishing. 2003), 43
- ⁴³ Mark Stewart, *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocations*, (Compass Point Books. 2007), 67
- ⁴⁴ Ibid, 42
- ⁴⁵ Mark Stewart, *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocations*, (Compass Point Books. 2007), 10
- ⁴⁶ Ibid, 8
- ⁴⁷ Jack Page, *In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000 Year History of the American Indians*,(Free Press. 2003), 262
- ⁴⁸ Mark Stewart, *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocations*, (Compass Point Books. 2007), 10
- ⁴⁹ Jack Page, *In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000 Year History of the American Indians*,(Free Press. 2003), 262
- ⁵⁰ Mark Stewart, *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocations*, (Compass Point Books. 2007), 14
- ⁵¹ Ibid, 13
- ⁵² Vicki Rozeman, *Voices From the Trail of Tears*, (John F. Blair Publishing. 2003), 38
- ⁵³ Mark Stewart, *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocations*, (Compass Point Books. 2007), 80
- ⁵⁴ Vicki Rozeman, *Voices From the Trail of Tears*, (John F. Blair Publishing. 2003), 39

⁵⁵ Jack Page, *In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000 Year History of the American Indians*, (Free Press. 2003), 2

⁵⁶ Mark Stewart, *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocations*, (Compass Point Books. 2007), 82

⁵⁷ Vicki Rozeman, *Voices From the Trail of Tears*, (John F. Blair Publishing. 2003), xiv

⁵⁸ Mark Stewart, *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocations*, (Compass Point Books. 2007), 15

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 85

⁶⁰ Mark Stewart, *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocations*, (Compass Point Books. 2007), 74

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 14