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The Trail of Tears Across Missouri. By Joan Gilbert. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1996. 122 pages.

While there have been several fairly recent works dealing respectfully with the Cherokee Removal, namely John Ehle's *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation* (New York and London: Anchor Books/ Doubleday, 1988) and Grant Foreman's *Indian Removal* (latest edition, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), little attention has been paid to events that occurred along the Trail of Tears in states like Missouri. Freelance writer Joan Gilbert, a native Missourian, has taken the first step to remedy this situation. *The Trail of Tears Across Missouri* tells the story of what happened to the Cherokee *en route* from the East to their newly assigned homeland in the West.

In this short but informative book, Gilbert pays close attention to the multitude of problems encountered by the Cherokees on their forced emigration. The author paints a picture of inept government strategies that failed to take into account the special needs of newborn and elderly Cherokee, as well as young children, the chronically ill, and those who were injured or became sick during the course of the painful journey. At the same time, the reader is introduced to a sometimes cruel, but more often sympathetic public that in fact extended a helping hand to the Cherokees as they were marched towards the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma).

The Trail of Tears Across Missouri is a passionate account of the Cherokee journey through the states of Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas. Gilbert provides a concise introduction and enough background information concerning the events leading to Indian Removal to allow for general comprehension of Cherokee exile. The mass exodus is traced state-by-state with a focus upon Cherokee experiences in Missouri. Throughout, Gilbert maintains her thesis by highlighting the lack of adequate preparation for the Cherokees by those authorities responsible for organizing and undertaking the Removal. Such necessary provisions as food and clothing, even transportation, were typically not of the highest quality, and occasionally not even available.

Despite the relatively thorough treatment of the subject in such a short presentation, Gilbert has failed to provide the reader with any notes or bibliography regarding her sources. These shortcomings can perhaps be overlooked since the author does credit her

sources within the text of the book itself. To her credit, Gilbert has managed to utilize a wealth of primary documents, such as the journals of Cherokees who walked the trail, the writings of missionaries and doctors who accompanied the Cherokees, letters from U.S. soldiers and Cherokee officials, contemporary newspaper articles, and the oral histories of the descendants of Missourians who witnessed the Removal.

The book is favorably structured and, as is typical of histories, the story unfolds more or less chronologically. There are nine brief chapters that can be divided into three sections of three chapters each, with a roughly even distribution of weight assigned to each section. The first section provides an excellent introduction to eastern Cherokee life in the 18th and early 19th centuries, an outline of the development of policies leading to Removal, and a description of major Removal era political figures and prominent Cherokee families. The second section of the book depicts the trials of the Cherokees as they move through Tennessee and Illinois, then into Missouri, and finally Arkansas.

This is the heart and soul of the book, where the routes of the various Cherokee detachments are illustrated along with significant landmarks along these routes. It appears that overall, the majority of the citizens of Missouri felt compassionately for the Cherokees and their sorrowful situation. Gilbert makes it clear that there is still much that can be learned concerning the Cherokee sojourn in Missouri and the interactions between the citizens of that state and the citizens of the Cherokee Nation. The author's observations in this regard account for one of the strengths of *The Trail of Tears across Missouri*. Further, Gilbert devotes some time to the Cherokee presence in northern Arkansas, again focusing on the routes of travel and the places of importance along the way. Inevitably, the discussion leads to the gradual reunification of recent Cherokee immigrants and "Old Settler" Cherokee who had voluntarily relocated to Arkansas and Indian Territory years before the actual enforced Removal.

The last section of the book highlights the development of a new Cherokee Nation in the west. The author briefly but carefully outlines some of the major events and people of the Cherokee Nation, subtly keeping the reader apprised of the significance of nation-building and the creation of national histories, either by the Cherokee, or at the expense of the Cherokee. All in all, Gilbert brings Cherokee history into the 20th century, and carries the reader into a discussion concerning Cherokee initiatives for

preserving the history of the Trail of Tears. Another interesting aspect of this final section is the introduction of Cherokees living in Missouri today, and the author provides a short profile of Beverly Baker Northrup, the current principal chief of the Northern Cherokee Nation of the Old Louisiana Territory. In closing, Joan Gilbert highlights the history of historic preservation and commemoration of the Trail of Tears. Cherokee initiatives are presented in conjunction with those of associations and organizations in Missouri as well as in other states.

Inevitably, due mainly to the journalistic license of the narrative, there are those who would undoubtedly argue that the content of the book is tinged with a grain of the romantic. Nevertheless, Gilbert does not really leave the solid ground of documentation in order to travel into designs or theories of her own making. While the author certainly brings to light some of the harsh realities and tragedies of the Cherokee Removal, she does not dwell incessantly upon those issues. Rather, Gilbert should be commended for utilizing primary documents and for taking the perspective of the Cherokee in her presentation. Likewise, in her implied suggestions for further research into this area, Gilbert has produced a work nearly on par with the slightly more scholarly *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* (1995), edited by Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green.

Overall, *The Trail of Tears Across Missouri* is easy to follow, written in a non-technical journalistic tone, and full of illustrations, maps, and photographs. Additionally, Gilbert provides a list of Missouri sites along the Trail of Tears, a list of further suggested readings, and addresses for several museums and tribal or community agencies to contact for more information about the Trail of Tears. All of these elements combine to present an excellent introductory account of the Trail of Tears for a general audience. Since the book is both succinct and instructive, it follows that this treatment of the Trail of Tears would be quite appropriate for high school and especially college level courses.

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Since Predator Came: Notes From the Struggle for American Indian Liberation. By Ward Churchill. Littleton, Colorado: Aigis Publications, 1995. 404 pages.