

# *Missouri Legacy Of Trail Of Tears*

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The Indian Removal Act was passed through congress in May of 1830. The removal involved the five "civilized tribes", namely, the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole.

The Cherokee, with over 51% mixed bloods, were removed in 17 detachments. There were three detachments which left on June of 1838 on a water route which resulted in a severe loss of lives. The remaining 13,149 Cherokees were removed under the oversight of Principal Chief John Ross in thirteen detachments of about 1,000 each, most going over land in the fall of 1838. It is estimated that 4,500 Cherokees died before reaching Oklahoma.

A section of the Trail Of Tears passed through the state of Missouri. To commemorate the tragic event of the removal of the Cherokee nation during the years 1838 and 1839, Congress designated thee "Trail Of Tears National Historic Trail". In December of 1987, this encompassed approximately 2,200 miles of land and water routes.

The crossing of the Mississippi River from Illinois to just north of Cape Girardeau, Missouri was very treacherous. The section of the trail across the state of Missouri is approximately 200 miles long, but today much of it is lost being swallowed up in private farm land and is difficult to be identified. Some of the locations were established by the "Trail Of Tears National Park Service and "National Historic Trails".

Some of these are: Trail Of Tears State Park in Jackson Missouri, Snelson Brinker House in Steelville Missouri; Star City Ranch in Berry County, Missouri; Meramac Spring in St. James, Missouri, and one campsite at New Madrid, Missouri on the Mississippi River. Also, there is a 31 mile segment in the Mark Twain Forrest and several other locations of the trail exist across the state of Missouri.

The route led by B.B. Cannon, through Greene County (Springfield, Missouri) has been marked with historic signs where the actual trail passes by modern day roads. These signs and "Six Nations Park Services National Historic Trail Of Tears signs, and Three National Park Services Enterprise , enabled 5 stations to be dedicated in April, 2012. Greene County was the first county in Missouri to mark the actual location of the Trail Of Tears where the trail crossed existing roads. In 2013, Ozark Greenways of Springfield, began clearing with bobcat machinery and chainsaws the area that has been identified as the portion of the Trail through Greene County.



In the spring of 2014, work by volunteers will resume on this project. Jack White Eagle Shryock, Leader Of Bands of the Southeastern Cherokee Council, has already helped in the clearing of this trail through this area. Along with being a Greene County Historic site of the Trail Of Tears, this section has also been designated as a National Historic Trail by the National Park Service. After this restoration project is completed in this part of Missouri, the Cherokee Nation leaders will be invited to dedicate it.

More information on the trail will be continued in the Fall edition of Cherokee Talking Leaves.

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