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This dissertation discusses ways to examine historical events such as the Cherokee Trail of Tears through various rhetorical lenses and scrutinizes how to negotiate meaning via these strategies. This work will contribute to the current discourse on how rhetoric and rhetorical strategies guide the reexamination of a unique American Indian/Euro-American history.

To accomplish this task, I examine the Trail of Tears event through rhetorical lenses that utilize dynamic genres such as ethnohistory, witness, and women's voice. To study the Trail of Tears narrative in this way, I employ theorists such as Amy Devitt as well as historians, ethnologists, and writers. Also included are first-hand accounts written by government officials, doctors, missionaries, Cherokees, and others who witnessed the Cherokee removal that tell the story of the Trail of Tears from alternative viewpoints, creating dynamic genres that assist in the multivocality of the historical event.

This study contributes to the current scholarship that reexamines history in a way that provides a rhetorical space for multiple and lesser-known voices from the Trail of Tears to arise. It is these voices and the others included in this dissertation that work to bring change to the current paradigm concerning Indian removal and the Native Americans that lived and died while walking the Trail of Tears.

THE RHETORIC OF NUNA DUAL TSUNY: RETELLING THE CHEROKEE
TRAIL OF TEARS

by

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To André

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Tsali

I will die
for them,
along side
my two
eldest sons.

Let my people go. Let them be free to plow their sacred lands.
Loosen from their throats your nooses made from fear and hatred!

Life for life.
My youngest
will pass on
the true story
of my duty,
remembering
the last time
he looked
into my eyes
near the rush
of red rapids,
the eternal
Tuckaseigee.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I wrote the above concrete poem entitled “Tsali” many years ago after viewing his character’s portrayal in the outdoor drama *Unto These Hills*, performed almost every summer evening on the Cherokee Indian reservation, located in Cherokee, North Carolina.

According to the most current dramatic interpretation, when the United States military came to round up the Cherokee people for removal, Tsali, his wife Wilani, and their children headed toward a mountain trail. Soon after, in scene 10 of the drama, Wilani’s life came to a violent end when she fell, and an intoxicated army militant beat her to death.

In the next scene Major Davis, a leader in the American Army, sent two men, Drowning Bear and Will Thomas, to Tsali’s mountain hiding place to offer him this deal: if Tsali surrenders, the Cherokee people concealed in the mountains can regain their freedom. Tsali agreed. But when he and his three sons returned to the camp, the army executed not only the father, but his two oldest sons as well. It was this execution by firing range that inspired my poem because I realized that Tsali’s selfless action was what allowed my ancestors to

remain and flourish in the Smoky Mountains, living on the land that is now called Qualla Boundary or the Cherokee Indian reservation.

At the time when I wrote the poem, I did not realize that the drama, and my inspired poem that reflects my interpretation of Tsali's courageous story of cultural martyrdom, were part of what Tom Carr in his article "Varieties of Other; Voice and Native American Culture" calls "the final romance period associated with the Native American" (196). According to Carr, this final stage stems from the era surrounding World War II. He writes:

It is based in part on an enlarged version of what James A. Clifton calls the development of the romantic Indian narrative. In "Cultural Fictions" (1990), he explains that this narrative is transmitted across time and space in all forms of media: literature, oral histories, films, and ethnographies . . . The traditional narrative tells the tragic story of the righteous Indian in North American history. It also helps to create a place for living Native Americans in modern moral orders and political systems (196-197).

As Carr asserts, this last "period of romance" . . . "is transmitted across time and space" and "tells the tragic story of the righteous Indian in North American history." Both the Cherokee drama *Unto These Hills* and my poem "Tsali" can be transmitted—or viewed or read—over time and space, and both genres portray Tsali as "a righteous Indian in North American history." And although my interpretation of Tsali's story is told using a different form than that of the drama, and though they both play a part in the romantic tradition regarding the Indian narrative, they both function to add Tsali's story to the American experience in

hopes of creating a more multi-voiced history and a greater understanding of the Cherokee culture.

The goal of writing this dissertation is no different, save the genres used that function to retell the Trail of Tears story. The genres that I employ for this project include ethnohistory, witness, and women's voice. Throughout the following chapters, I argue that these genres rhetorically function in ways that retell the Trail of Tears story: they open the reader to multiple interpretations that are not often heard in mainstream American teachings.

Amy Devitt's work on genre theory has been an especially valuable resource for my purposes. She opens the door for genre to become dynamic, breathing. She states in her book *Writing Genres* that "studying genre is studying how people use language to make their way in the world" (9). I have chosen genre theory as the theoretical framework to illustrate how the people involved in the Trail of Tears used language to make their ways in the world.

Devitt also claims that "genres function for a group of language users to fulfill the group's needs" (34). In the case of this dissertation, that group is the Cherokee Indians and the other people involved in the Trail of Tears experience. Genre theory is important to this dissertation because it shows (rather than just tells) history, persuading its users to see events like the Trail of Tears in ways that make meaning and importance. The genres discussed in this dissertation all do work responding to situations, acting in recurring situations, serving the needs of a particular community, and changing with the reader or context. They bring

more interpretations to the Trail of Tears, a narrative that has not yet totally established its well-deserved and much-needed place in dominant society. This work will hopefully contribute to the story of the Trail of Tears as an historical event, adding interpretations that enhance, but diverge from, the present paradigm. Further, I hope that this dissertation provides an avenue for American citizens to reexamine their country's past, recognizing its role as colonizer.

In addition to contributing to a greater academic dialogue that encompasses cultural rhetoric, there are other reasons why I want to belong to the increasing scholarship that works to add fullness to the Trail of Tears account. One main factor is because of my Cherokee Indian heritage. While growing up in my parents' home, I never had the opportunity to experience the Native American storytelling tradition because there were not any stories told. In fact, my mother's father told her that although she was Cherokee Indian, she need not speak of that to anyone. Back then, life was about survival; my mother needed to "pass" (meaning, pass for a white female) so that life could be livable. Therefore, I never knew Cherokee stories or history or culture. All I knew was that my dark hair, dark skin, and dark eyes were very different from the blonde, fair-skinned Euro-American girls with whom I attended school.

My experiences in academia were not much different. My K-12 and undergraduate experiences did not include the Indigenous voice (other than some childhood Thanksgiving pageants). I soon fell victim to the romantic belief that I learned from educators, the big cinema "silver screen," and the small

television set. These misleading images taught me that I was a savage, a brave, a drunk, a sex addict, and a nature worshiper. I also believed, as many people still do today, that the historical Indian/European relationship was amicable; I knew nothing concerning Indian removal or cultural genocide.

Plainly and painfully, I knew nothing of the history of the ones from whom I came. Slowly, however, through texts, colleagues, and mentors, I began realizing that there was, in fact, a rich history that beckoned me to learn it, to tell it, and to teach it. I want others (Native and non-Native) to know the histories that I have strived to and continue to learn. What I do not want is for anyone else to remain ignorant (like I did for too many years) to an alternative reading of history.

It is this learning and relearning of the past, another primary goal of this dissertation, that is crucial to the future of all those living in the United States. There are too many schools and universities that do not bother to teach Native American literature, history, and culture—let alone an event as horrific as the Trail of Tears—from the Indian perspective. This must and can change through scholars and activists that encourage the addition to curriculum of American Indian topics. And after these necessary incorporations are made, if faculty truly wishes to teach a more equitable American story, it must begin by including more indigenous voices. To achieve this curricular and cultural goal, Native American anthologies and other texts can be useful in grouping ideas, genres and different cultures. But, be careful; even though teachers can verify sources, texts that

appear to be trustworthy are not always the most honest representations. For example, Carlos Castaneda's hoax—and accepted doctoral dissertation at UCLA—*The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge* depicts the author's (fabricated) story about living as an apprentice to a native Yaqui sorcerer, learning about his culture, magic, and medicine.

Establishing a relationship with local area tribal members is also a pragmatic way to check the sources utilized in the classroom. These relationships can be avenues to secure guest speakers, bringing more intimate ways of knowing for students and teachers. Lastly, students can go into the Native community, attending pow-wows, cultural art shows, and demonstrations. In essence, there exists many ways to incorporate the Native American voice into curriculum, creating an environment that appeals to a culturally equal American society.

As stated earlier, my endeavor in writing this dissertation is twofold: professional and personal. Professionally, I desire to become a part of the dialogue dealing with the rhetoric of Native American events such as the Trail of Tears. By belonging to such a community, I can assist in spreading new rhetorical interpretations of culture and history, thereby righting the wrongs of the past. My personal goal has been to learn more about myself: someone that is considered Other in American society. I have learned from the voices included in this dissertation that I am who I say I am: a Christian, (maternal) Cherokee woman who strives to tell the untold stories of her childhood.

CHAPTER II

THE RHETORICAL DEBUNKING OF INDIAN HISTORY

Should your Majesties command it, all the inhabitants [peoples] could be taken away to Castile [Spain], or made slaves on the island. With 50 men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want.

Christopher Columbus

The above 1493 log written to Lord Raphael Sánchez, the treasurer of Aragón, by well-known *discoverer* of the Americas, Christopher Columbus, seems shocking to most because history does not present the explorer in this way. Americans tend to equate Christopher Columbus with adventure and heroism rather than Eurocentrism and slavery. Generations of teachers from the dominant culture have taught the legends of Columbus, from *discovering* America to *inviting* some of his new *friends* to make the acquaintance of his Spanish King and Queen (Ferdinand and Isabella). The way that readers have come to imagine Columbus' actions is very different from reality. William Bigelow writes in his essay "Rereading the Past" that even though Columbus did find the

Americas (for himself) and did invite some Indians¹ back to Spain, he also captured:

hundreds of Indian slaves and sent them back to Spain where most of them were sold and subsequently died. What is also true is that in his quest for gold Columbus had the hands cut off any Indian who did not return with his or her three month quota. And what is also true is that in one island alone, Hispaniola, an entire race of people was wiped off the face of the earth in a mere 40 years of Spanish administration (65-66).

This knowledge, which is not new, that Columbus seized “hundreds of Indian slaves and sent them back to Spain where most of them were sold and subsequently died” debunks the theory that Columbus’ primary expeditious intentions concerned the shape of the earth. Bigelow suggests in his piece that, “Columbus’s quest was wealth, both for Spain and himself personally” (67).

In addition to this avaricious persona, Columbus also takes on a new identity when he “had the hands cut off any Indian” who did not meet his or her gold quota. In this context, his role as murderer—a distant image from the courageous sailor that many Americans find synonymous with his name—comes closer to the historical Christopher Columbus rather than the Westernized legend that American citizens have been taught.

¹ The terms Indian, Native American, and American Indian are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation. And although these names do not represent the true name of the Cherokee people, Tsa la gi, they refer to the people of this country (now called the United States) colonized by early Europeans.

And, just like Columbus, Native Americans have been westernized, except they have been presented in a very different—inaccurate and mostly negative—way than that of the famous explorer. In his article “Varieties of Other: Voice and Native American Culture,” Tom Carr reminds the reader of the traditional view of the American Indian, and how past relations with whites, dominant-culture-created mythology concerning the tribes, and other pertinent issues have contributed to the Native American becoming a figure of “otherness.” He writes:

Traditionally, of course, what we have known of Native American cultures has come from poorly handled political dealings, superstitious colonial folklore, and primitive anthropological ethnographies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Through these sources of misinformation, those in the mainstream culture have created an Indian that was a better match *for* their needs than *to* the people and the cultures being “otherized,” being portrayed alternately as sub-human and a special human. The effect of both portrayals not only diminished the Indian, but distorted and silenced native peoples and their cultures (191-192).

As Carr notes, “sources of misinformation” have had disastrous effects on the Native American culture. They have created a “sub-human and a special human,” and the effects of these portrayals have “not only diminished the Indian, but distorted and silenced native peoples and their cultures.” By including and examining this example and others like it, the argument for rereading history, particularly that of Native Americans, becomes paramount.

History, on all logical accounts, supposedly documents and informs its users about their pasts and the pasts of others in the local community, country,

or the world. A reader would presume, then, that the ethos involved in the telling and retelling of history would be a principal task. However, as the example of Columbus demonstrates, for the Native American, a full history has not yet been told. Many voices of peoples residing in the United States long before the land was named such have been silenced due to the dominant culture's attempted genocidal attacks—physical, societal, and psychological. Angela Cavender Wilson (Wahpatonwan Dakota) writes in her article “American Indian History or Non-Indian Perceptions of American Indian History?” about the current white control of American Indian studies. She states:

American Indian history is a field dominated by white, male historians who rarely ask or care what the Indians they study have to say about their work. Under the guise of academic freedom they have maintained their comfortable chairs in archives across the country and published thousands of volumes on whites' interpretations of American Indian history. Very few have attempted to find out how Native people would interpret, analyze, or question the documents they confront, nor have they asked if the Native people they are studying have their own versions or stories of their past. As long as history continues to be studied and written in this manner the field should more appropriately be called non-Indian perceptions of American Indian history (23).

That, of course, is the problem. Research questions, practices and data selection often blind the researcher to the implications of colonization. Because of this perception that only a few white male historians “have attempted to find out how Native people would interpret, analyze, or question the documents they confront.” Wilson suggests that tribal and family historians be consulted about

American Indian history. She also directs historians to establish relationships with native peoples over time, allowing them to comment on the work in progress. Just as important, Wilson states that incorporating the native perspective “allow[s] native people input into how their history will be understood by the rest of America . . . [and] it also would allow the academician the privilege of having community-endorsed work” (25-26). By consulting American Indian groups, as Wilson suggests, both researcher and tribal member can establish a future determination.

In addition to the problems inherent in research methodologies and data selection, the researcher’s location, or site of analysis, must also be understood. Scholars’ own biases shape their perspectives of and rhetorical presentations of history. Kenneth Burke in “Terministic Screens” argues that the words we choose direct our attention and set a linguistic course of association and meaning, closing off other meaning: “[W]hatever terms we use, they necessarily constitute a corresponding kind of screen; and any such screen necessarily directs the attention to one field rather than another” (50). In acknowledging one’s own cultural identity within the writing of history, these acts of attempted colonization and cultural genocide, in the least, can be examined as a continuing generational force in American society, what Burke refers to as a “continuity” within a terministic screen (50-1). Susan Lobo and Steve Talbot discuss in their text *Native American Voices* the generational interpretations of (his)tory. They write:

Most scholars who write history are the products of their own particular ethnic past. They have “recorded” and interpreted historical events through the eyes of “pioneers” and “empire builders,” who were almost entirely white males of property and influence. Thus, most general histories of the Western Hemisphere are not histories of the region, nor are they histories of all of the many peoples who reside there, that is, a people’s history. Rather, most such works are essentially chronicles of the European conquest and the subsequent national development of English-, Spanish-, and Portuguese-speaking white people during the succeeding centuries (128).

Reminding most American scholars, as Lobo and Talbot do, that they “interpret historical events through the eyes of “pioneers” and “empire builders” who were almost entirely white males of property and influence” prompts a new understanding of America as colonizer. As terministic screens, these metaphors that shape historical narratives allow for a range of understandings and observations, but only within that metaphoric field: “Within that field there can be different screens, each with its ways of directing the attention and shaping the range of observations implicit in the given terminology” (Burke 50). Also, knowing that “most general histories of the Western Hemisphere are not histories of the region, nor are they histories of all of the many peoples who reside there, that is, a people’s history” argues for the reexamination of the past and its people, providing, what Burke calls “discontinuity,” a disruptive force in the historical traditions (50-51).

To address the problems of terministic screens that blind the historian to her colonizing tendencies, she disrupts the historical traditions by selecting different data, by engaging in different methodologies and inquiries, and by

situating herself and her biases in her writing. From this location outside of the tradition, she systematically addresses and critiques the continuity of that tradition and provides new voices and perspectives to establish histories. To accomplish a more complete “people’s history,” a reexamination of (all) those residing within a particular community—in this case, the United States—needs to be performed. Not only does reconsidering past data in the context of historical revisionism create new multi-voiced interpretations, but it also allows *others* working on the fringe of academia to claim more opportunities to speak—and to update history—to a greater community. Wikipedia web source explains revisionist historians’ work, their cultural makeup, and where they might be situated within academia:

Revisionist historians often contest the mainstream or traditional view of historical events, they raise views at odds with traditionalists which must be freshly judged. Oftentimes historians who are in the minority, such as feminist historians, or ethnic minority historians, or those who work outside of mainstream academia in smaller and less known universities, or the youngest scholars, who have the most to gain and the least to lose, by shaking up the establishment. In the friction between the mainstream of accepted beliefs and the new perspectives of historical revisionism, received historical ideas are either changed, or solidified and clarified. If over a period of time the revisionist ideas become the new establishment status quo a paradigm shift is said to have occurred (par. 3).

Revisionist researchers such as “feminist historians, or ethnic minority historians, or those who work outside of mainstream academia” and others like them who

possess “views at odds with traditionalists” that locate greater awareness in history can change how events such as the Trail of Tears are interpreted.

A large part of the reexamination process for contributors such as the ones working in this field is devoted to the genre of ethnohistory, which I discuss in more detail in chapter two. Ethnohistorians can re-envision events such as the Trail of Tears by including and analyzing dynamic genres such as ethnography, geography, cultural folklore, and oral history as sites for historical data and narrative. Lobo and Talbot state that these researchers use genres to “get as close to the actual event as possible, for instance through eyewitness accounts, and on-the-scene reports” (128). These processes of research, selection, and composition, as Lobo and Talbot testify, turn an event such as the Battle of Wounded Knee into the Massacre of Wounded Knee. In the case of the Cherokee event, ethnohistory can turn “Indian removal” into the “Trail of Tears,” thus allowing for an alternative terministic screen to the same historical occurrence.

Dynamic Genre

Using data from multiple genres to create a new and competing story undercuts the colonizing tendencies of historical narrative through its inclusivity and multivocality. It can transform the account of Indian removal into the narrative of the Trail of Tears, changing the way researchers and readers examine and make meaning out of the event. According to Amy Devitt in *Writing*

Genres, “studying genre is studying how people use language to make their way in the world” (9). I have chosen genre theory as the theoretical framework for this dissertation to illustrate how the people involved in the Trail of Tears use(d) language to make their ways in the world. Genre theory is important to this dissertation because it highlights the ways in which terministic screens both close off voices and open others to history and the ways that these screens persuade historians and history readers to understand events like the Trail of Tears differently. My use of genre in this dissertation diverges from tradition. Working from Devitt, my examples illustrate how genre can be a function, rather than just a form, capturing a new way to look at genre and history.

Devitt explains that a large scholastic community has echoed Carolyn Miller’s (1984) definition of genre(s): “typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations.” To comprehend this definition of genre, Devitt states that “understanding genre entails understanding a rhetorical situation and its social context” (13). To accomplish this task, a change in thinking must occur. In her article “Generalizing about Genre: New Conceptions of an Old Concept,” Devitt argues that genre is dynamic, not static. To come to know genre in this manner, she suggests that the ways in which readers think about genre need to change:

Our reconception [of genre] will require releasing old notions of genre as form and text type and embracing new notions of genre as dynamic patterning of human experience, as one of the concepts that enable us to construct our writing world. Basically, the new conception of genre

shifts the focus from effects (formal features, text classification) to sources of those effects (573).

Before genre that reexamines the past can be dynamic, readers must first, as Devitt asserts, “[release] old notions of genre as form and text type and [embrace] new notions of genre as dynamic patterning of human experience.” Therefore, when reexamining the Trail of Tears through a rhetorical lens, genre must act in society in some manner.

There are many functions of genre that Devitt explains in her book *Writing Genres*. Throughout this dissertation, genre can be found functioning in a group, serving the needs of a particular community, constructing and responding to situations, and changing and shifting over time with its contexts and readers. As Devitt explains:

One common way of describing genre’s social involvement is to claim that genres function for a group of language users to fulfill the group’s needs. The rhetorical situation to which a genre is related arises from the functional needs of a particular group; hence those who encounter that situation are those who need and use that genre. Genres function for people in their interactions with one another in groups and through social structures; they are social actions (34).

As she asserts, “genres function for a group of language users to fulfill the group’s needs.” In the case of this dissertation, that group is the Cherokee Indians and the other people involved in the Trail of Tears experience.

Throughout this dissertation, many voices that “encounter[ed] that situation” called the Trail of Tears use[d] genres such as visual rhetoric, ethnohistory, witness, and women’s voices to fulfill a need, interacting with one another and making sense of her/his own situation (forced removal) that also recurred within the whole group. These interactions or genres functioning as “social actions” create a Trail of Tears like other traditional forms cannot. Genre theory as the theoretical construct of this dissertation is valuable because reexamining the Trail of Tears in any other way creates a different story, one that is static, quiet: what most would call Indian removal.

Another function of genre is to construct and respond to situations. Devitt states in *Writing Genres*:

Our construction of genre is what helps us to construct a situation. Genre not only responds to but also constructs recurring situation . . . Genres *construct* and *respond* to situation; they are *actions* . . . As our constructions of situations change and new situations begin to recur, genres change and new genres develop. Since situation is inherently a social as well as rhetorical concept, genres change with society” (577-579).

Therefore, if the “construction of genre is what helps us to construct a situation,” as Devitt claims, then that construction (action) must make meaning out of the situation. And, if genre “[changes] with society” it can be fluid enough to reexamine the Trail of Tears event from new rhetorical perspectives. Not only does dynamic genre create a space for the event to become flexible, but it also

allows the situation to move through time, much like the stories that are passed down through generations in the Native American storytelling tradition.

Illustrations of Dynamic Genre

From and with this theoretical framework, I now offer illustrations of how genre theory can work to provide a different story involving Native Americans and the Cherokee Trail of Tears. Using maps, migration, and population analyses, I work across the fields of topography, anthropology, ethnography, and demography to provide a greater awareness concerning Native American history, and, more locally, the Cherokee Trail of Tears story. Maps, migration, statistics, and population charts work together to become a dynamic genre of visual rhetoric, by identifying specific terrains and sites of events and by showing movement and density of peoples. For example, looking at a map creates a very different kind of rhetoric than does reading words on a page. Topography, or the study of land surfaces and regions, is important to examining and reexamining history. Topography creates a vehicle for creators and users of maps to examine land masses such as mountainous regions, deserts, and forests. Visual rhetoric in this sense creates meaning via communication while serving a particular community, thus operating as a terministic screen within a cultural community. For Native Americans and early Europeans, visual rhetoric was an important means of dialoging and deceiving. For example, in his article “The Ethnohistory

of Native America,” James Axtell writes that early Native Americans drew maps for encroaching Europeans:

[Native Americans used] fingers or sticks on sand and dirt, on birchbark, skin, and paper with charcoal, paint, or quill pens and ink. Much of their information was incorporated in colonial maps, which were then used to wrest the continent from the natives’ obliging hands (19).

As Axtell shows, visual rhetoric as genre functions to assist and mislead. While the tribal peoples were using “fingers or sticks on sand and dirt” to help their new neighbors, the white man took that information to steal “the continent from the natives’ obliging hands.”

The above example leads to another function of visual rhetoric: it demonstrates how topography changes over time. Looking at that loss through a topographic lens is more powerful than just reading about the loss because the visual rhetoric connects to the imagination and logic about land size and loss. It shows (rather than tells) a part of the Trail of Tears story.

Rhetorically, visual rhetoric can persuade, creating a sense of realness that words on a page often cannot. As Charles Hill asserts in his article “Reading the Visual in College Writing Classes,” visual rhetoric provides a stronger presence, and “can crowd out other considerations from the viewer’s mind” (119). In this way, topography as genre functions to capture more attention than words

alone. A more in-depth study on maps as a part of the genre of ethnohistory can be found in chapter two.

Working along side of maps, evidence of migration is another piece of the visual rhetoric pie that illustrates genre theory. This type of rhetoric functions to provide visual evidence of life and migration prior to 1492. The anthropological and ethnographical fields incorporate visual rhetoric to make meaning out of history and culture. When dealing with an exposition of an alternative American history, there must first be a realization and a belief that American Indians lived on the North American continent prior to the European invasion(s). Donald Fixico (Shawnee, Sac & Fox, Seminole, and Muscogee Creek) writes in his article "Ethics and Responsibilities in Writing American Indian History" that "non-Indians have had to face the issue that American Indians, indeed, existed in the Americas well before the accidental arrival of Columbus, and that Native Americans are a vital part of this country" (86). Grasping the practicality that populations resided on the continent prior to the coming of later non-Indians confirms an American Indian history.

Fixico also asserts that "Indian history should not be regarded as a special or exotic subfield to be pushed aside and ignored. In actuality Indian history has set the foundation of American history" (90). By creating a space for Native American history, and not allowing it to be "pushed aside and ignored," more interpretations of Indian history can contribute to the idea that this past has indeed "set the foundation of American history." This vantage point assists in the

reenlightenment of America through the eyes of its principle people: the American Indians. In these terms, then, historical revisionism functions to provide speech for silenced voices.

Finding new ways to examine the past allows the reader to consider alternative histories, ones that contradict the current norm. And in this state of challenge, new approaches can be discussed and spread throughout the community, classroom, and country, ultimately reaching toward a new paradigm. For example, for many years people thought that peoples migrated over the Bering Strait and then headed due south during the last ice age, approximately thirteen thousand years ago. This idea has dominated history textbooks for many years. Now, thanks to the rhetorical act of reexamination and visual rhetoric as genre, this theory is not so concrete. In fact, Charles Mann states in his text *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*, that “in 1997 this theory abruptly came unglued” (16). Mann explains:

An archeological dig in southern Chile had turned up compelling evidence of human habitation more than twelve thousand years ago. And because these people lived seven thousand miles from the Bearing Strait, a distance that presumably would have taken a long time to traverse, they almost certainly arrived before the ice-free corridor opened up (In any case, new research had cast doubt on the existence of that corridor.) Given the near impossibility of surpassing the glaciers without the corridor, some archeologists suggested that the first Americans must have arrived twenty thousand years ago, when the ice pack was smaller. Or even earlier than that—the Chilean site had suggestive evidence of artifacts more than thirty thousand years old. Or perhaps the Indians traveled by boat, and didn’t need a land bridge. Or maybe they arrived via Australia, passing the South Pole (16).

Here, a new discovery that can be held and seen functions to challenge the past, asserting that Indians “almost certainly arrived before the ice-free corridor opened up.” This new finding is important not only because it lends itself to even more questions concerning migration, but it also acts to right the wrongs of the American paradigm that still suggests history on this land did not begin until 1492. Examining physical evidence changes the perspective because the physical artifact testifies to a specific time and place in the past connected to the culture and community of that moment.

Working with maps and migration, population analysis is another contributor to the genre of visual rhetoric. This illustration of dynamic genre pulls from the field of demography and involves documents such as the chart, poll, graph, census, and other visual rhetoric that create a population base for Native Americans. Populations have been historically underestimated; thus mainstream histories have contributed to the belief that the native peoples’ decline in number after European contact was far less severe than it actuality was. It is not surprising that non-Indians—and deceived Indians, in some cases—do not believe that the cultures of the Americas thrived in great numbers for many years prior to the arrival of Hernando de Soto, Christopher Columbus and other explorers. According to Ward Churchill’s (Keetoowah Cherokee) text *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492 to the Present*, the committed genocide (in numbers) was far greater than initially estimated and reported. In fact, his research estimates that “the demographic reality of

aboriginal North America was about fifteen times of that pretended by Smithsonian convention [under one million] until well into the 1980s, and about seven-and-a-half times what it is prepared to admit now” (135). These new estimates of “seven-and-a-half times” the standard, currently believed number reveals a staggering situation and, it prompts the reader to logically consider these new numbers as *fact*. This appeal also creates emotionally devastating images of massive deaths, likened to a holocaust, a direct result of colonization.

In his text *The Cherokees: A Population History*, Russell Thornton (Cherokee) discusses how colonization affected millions of aboriginal people. He examines depopulation through the lens of European contact:

American Indians declined to only 250,000 or less by about 1900, surely due to both increased American Indian death rates and decreased birthrates following the arrival of the Europeans and Africans. Changes in death rates and birthrates resulted primarily from the introduction of such Old World diseases as smallpox, measles, cholera, diphtheria, scarlet fever, the plague, malaria, and various forms of influenza and venereal disease into the relatively disease-free pre-Columbian population. They also resulted from wars and genocide, removal and relocation, and destruction of native ways of life (14).

Thornton reveals another side of history, one that places much of the blame for such vast population loss at a time “following the arrival of the Europeans and Africans.” Without the influx of these new people, millions of Natives living in an Eden-like state that was “relatively disease-free” would not have been introduced (intentionally or not) to many deadly diseases. Not all disease

transference was spread naturally. For instance, Churchill states that Lord Jeffrey Amherst used biological warfare in 1763, commanding that smallpox-infected blankets be sent to certain tribes. Amherst wrote in the instructions that “you will do well to [infect] the Indians by means of blankets as well as to every other method that can serve to extirpate this [execrable] race” (154). Also, as Churchill further affirms,

The disease spread like wildfire among the Ottowas, Mlingos, Miami, Lenni Lenâpés (Delawares), and several other peoples. By conservative estimate, the toll was over 100,000 dead, a matter which effectively broke the back of native resistance in what the United States would later call the “Northwest Territory” (154).

This example of a massive death toll that totaled “over 100, 000” and others like it creates a much more realistic visualization and conceptualization of colonization and cultural genocide. The numbers of population loss create a visual rhetoric that functions to show a devastating death toll that was cross-tribal. Also interesting is that the well-known town in Massachusetts is named after this European man; this fact is further proof that Americans do not realize whom they celebrate. This ignorance is why more multiple truths and interpretations about history need to be offered. Reading alternative and varied truths (in the least) allows readers to know another side of their cultural pasts.

Cherokee Demography

Genre theory can create a different history, transforming what is typically known as Indian removal into a Trail of Tears narrative. Opening a terministic screen in terms of demography persuades readers to grasp an alternative history of the Trail of Tears. Envisioning demography in this way allows for a closer reexamination of more intimate data surrounding population and depopulation such as food supply, disease, and birth and death rates. There were (at least) an estimated 22,000 Cherokees living at the time of 1650. As Thornton explains, by reassessing information regarding the food supply and the living area at that time, a population number can be determined. First of all, the Cherokee food supply was plentiful, for the people:

had various wild food plants at their disposal, producing vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds; for example, pigweed (amaranth), varieties of *Smilax*, arrowhead, cattail, blueberries, mulberries, raspberries, and blackberries, grapes, acorns, walnuts, hickory nuts, and chestnuts. In addition, they had a variety of cultivated foods, particularly maize (corn), beans, squash, gourds and pumpkins, and sunflowers. The Cherokees also had access to abundant animal life, including deer, buffalo, bears, opossums, raccoons, rabbits, squirrels, wild turkeys, pigeons, trout, catfish, bass, and various shellfish (16-17).

In addition to these “various wild food plants” and “cultivated foods” and “abundant animal life,” the Cherokees lived on 120,000 square kilometers. These ethnographic findings combined, as Thornton asserts, could have

supported a population of 30,000 people, but he doubts there were more Cherokees than that.

Causes of depopulation were much the same for Cherokees as it was for all Native Americans: disease, war, genocide, removal. Looking again at European contact, Thornton claims that after De Soto's (early 1500's) visit, diseases confronted the population. Thornton lists possible epidemics: "after De Soto and up to 1650 include influenza (1559), typhus (1586), and bubonic plague (1612-19); there was possibly also a severe epidemic of an unknown disease from about 1564-1570" (18). Examining these epidemics in terms of revisionism reinforces the idea that the "Old World" diseases were factors in Cherokee depopulation. It may also prove that there "may have been significant depopulation of the Cherokees by 1560," the 22,000 population approximation date. Reexamining the past through population analysis works with other aspects such as maps and migration to become part of a visual rhetoric that functions to fill a need for a more accurate number of Cherokees living and dying before, during, and after the Trail of Tears.

Like disease, removal was another primary cause of Cherokee depopulation. Most sources such as textbooks and even books specifically written on the Trail of Tears subject claim that close to 4,000 lives were lost during that event. In his essay, "The Demography of the Trail of Tears Period: A New Estimate of Cherokee Population Losses" Russell Thornton opposes the current historical estimates that conclude 4,000 lives were lost, and proposes

that the human cost could actually be twice that standard number. He cites many scholars such as Forman, Howard and Allen, and Knight who have all accepted and have followed ethnologist James Mooney's numerical findings. And while these scholars agree on this 4,000 person death toll, Thornton reconsiders the number; and, to him, it "seems highly speculative. It appears to be only a suggested estimate, one without a hard factual basis, but one that subsequent scholars have cited and recited" (85). Thornton suggests that although the precise number of Cherokees who lost their lives is not known, he believes that "it is possible, however, to derive empirically an estimate of Cherokee population losses, one based on demographic analysis using factual data" (85). Via logic, Thornton persuades his readers to believe that by utilizing ethnohistorical factors such as births, deaths, and migrations in real numbers, a greater estimate of total lives lost during the removal process—before, during, and after removal—can be realized.

While the majority of scholars examine the 4,000 person estimate in terms of one viewpoint, Thornton's main premise looks at a total population loss:

Population loss is the difference between actual population size (after removal) and what population size would have been had removal not occurred. This calculation is based not only on increased death rates during the removal, but also on changes in the frequency both of birth and of migration, the two other components of numerical population change. Removal surely affected fertility and migration as well as mortality; effects on both should be included, therefore, along with effects on mortality in estimating a total population cost for the Trail of Tears (86).

If his argument is correct, calculating population loss by investigating increased death rates, birth rates and migration frequency, then there appears to be many more lives lost during the Trail of Tears than initially calculated. Found throughout Thornton's article are his many census data tables and mathematical formulas that calculate such rates of population loss. His conclusive findings using these formulas function to persuade the reader to logically believe "over 10,000 additional Cherokees would have been alive sometime during the period 1835 to 1840 had Cherokee removal not occurred" (93). Of these numbers, Thornton takes into consideration natural deaths, non-births, and lost migrants. Therefore, he approximates that 10,362 Cherokees died due to removal in those five years, a far greater number than the accepted 4,000 traditional estimate. He proposes a figure of 8,000 during the Trail of Tears event, twice that of current thought. This new numerical evidence of the Trail of Tears supports a more prominent place for the Cherokee Indian in the American historical experience.

Jacksonian Removal Rhetoric

Collecting and reading government documents is a traditional part of the research process of the telling of history. Turning away from the conventional metaphor of recording historical data, dynamic genre can create and recreate new stories from these static readings. As Devitt asserts, readers must release "old notions of genre as form and text type and embrac[e] new notions of genre

as dynamic patterning of human experience” as well as realizing that this “new conception of genre shifts to focus from effects (formal features, text classification) to sources of those effects” (573). This concept applied to nineteenth century Indian policy creates a new story of the Trail of Tears. For example, reading historical treaties is one way of examining history, but reexamining the “sources of those effects” of the reality behind the rhetorical Indian policy recreates a history that encompasses human experience.

During the European land encroachment of the nineteenth century, one man stood out as controversial: President Andrew Jackson. He is important to the story of removal and to the Trail of Tears because he was the President of the United States during the negotiation of the 1835 Treaty of New Echota. This fraudulent treaty, signed on 29 December, 1835 by the Ridge Fraction—Major Ridge (a Cherokee chief and main negotiator), John Ridge (Major Ridge’s son), Elias Boudinot (nephew of Major Ridge and editor of *Cherokee Phoenix* newspaper), and his brother, Stand Watie (for a more complete list see Fleischmann), amongst others—and then ratified on 23 May, 1836 stated that the Cherokees would cede all of their lands in exchange for lands west of the Mississippi and a sum of five million dollars.

Even though Indian removal began long before Jackson’s presidency, seventy Indian treaties were ratified (mostly involving land cession) during his tenure. By reviewing the rhetoric of Jackson’s policy, the terministic screen of removal as the colonizer’s victorious deception and treaty execution is clearer.

Ronald Satz writes in his essay "Rhetoric Versus Reality: The Indian Policy of Andrew Jackson" that "by 1837, the Jackson administration had removed 46,000 Indians and had secured treaties providing for the removal of a slightly larger number" (30). What is behind this enthusiasm that Jackson possessed for Indian removal? Satz first reveals the two camps concerning Jackson's rhetoric on removal: the "devil" theory and the revisionist or "angel" theory. While the "devil" theory addresses the rhetoric that demonstrates Jackson's absolute hatred for the Indian people, the "angel" theory poses that removal was "a means of rescuing eastern Indians from the evil effects of close contact with the advancing frontier" (32). The "angel" theory also goes to the point of expressing that Jackson could not have been an Indian-hater because he adopted an Indian orphan and raised the boy as his own son.

After Satz sets the tone that describes the rhetoric of both camps, he states that while Jackson's regard for Indian ways was not constructive, his Indian policy represented his "overwhelming concern for the growth, unity, and security of white America" (35). Here, he suggests that the issue was not so much about Jackson's attitude toward the Cherokees as it was his own Eurocentric promotion. This said, Satz examines Jackson's four proposed benefits of Indian policy and analyzes them, later concluding if those benefits came to fruition. He lists Jackson's benefits:

- (1) Fixed and permanent boundaries outside the jurisdiction of American states and territories,
- (2) isolation from corrupt white elements,
- (3) tribal self-government unfettered by state or territorial laws, and
- (4) opportunities to acquire the essentials of “civilized” society (Christianity, private property, and knowledge of agriculture and the mechanical arts) (37).

In reality, Jackson’s seemingly philanthropic paternalistic goals failed on all four accounts. First of all, the fixed boundaries proposed were not permanent due to the responsiveness to the needs of the states and their white citizens over those of the Indian communities. Secondly, corrupt elements were not kept away from Indian lands. Even treaty rights did not prevent white settlement and whisky dealers from invading Indian boundaries. Thirdly, self-government could never come to fulfillment because the Trade and Intercourse Act of 1834 “specified that American laws would take precedence over Indian laws and customs in all cases involving Indians and whites” (39). And lastly, the benefits of “civilized society” turned out to be a means of discouraging the Indian culture, controlling it, and creating a society of Indian people who emulated or copied white people.

Overall, Satz proves that there exists a large gap between Jackson’s rhetoric and his realities of his own Indian policy; he states that this gap should not be ignored. Satz urges scholars not to look at the devil/angel dichotomy, but rather to the realities of resulting policy because it shows “the danger of oversimplified, one-dimensional interpretations of history” (44). By scrutinizing those results, findings suggest that the effects of the Treaty of New Echota led to

the Cherokees being forced off of their lands, violently imprisoned, and made to walk the horrific Trail of Tears.

Retracing the rhetoric of Indian removal reveals multiple and divergent interpretations. The significance of returning to history prompts a greater reinvestigation that manifests in a more insightful and varied look into events such as the Trail of Tears.

Introducing Nuna Dual Tsuny or "The Trail Where We Cried"

Examining events such as the Trail of Tears allows readers to construct history. As Devitt explains, "our construction of genre is what helps us to construct a situation. Genre not only responds to but also constructs recurring situation" (577). Reading the Trail of Tears event in these terms allows for an alternative history to be exposed. For example, reading the many false treaties that the United States government presented the Indians exposes a recurring situation: repetitive land cession. Reading these documents as social acts of deception creates a narrative rather than a historical document. Known to most as the "Trail of Tears," this historical event killed many Cherokee men, women, and children, amongst others. It was in the springtime of 1838 that General Winfield Scott, commander of the United States army, with the assistance of forces from states such as North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee, expelled approximately 19,000 Cherokees from their homes, violently herded

them into stockades, and then forced them to travel over eight hundred miles to their new government-appointed lands west of the Mississippi. During the capture, stockade experience, and journey west over 4,000 (this may be an underestimate) Cherokees died due to factors such as disease, illness, and murder.

To understand how this devastating event occurred some background information² concerning Indian-white associations must first be examined. Since early sixteenth century contact, Cherokees had been making treaties with encroaching Europeans. These documents were originally meant to function to secure peaceful relations between parties. The first (recorded) treaty between Cherokee and Europeans is said to have been signed in 1684. According to ethnologist James Mooney's text *Myths of the Cherokee*:

Among the manuscript archives of South Carolina there was said to be . . . a treaty of agreement made with the government of that colony by the Cherokee in 1684, and signed with the hieroglyphics of eight chiefs of the lower towns, viz, Corani, the Raven (Kâ'lanû); Sinnawa, the Hawk (Tlă'nuwă); Nellawgitehi, Gorhaleke, and Owasta, all of Toxawa; and Canacaught, the great Conjuror, Gohoma, and Caunasaita, of Keowa (31).

² I have included an appendix that lists the events leading up to the Cherokee removal. This chronology is from Theda Purdue and Michael Green's text *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*. What is important about this chronology is that it includes many Euro-American events that coincide with the process leading to the Cherokee Trail of Tears. This chronology is located at the end of this work because of its appropriateness to the subject, length and value to Cherokee Indian history.

Treaties such as this one between the eight chiefs and the colony of South Carolina function as ethnohistorical genre to extend the hand of each party to the other in agreement.

Over time, however, the treaty lost its original purpose, and deception took the place of good intention. It is here that the roots of ruse concerning land cession began to grow. Many peace treaties were actually bills of sale that legally allowed (once signed, of course) colonizers to secure Indian land. Similar documents (falsely) promised monies and lands far away from the growing advancement of European colonizers. As an example, I have included in the appendix a chart that lists nineteenth century land cedes from Thornton's *The Cherokees: A Population History*. This chart tallies approximately 38,000 square miles of land ceded during the nineteenth century alone.

The Death Treaty

"This is my death warrant." Major Ridge

Although treaties between the United States and the Cherokees had appeared in the past, it was the Treaty of New Echota, signed on 29 December, 1835 and ratified 17 May, 1836 that became infamous in Cherokee history. It was this treaty that stated the Cherokees would relinquish all Southeastern lands in exchange for lands in the West, and received five million dollars (Finger 16).

This treaty, like many others before it, was not only deceptive, but it ultimately split Indian party lines so deep that death was the ensured outcome.

Major Ridge—also known as The Ridge, seen in Figure 2—led what was later known as the Treaty party. This group of Ridge followers signed the New Echota treaty without the authority of John Ross, the Principal Chief of the Cherokee people. Major Ridge knew that signing this treaty would warrant his death because under Cherokee law all lands were held in common and no one person or group of people possessed the right to sell or give away this land; if this law was broken, the individual's punishment was death. Therefore, by signing this treaty, Major Ridge sealed his own death sentence and the death decrees of thousands of other Cherokees that were about to be rounded up like cattle and herded west of the Mississippi River. Thus, his account while signing the treaty only left him to state: "This is my death warrant" (Gilbert 22). Inevitably, as Major Ridge predicted, he and some of the other Ridge/Treaty party members including Elias Boudinot (see Figure 3): a cousin of John Ridge, a treaty negotiator, and an editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* newspaper) were all murdered after arriving to their newly-founded homes in Indian country located west of the Mississippi—now known as Arkansas.



Figure 2. "Major Ridge." Famous Indian Chiefs. 30 October, 2005 <
http://www.axel-jacob.de/cherokee__major_ridge.jpg>.



Figure 3. "Elias Boudinot." The Stand Watie and Elias Boudinot Family. 30 October, 2005. <<http://www.cville.com/members/ridenour/EB.jpg>>.

Ethnologist James Mooney writes:

Major Ridge was waylaid and shot close to the Arkansas line, his son was taken from bed and cut to pieces with hatchets, while Boudinot was treacherously killed at his home in Park Hill, Indian territory, all three being killed upon the same day, June 22, 1839" . . . An agent reported to the Secretary of War that in the case of Boudinot's murder, "Three men called upon him and asked for medicine. He went off with them in the direction of Wooster's, the missionary, who keeps medicine, about three hundred yards from Boudinot's. When they got about halfway two of the men

seized Boudinot and the other stabbed him, after which the three cut him to pieces with their knives and tomahawks” (134).

The stories surrounding Major Ridge and his party—from the signing of the Treaty to their infamous murders—are important parts of the removal story, but the loss of land is a core issue of the treaty rhetoric that must never be forgotten.

By the 1838 removal, the Cherokees had lost most of their territory, lands that had once encompassed parts of what are present day “Kentucky, and Tennessee, smaller portions of Alabama, Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, and West Virginia” (Fleischmann 5-6). The only remaining land is located in Western North Carolina. Tom Underwood’s book *The Story of the Cherokee People* describes the small allotment. He depicts the land totals and the locations attributed to those tallies that are found in the region of the Great Smokey Mountains of North Carolina. Underwood writes:

The present-day Indian Reservation or Qualla Indian Boundary has approximately fifty five thousand acres of lands in its boundaries and lies in the heart of Western North Carolina in Swain, Jackson and Graham counties, but the main tract lies in Swain and Jackson counties on the headwaters of the Oconaluftee River. The other tracts, one containing 3200 acres, near Whittier, N.C. is in Swain County and the other tract lies in a remote section of Graham County near the headwaters of the Little and Big Snowbird Rivers (46-47).

Looking at land loss in terms of a decrease from an original estimate of 46,000 square miles (Thornton 16) down to the present-day “fifty-five thousand acres”

illustrates how treaties have been continuously (and successfully) used to encroach and steal Indian lands.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued for the reassessment of history via two illustrations: first, through the argument of maps, migration, and population analyses as visual rhetoric and, second, through providing presidential and Indian rhetoric, policy, and treaty as background to the Trail of Tears. Underlying both demonstrations is my argument that Amy Devitt's dynamic genre theory foregrounds multiple voices and views of history. Within this argument and across this dissertation, I endeavor to prove that dynamic genres can ultimately function to serve communities, fulfill needs, act socially, and bring multiple interpretations to the histories concerning Native Americans, Euro-Americans, and the Cherokee Trail of Tears event. By using analyses of maps, artifacts, population, and the rhetoric of the colonizer and colonized, the past can be exposed, and a paradigm shift can occur that teaches new ways of knowing.

In chapter three, I argue that the rhetoric of ethnohistory as genre works to persuade or adjust readers' thinking concerning the Trail of Tears. A reexamination of history by means of primary sources offers the United States a new perspective on its position as colonizer. For the purposes of this argument, I posit ethnohistory as a primary genre that functions to retell history using the

following sub-genres: visual media, treaties, maps, personal writing, and poetry and song. These varied texts concerning the Trail of Tears utilize genre to tell an alternative past, one that contains multiple interpretations that Americans do not often read or learn about.

Chapter four focuses on the rhetoric of witness. I argue that the rhetoric of witness as a dynamic genre offers varied ways of retelling an event like the Trail of Tears. The voices included in this chapter function with the goal of revising history, creating a more realistic and multi-voiced past regarding the Trail of Tears as an historical event. Also, I attempt to provide a greater selection of eye-witness accounts from those who lived to write, speak, and hand down the stories about their own experiences during the Trail of Tears.

Chapter five argues for women's voices as genre, functioning to reveal the hardships of the often-forgotten female influences that surround the Trail of Tears. This genre functions to tell history from the point of view of both Cherokee and white women who were strong in speech, in action, and in protecting the lives of the Cherokee people. These women take on the courageous act of telling the Trail of Tears in their own rhetorical ways.

The conclusion brings together the points of argument throughout this dissertation. Also, it recapitulates how Devitt's work creates a meaningful theoretical framework for this piece, ultimately allowing genre to function as a means of providing an alternative history in regards to the Trail of Tears historical event.

CHAPTER III

(RE)TELLING THE TRAIL OF TEARS THROUGH AN ETHNOHISTORICAL APPROACH

It affords me sincere pleasure to be able to apprise you of the entire removal of the Cherokee Nation of Indians to their new homes west of the Mississippi. The measures authorized by Congress with a view to the long-standing controversy with them have had the happiest effects, and they have emigrated without any apparent reluctance . . .

Martin Van Buren, Eighth President of the United States, 4 December, 1838

President Van Buren's attitude of "pleasure," announcing that the removal process "had the happiest effects, and [the Cherokees] have emigrated without any apparent reluctance," not only creates a false sense of amicable relations between the United States government and the Cherokee Nation, but also invents a fictitious notion that the subjects at the center of his message—the Cherokee people—were willing and satisfied partners in the removal process that we now know as the Trail of Tears. The President's report and others like it persuaded (and still persuade) the American public to believe the historical untruth that the Cherokee Indians—as well as other Native American tribes—were not only better off removed to a new place, but also that these tribal peoples expressed exceeding gladness about their new lands and the monies paid to them from the U.S. government for those territories.

Flowing from the top down, other government representatives that worked under the eighth president of the United States also used their tongues to corrupt the thinking of the American citizens, reinforcing erroneous representations concerning the removal process. For example, these words from the Secretary of War at that time, Joel Poinsett, fortify the presidential rhetoric:

The generous and enlightened policy evinced in the measures adopted by Congress towards that people, was ably and judiciously carried into effect, . . . in every instance with promptness and praiseworthy humanity . . . They [the Cherokees] departed with alacrity under the guidance of their own chiefs. . . Humanity, no less than sound policy dictated this course. . . It will always be gratifying to reflect that this has been effected, not only without violence, but with every proper regard for the feelings and interests of that people (Fleischmann 65-66).

It is official declarations such as these that claim “praiseworthy humanity” and “without violence” on the part of the U.S. military and the lack of importance afforded to the Trail of Tears as an historical event that dominate textbook and classroom teachings and societal thought in the United States, both in the past and currently. Even as late as 1985, a high school history textbook entitled *The Americans: The History of a People and a Nation* devoted a mere two pages to discuss President Andrew Jackson and his removal policy. Also, this source notes the Trail of Tears event in two paragraphs out of its 850 plus page textbook. Concerning the Trail of Tears event, the text states:

Jackson and Congress simply paid no attention to the Court's decision. No federal troops were sent to protect the Cherokees from the equally defiant state authorities. The land seizures continued until finally, in 1838, the Cherokees were forcibly evicted. Georgia militiamen rounded up some 17,000 Indians and packed them off to Oklahoma.

The 800 mile journey was made partly by steamboat and railroad and partly on foot. Along the way, government officials stole Cherokees' money, while outlaws made off with their livestock. The Cherokees buried more than a quarter of their people along the "Trail of Tears." Some died from starvation; others were suffocated in the hot and overcrowded railroad cars. And, as usual, when the Indians reached their final destination, they ended up on land far inferior to that which they had been forced to leave (264-265).

This textbook and others like it present the Trail of Tears in short form, summarizing the actions of the U.S. military in phrases such as "packed them off," as if the event were more like a hearty send-off rather than the death trail that is really was. Also, the text lists the use of steamboats and railroads as means of primary transportation, both seemingly comfortable ways of travel, while walking is mentioned last (or least important) and riding in disease-infested carts, a prominent means of passage for the elderly and the sick, is not mentioned at all.

Further, the textbook states that "some [people] died of starvation; others were suffocated in the hot and overcrowded railroad cars." While the text does mention starvation and lack of oxygen, these ways of dying are far less graphic than the accounts in this chapter and the rest of my dissertation describe. By not stating factors such as the vast disease with little or no available treatment, the substantial beatings and rapes that led to certain death, and the massive

mistreatment and murder, the Trail of Tears only appears as a “removal” process, and does not tell the horrific truth of the historical event, a truth that recounts the story of the U.S. government’s (somewhat successful) attempt at cultural genocide, in essence, a “Trail of Tears.” Textbooks like these have taught readers, in two paragraphs or less, that Indian removal does not deserve more consideration, thus treating the indigenous people of the United States and other parts of the Americas and their struggles to survive in the face of the colonizer as mere footnotes in American history.

As the textbook example shows, the American Indians—who should hold a prominent place in America’s past—are not the ones reporting and repackaging history. In most cases, Native Americans are not even consulted when writing such textbooks, organizing community events, and/or producing films that concern American Indian issues, rendering misleading representations of history and its indigenous peoples.

Susan Lobo and Steve Talbot in *Native American Voices: A Reader* consider the definition of historical truth. They inquire as to whether history books give a reliable account of the American Indian story or if the history being taught is “actually “his-story”—i.e., white, male, and Eurocentric” (127). This type of questioning was pushed forward, especially during the controversies surrounding the Columbian Quincentennial in 1992, when numerous American Indians found themselves excluded during the planning process of the many worldwide celebrations that commemorated the Christopher Columbus 1492

discovery of America. Eventually, these celebrations took on what Lobo and Talbot call a “carnival atmosphere,” quoting “Who are These Gentle People” (Patrick Morris 1993) which states the Ohio celebration, for example, “included everything from an African-American Heritage Consortium to ‘Discover Columbus’ international soccer tournaments, an air show, a marathon, even a world horseshoe tournament—but no Indians” (127). I make mention of the Columbus, Ohio side show because I was present during the AmeriFlora ‘92 exhibition. I would have to disagree that there were not any Indians at all. The AmeriFlora exhibit did include a very small section devoted to the amicable relations between the American Indians and the European explorers. Actually, it was this misrepresentation at this event that prompted me to make attempts to discover more about my own Native American culture. It was at this point that I mindfully replayed my past societal, familial, and academic tapes, realizing that my learning had been from one point of view: that of the colonizer of my ancestors, the Euro-American.

Examples from textbooks and celebrations such as these can be useful in arguing for the non-acceptance of a completely Euro-American history. In contrast to and in addition to Euro-American sources, other materials that examine the Native people who helped to create the American experience should be included when retelling history. It is this argument, that there needs to be a more multi-voiced way of telling the Trail of Tears, that holds importance for the future of discussing and retelling that event. In this chapter, I argue that

ethnographic materials that make up a dynamic genre of ethnohistory persuade or adjust readers' thinking concerning the Trail of Tears. A reexamination of history via primary sources can offer the United States a new perspective on its position as a colonizer. For the purposes of this argument, I will posit ethnohistory as a primary genre by examining some of its different aspects—visual media, treaties, maps, personal writing, and poetry and song—along with varied texts about the Trail of Tears.

The importance of arguing for a better understanding of the Trail of Tears through ethnohistory provides the United States with a better understanding of itself in terms of colonization and the lasting effects of the forced acculturation and oppression on the indigenous peoples of this land. And in acknowledging the roles and reactions of colonization, American citizens can become more prevalent partners in correcting the wrongs of the past while accepting a deeper, more complex history. Also, understanding this multivocality in terms of the Trail of Tears creates a country that progressively moves toward a future scholarship that will be more apt to include this integral voice in history rather than silence it.

Ethnohistory as Genre

As discussed in chapter one, genre has been traditionally known as a category or a classification in which a subject is placed to give it a grouped meaning. This definition creates a stagnant connotation of genre, not allowing it

to move or possess purpose. If ethnohistory is defined as more than just a category of research study, and as a dynamic means of retelling history, it becomes something more, something that functions and operates in society as situational. In her article “Generalizing about Genre: New Conceptions of an Old Concept” Amy Devitt invites the idea that genre is more than what tradition has considered it to be. She asserts that genre takes on activity and function. Devitt writes:

If genre not only responds to but also constructs recurring situation, then genre must be a dynamic rather than a static concept. Genres *construct* and *respond* to situation; they are *actions* . . . As our constructions of situations change and new situations begin to recur, genres change and new genres develop. Since situation is inherently social as well as rhetorical concept, genres change with society (578-579).

If genre can “construct and respond” (both action words) as Devitt asserts, then it must possess the ability to move with situations and society. Therefore, as ethnohistory reexamines historical situations, it (as a genre) must be able to reform along with the new-found ways of looking at documents that retell history.

In addition to seeing genres as active, another function that Devitt explains in her book *Writing Genres* is how genres can “help people to do things in the world. They are also both social and rhetorical actions, operating as people interact with others in purposeful ways” (13-14). Therefore, genres such as ethnohistory can be examined with an understanding that they are social and

dynamic and “help people do things in the world.” And one of those acts that ethnohistory as a genre can “help people do” is to bring new histories and stories to society concerning the Trail of Tears.

Ethnohistory, as Michael Green and Theda Perdue assert in their piece “Native American History,” was birthed from its parents, history and anthropology. The authors describe how ethnohistorians can examine the same forms, but utilize them in different ways to bring about new perspectives. Green and Perdue state:

The records of analysis remain the same documents, reports, and correspondence that previous generations of scholars used, but ethnohistorians use them differently. They ask questions framed in cultural contexts, they interpret the evidence from the perspectives of cultural awareness and sensitivity, and they assume things about Native-American societies that their predecessors never did (209).

Therefore, “ask[ing] questions framed in cultural contexts” and “interpret[ing] the evidence from the perspectives of cultural awareness and sensitivity” implies that interest in culture itself is growing more popular, rather than just the traditional curiosity in the culture as it relates to mainstream ideals.

Green and Purdue also state that ethnohistorians “assume things about Native-American societies that their predecessors never did.” This comment suggests that they are using these sub genres (“documents, reports, and correspondence”) to function in ways that answer new questions, creating an

environment that can change the traditional paradigm into a new way of thinking, one that reevaluates history in terms of Native and non-native culture. Such retellings are good examples of how genre can be dynamic, functioning to create different versions of history and release those voices that have been chained since the Trail of Tears event.

Justification of using ethnohistory comes with the desire to know the past at its deepest level. Ethnohistory as part of the historical revisionism movement makes a strong case because, as Susan Lobo and Steve Talbot state in *Native American Voices: A Reader*, it “attempt[s] to get as close to the actual event as possible” (128). Ethnohistory brings a more balanced story and greater understanding to history because it utilizes primary documents that are written and spoken by those who lived the experience, rather than by those who interpreted the event (i.e. Euro-American and male) many years after. Lobo and Talbot assert that reexamining history is becoming pregnant with interest for ethnography, a way of using specific cultural data—i.e. personal accounts, folklore, biography—in order go back in time to the event. This examination of the past:

combine[s] the use of data from several fields, including geography, archival records and reports, diary entries, oral history and biography, archeology, folklore, and ethnography, in order to construct an integrated picture of the social and ethnic processes taking place among a particular people (in this case, Native Americans) during a particular historical period. The ethnohistorian attempts to get as close to the actual event as

possible, for instance through eyewitness accounts and on-the-scene reports, rather than interpret the event some years afterward (128).

By rereading the Trail of Tears utilizing several sub genres such as “records, reports, diary entries, oral history and biography, archeology, folklore, and ethnography” the event can be better understood because there are a variety of choices, rather than just one choice narrated from an ethnocentric voice.

Lobo and Talbot state that using ethnohistory transforms an event such as the Battle of Wounded Knee into the Massacre of Wounded Knee: the word battle coined by historians; the word massacre created from the eyewitness accounts. It is this type of rhetorical retelling—ethnohistory as genre—that functions to convert one story, traditionally told as “Indian removal,” into a completely different narrative told from varied and multiple voices called the “Trail of Tears.”

Ethnographic Tellings of Truth on the Trail

Understanding ethnohistory as an active genre, the reader can now turn to some of its forms and sub genres. These ethnographic modes that I have chosen—visual media, the treaty, the map, personal writing, and poetry and song—follow suit of their parent genre ethnohistory, and become dynamic sources, rather than inert ones, when dealing with the Trail of Tears.

Although these investigative sources are not necessarily new, the ways in which they function are fresh. I am not saying that these means are the only categories or sub genres that fall under ethnohistory when reexamining the Trail of Tears. Nor am I saying that probing their functions will create a whole picture of the historical Trail of Tears. What I am saying is that these ethnohistorical facets are good places to look for function in the retelling of history; and, they aid in producing a greater understanding and a more culturally varied picture of the Trail of Tears event.

These sorts of ethnohistorical aspects such as visual media, the treaty, the map, personal writing, and poetry and song and others like them are important to righting the wrongs of what generations of U.S. history texts, government officials, misinformed scholars, Hollywood, and the media have taught the American people about the Cherokees and their personal trials concerning the Trail of Tears.

The following five sections of this chapter are devoted to explaining each of the ethnographic aspects—visual media, the treaty, the map, personal writing, and poetry and song—and how they contribute to correcting historical untruths of the Trail of Tears. Along with the descriptions found in each section will be a discussion of one of the following current texts that use that particular source or genre to retell history: Theda Perdue and Michael Green's *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*; Joan Gilbert's *The Trail of Tears across Missouri*; and Robert Conley's (Cherokee) *Mountain Windsong: A Novel*

of the Trail of Tears. These texts offer new ways of reading the Trail of Tears event. They approach the revising of history by using genres such as the ones examined in this chapter to create rhetoric that persuades readers to think about the multiple voices that contribute to the Cherokee Trail of Tears. While some older books on the Trail of Tears subject may be useful, they may also speak from one point of view: the Euro-American position; this may be because the texts were written without considering the Native American viewpoint or because ethnographic genres were not either popularly measured or discovered at the time.

These newer texts speak from a more equitable stance, including that of the Cherokee Indian. As Devon Mihesuah asserts in *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians*, “Indians appreciate accurate historical and anthropological works that focus on their histories and cultures. If a tribe has no tribal historian, it generally will rely partially on studies written by outsiders” (8). This reliance on “outsiders” creates a crucial cultural and historical need, then, for accurateness. Newer texts that reexamine the Trail of Tears from these approaches and others like them create an environment for the study of multiple truths, therefore contributing to a greater societal paradigm shift. If more texts such as these appear, then a more realistic Trail of Tears will rise to the prominent place in history that it deserves.

Visual Media as Ethnohistorical Genre

Visual media as genre provides a rhetorical dimension of reality to the Trail of Tears experience that words on a page cannot provide as effectively. Photographs of people and places, for instance, function to put a face or place to a particular person or historical event being discussed. The image on the photograph allows a more intimate relationship between the reader and the story. In essence, we can imagine that particular person going through the Trail of Tears experience, signing that treaty, being forced into a stockade, or even dying on the Trail. This genre, as does the other ones mentioned, reflects the complexity of the Trail of Tears. Photographs permit another human's face or a landmark to tell history. There is something very personal about seeing the storyteller/role player or the place where a past event occurred.

Not only does this function of visual rhetoric create a storyteller and/or a place where that story happened, but it also provides evidence that the person or place of occurrence photographed or reproduced is real. In her essay "In Plato's Cave," Susan Sontag writes that:

Photographs furnish evidence. Something we hear about, but doubt, seems proven when we're shown a photograph of it . . . A photograph passes for incontrovertible proof that a given thing happened. The picture may distort; but there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist, which is like what's in the picture (41-42)

In addition to “furnish[ing] evidence” that the Trail of Tears happened, photographs also portray a unique situation on paper. As Sontag puts it, “photographs are really experience captured” (40). Looking at the photographs from the Trail of Tears in this way creates an experience felt by many and captured on film by few.

Perdue and Green’s *Cherokee Removal* and Gilbert’s *The Trail of Tears across Missouri* both provide photographs that assign faces to the people who played roles and the places of importance during the removal process. Perdue and Green include images of Major Ridge (the most important signer of the 1835 treaty and a Cherokee Chief: see chapter one for photo), Elias Boudinot (a Cherokee, former editor at the Cherokee newspaper, *The Cherokee Phoenix*, and 1835 treaty negotiator: see chapter one), and John Ross (Principle Chief of the Cherokee People who stated that the 1835 treaty was invalid: see Figure 1).

Although both texts offer visual rhetoric, it is Gilbert’s *The Trail of Tears across Missouri* that uses the functioning genre as a greater means of persuasion. Her text offers photographs of many more people such as Reverend Bushyhead, Cherokee minister; Quatie Ross, wife of Chief John Ross; Elias Boudinot, brother of Stand Watie; Swimmer, a Cherokee medicine man, amongst others, all of which provide evidence of participants in the Trail of Tears event.



Figure 1. Cherokee Principle Chief John Ross. Image.
<<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Images/JohnRoss.jpg>>.



SEAL OF THE CHEROKEE NATION

Figure 2. Seal of the Cherokee Nation. Seal. Chronicles of Oklahoma.
Oklahoma Historical Society.
<[http://digital.library.okstate.edu/Chronicles/v018/images/v018p363photo.j
pg](http://digital.library.okstate.edu/Chronicles/v018/images/v018p363photo.jpg)>.



Figure 3. Trail of Tears. Logo. Trail of Tears National Historic Trail: North Carolina Chapter of the Trail of Tears Association.
<<http://www.arch.dcr.state.nc.us/tears/logo1.JPG>>.

Also, Gilbert includes places that represent special interest to the Cherokee removal. While she includes scenes from the “Unto These Hills” drama, played each summer at the Cherokee reservation on Qualla boundary in North Carolina, she does not forget the Missouri River or the Cherokee Female Seminary at Park Hill, near Tahlequah, Oklahoma. Even though the majority of these photographs appear as images of nature, the genre functions to cite that there was once something there: a group of traveling Cherokees, a ceremony for a deceased woman buried with no grave marker, a place where water was used. It is these types of visual rhetorics that remind the reader that not only does the genre carry function, but the land does as well.

Another type of visual rhetoric is that of the drawing. When pencil or pen is put to paper, the outcome is usually a drawing in which to view (a static category). But, when the result brings cultural identity, the act and intention of drawing becomes a function. It is this function that Gilbert utilizes in her text. She includes the seal of the Cherokee Nation, as seen Figure 2, and the Trail of Tears logo, as seen Figure 3. Both images hold significance. The seal of the Cherokee Nation symbolizes the structure of the Cherokee government and Cherokee stamina. The seven points found on the star indicate the seven matriarchal clans found in Cherokee culture. The Trail of Tears logo, provided by the National Parks service, represents the trails traveled during the Trail of Tears; this image or sign marks the past places where the events occurred. These types of visual genres help to secure a more prominent place for the Trail of Tears as an historical event by showing readers who is speaking or what is being discussed.

Visual media persuades its viewers that somebody real lived or something authentic happened in a particular place. Combined with other ethnographic modes such as treaties, maps, personal writing, and poetry and song, a more concrete history can bring about greater awareness and hopefully a paradigm shift to the traditional ways of knowing that Americans have learned for generations.

Treaty as Telling the Trail

Some of the main ethnohistorical documents deemed valuable when examining the Trail of Tears are treaties and other types of legislation that surround this event. These types of documents can be very powerful and persuasive to show how the government, the Cherokees, and other parties involved used rhetoric in creating and executing such documents.

Foremost, the treaty is traditionally known to function as a means of peace, partnership, and honesty, declaring that different parties agree on the same terms. At the beginning of European-Native American relations, according to Peter Nabokov in *Native American Testimony*, this was the case: treaties were formed as peaceful documents. However, the function of the genre changed over time; it took on a sinister function, one that manipulated, betrayed, and stole from the Indian. According to Nabokov:

The documents [treaties] became thinly disguised bills of sale, transferring ancient tribal lands into white hands. In the fine print, these treaties usually called for Indians to move to the least fertile corner of their existing lands, to abandon their homes altogether and move elsewhere, or to slice up their holdings into single-family allotments, which the Indians were supposed to cultivate while selling off the rest to white land speculators. In some cases, whites reserved the right to run their wagon trails or railroad tracks across Indian land (118).

In essence, as white avarice for land and wealth grew, so did the trickery portrayed through the treaties. All whites had to do to fool the Indian was to

create documents that were “thinly disguised bills of sale” so that the land could switch hands. Over time, the deceptive function of the treaty became the norm. Nabokov states that by the 1750’s “treaty making was standard operating procedure for getting what one wanted from the Indians” (119). These false treaties hold importance in retelling history when dealing with the Trail of Tears event. The illusory function of this genre acts as a means of breaking the traditional thought that the United States bought the land with intentions of fairness and goodness.

Robert Conley’s book, *Mountain Windsong*, reprints the entire Treaty of New Echota, including all who signed and witnessed the signing. One excerpt from the twenty article treaty includes:

Whereas the Cherokees are anxious to make some arrangements with the Government of the United States whereby the difficulties they have experienced by a residence within the settled parts of the United States under the jurisdiction and laws of the State Governments may be terminated and adjusted; and with a view to reuniting their people in one body and securing a permanent home for themselves and their posterity in the country selected by their forefathers without the territorial limits of the State sovereignties, and where they can establish and enjoy a government of their choice and perpetuate such a state of society as may be most consonant with their views, habit and condition; and as may tend to their individual comfort and their advancement in civilization . . . The Cherokee Nation hereby cede relinquish and convey to the United States all the lands owned claimed or possessed by them east of the Mississippi river, and hereby release all their claims upon the United States for spoliations of every kind for and in consideration of the sum of five millions of dollars (47-49).

In addition to the 1835 New Echota treaty that falsely promises the Indians “a government of their choice,” and “individual comfort,” and “five million dollars,” Conley also includes a valuable reprint of the supplementary articles to the 1835 treaty. By including this supplement to the treaty, the document is reinforced, and the act of removal becomes even more cemented. This additional legislation further reveals the widening gap between those parties for and against the Indian removal policy and those involved in the pre-removal politicking. The excerpt below accounts for the partisan list and does not include the witnesses:

In testimony whereof, John F. Schermerhorn, commissioner on the part of the United States, and the undersigned delegations have hitherto set their hands and seals, this first day of March, in the year one thousand eight hundred and thirty six.

J. F. Schermerhorn

Major Ridge, his X mark,	John A Bell,
James Foster, his X mark,	Jos. A. Foreman,
Tak-ye-ske, his X mark,	Robert Sanders,
Long Shell Turtle, his X mark,	Elias Boudinot,
John Fields, his X mark,	Johnson Rogers,
James Fields, his X mark,	James Starr, his X mark,
George Welch, his X mark,	Stand Watie,
Andre Ross,	John Ridge,
William Rogers,	James Rogers,
John Gunter,	John Smith, his X mark (63).

What is notable here is that there exist a considerable number of Cherokees who signed this supplement with an “X,” meaning that they could not read English. And while the “non-reading” Cherokees could see the characters on the page,

they could not decipher the meanings of the words. These Cherokees had no other option than to trust the whites who wrote the treaty and those Cherokees in the Ridge party who could read and understand the English language. In this case, the rhetoric of the treaty persuaded the Cherokee people to cede their lands by creating a document that “allowed” a small percentage of Cherokees to (wrongly) act as principal negotiators—and representatives for the entire tribe—between the Cherokees and the United States government.

Treaties need to be included in the reexamination of history because they show how a piece of paper can, in this case fairly fruitfully, attempt to destroy a whole culture. This is where maps would have been helpful in discerning what the government was actually doing to the Cherokee people.

Maps as Marking the Trail

In addition to treaties and legislation, maps provide another way to reexamine history. Maps contribute to the genre of ethnography and visual rhetoric, and function universally in communities. While maps show geographic locations, plots, and land lots, they also create a visual picture of distance that can be scaled on a piece of parchment. Charles Hill discusses how such images can persuade, a primary function of the genre. He states in his essay “Reading the Visual in College Writing Classes” that:

Objects or ideas that are merely discussed, especially in abstract terms, have a low level of psychological presence, whereas objects or ideas that are pictured or represented in concrete, visual terms are given added presence, thereby becoming more real to the reader/viewer. . .when particular objects are given enough presence, they can crowd out other considerations from the viewer's mind, regardless of the logical force or relevance of those other considerations (119).

Here, it is important to realize that visual rhetorics such as maps function in persuasive ways, "giving added presence" as Hill asserts, "thereby becoming more real to the reader/viewer." More interestingly perhaps is to consider if the map can "crowd out other considerations from the viewer's mind, regardless of the logical force or relevance of those other considerations." Therefore, maps can function in the crowding out of other considerations or screens concerning the Trail of Tears and create a new multi-vocal history.

The map functions as a means of physicality, showing how many miles the Cherokees were forced to travel and the terrain upon which the detachments crossed: on foot, on wagon, on boat. Gilberts text *Trail of Tears across Missouri* contains a variety of maps and locations pertaining to the Trail of Tears. Her book also includes a list of geographical sites located in Missouri that relate to the Trail of Tears; some include Otahki Bushyhead Hildebrad's grave marker, a Cherokee campsite at the Snelson-Brinker House, and the McMurty Spring in Barry County where the traveling Cherokees used its water.

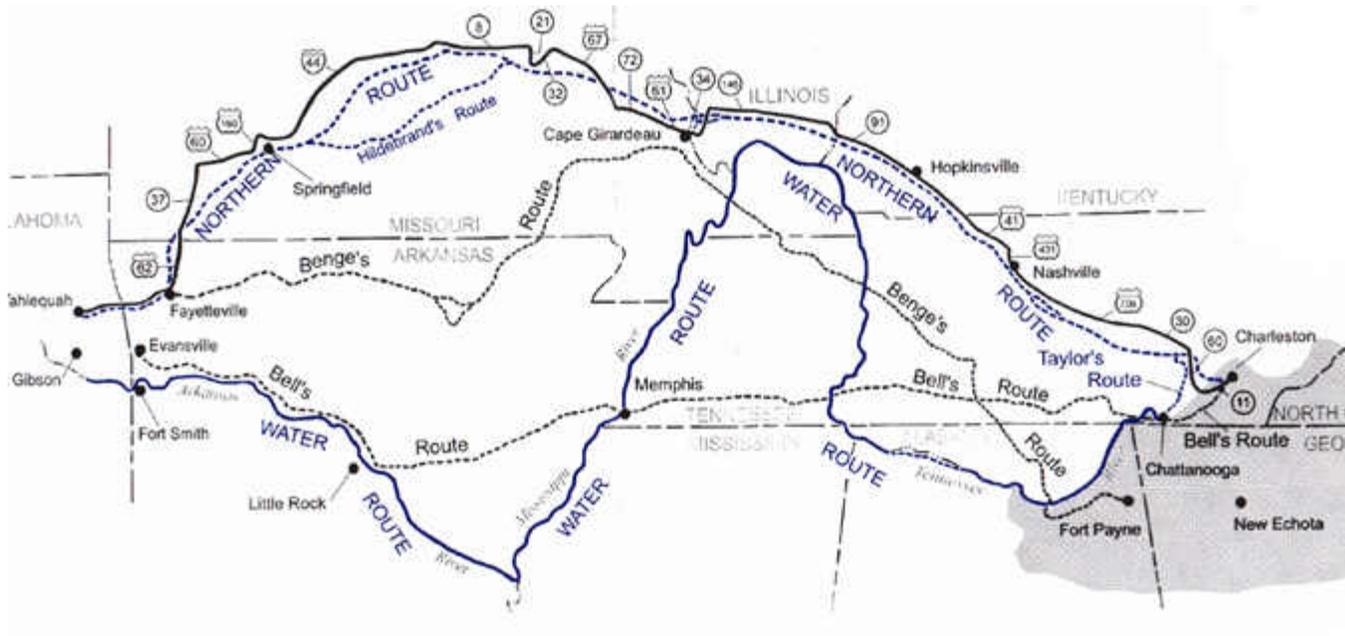


Figure 4. Trail of Tears. Map. Trail of Tears National Historic Trail Brochure. National Parks Service.
<http://ngeorgia.com/history/trailoftearsmap2.html>.

Gilbert's text is unique because it retells the Trail of Tears partly through geographic location. Her entire book is like a map in that after providing an overview of the Southeastern Cherokee lifestyle and the processes of pre-removal activity, she takes the reader on a trip through the states involved in the Trail of Tears exodus that led to and continued beyond the Trail in Missouri: Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas. Many people believe that the trail on which the American Indian tribes were removed consisted of one

simplified route. In fact, there were many paths and patterns of travel that the encompassed the Trail of Tears, as shown in Figure 4.

Gilbert uses ethnographic sources such as letters, the writings of guides, and the accounts of missionaries and doctors to map the Trail of Tears through each state. Her text not only provides the route(s) of the Trail of Tears, but it also provides the records of occurrences from the trails. For instance, Gilbert shows an illustration of the treatment and the sorrow experienced by one detachment traveling through Kentucky. She explains that a woman on the trail not far from the Ohio River (about ten miles) was found dead, her newborn child wrapped in her arms. The account is then told by Reverend Daniel Buttrick, a missionary who traveled with the detachment:

As the man living near was not willing to have her buried there, and as no plank could be obtained for a coffin, the corpse was carried all day in the wagon, and at night a coffin was made, and the next morning she was buried near the graves of some other Cherokees who had died in a detachment preceding us (46).

Here, through the missionary's account, the story of removal—the dead mother and baby, the uncompassionate neighbor, and the carrying and burying of the corpse—becomes more devastating and genocidal. We can look at a Kentucky map, ten miles from the Ohio River, and see where this woman died on the Trail. Being able to pinpoint a geographical location of a past incident aides in persuading the reader that the event took place: the site becomes evidence. It is

these voices that Gilbert brings to life throughout her text, ones that rhetorically create a true sense of the geography of the Trail of Tears.

Another interesting aspect to Gilbert's text is a heavy focus on the Trail of Tears through Missouri, where she relies upon the journals of Dr. W. I. I. Morrow and guide B. B. Cannon to tell the stories of the Cherokee migration. Gilbert states that the detachment guided by Cannon departed from Tennessee with 365 people. But through the Missouri track, weather conditions and illness worsened. At one point, at Huzza Creek in Crawford County, the weather became extremely cold and G.S. Townsend, the doctor with the Cannon detachment, asked to stop. In a report to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Townsend wrote that:

[he] found the increasing number of cases rendered it absolutely necessary for the detachment to discontinue its march in order that I might have some chance to combat the . . . overwhelming disease that seemed to threaten the party with destruction . . . as many as 60 at that time being dangerously ill (61-62).

Cannon agreed that the stop was necessary. And although Cannon's journals were short, they told of the shocking sickness and crude burials along the Missouri route. Some of the phrases that Cannon wrote to tell the removal story include: "accordingly directed the Party to remain in camp and make the best possible arrangements for the sick"; "buried Nancy Big Bear's Grand child"; "no fodder was to be had"; and a note of two more deaths "Elege's wife and Charles Timberlake's son (Smoker)" (62). Gilbert asserts that the suffering in Cannon's

detachment led to Dr. Townsend writing again to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, suggesting that a more feasible way of travel would be on water because: “Near 80 days have been consumed in traveling a distance short of 800 miles,” and that water travel could save lives rather than take them. And, as Gilbert states, the Bureau did not heed Dr. Townsend’s advice, sending another group, a larger one, on Cannon’s route the very next year (62-63). Here, the Bureau’s response—or, more appropriately, non-response—reveals the utter disregard not only for the experiences as reported from the appointed guides and doctors traveling with the Cherokees on the trail, but also for the value of life of the Cherokee people forcibly removed from their homelands.

Maps as geographic visual rhetoric hold importance in the uncovering of an alternative Trail of Tears story. This genre persuades readers that the routes existed, and can still be followed to this day. Also, visual rhetoric such as maps help to reinforce the idea that there were multiple roads that comprised the Trail of Tears, a fact that still needs repeating to American society.

Paths of Personal Writing

In addition to being able to examine maps as a means of connecting to and seeing the horrific walk the Trail of Tears would have been, bringing those realities into the present, personal writing as genre also functions as a means of

supplying more pictures of history. As demonstrated in the next chapter, these primary pieces of documentation tell the past from an individualistic point of view.

As evidence, these journal entries and letters read in the present function in terms of looking at the past through someone else's personal and public words during a specific time. In Amy Devitt's *Writing Genres* she discusses the functions of literary and nonliterary genres. She explains:

The issues of value . . . develop historically and culturally and influence what gets read and how. The fact, then, that some literary works are read centuries after they were written can be explained in historical and cultural terms . . . When literary works are read centuries after they were written, the situation within which they were produced has changed (180-181).

Even though the Trail of Tears is not currently happening because the "situation within which [the documents] were produced has changed," the function of the documents such as letters and journals has not; they still show the significance of the Trail of Tears as an historical and cultural event in the lives of the colonized people of the United States. And through reexamining these historical pieces as functions of revealing multiple truths in history, a correction of the past can occur.

Letters and journals written by guides, doctors, missionaries, and protesters—and, of course Cherokees—all tell their own historical experience in an extraordinary way. Purdue and Green's text *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* is grounded in assisting "students and other serious readers of history [to] understand the complexity of Cherokee removal" (vii).

This, of course, is no easy task. The removal appears as a web of legal, political, personal, and cultural issues that many scholars today attempt to untangle.

Perdue and Green frame the primary sources such as the ethnohistorical documents within the context that they use to tell the Trail of Tears story. After the main introduction that summarizes the story of the Cherokee people, Purdue and Green create a contextual scheme to convey some of the more prominent details of the Trail of Tears.

For example, in order to persuade the reader, each section includes an introductory narrative that explains a particular event or topic; and, then, an ethnographic document will follow the narrative that provides a sense of reality of the situation or story. An illustration of Perdue and Green's contextual rhetoric can be found in the section entitled *Cherokee "Civilization."* First, the editors narrate the story, recounting how the Cherokees adapted to and adopted European ways. Then, Purdue and Green present Young Wolf's (a Cherokee man) 1814 Last Will and Testament to reinforce the previous narrative; this last will and testament not only provides clear examples of how the Cherokee Indian culture was changing, but it also provides a favorable attitude for Indian removal:

In the name of God in men [amen]. I, Young Wolf, being in real good sense at this present time, do make my last Will and Testimony and bequeath and leave loving daughter, Ann, that Negro Woman named Tabb, and also leave to my loving son, Dennis, a Negro man named Caesar. Also, I leave a yearly income for Dennis in the Turnpike Company & . . . my house & plantation & all the farming tools. . . Also if

death should take place with any one of my children, the property to said deceased must be equally divided among the other children (28-29).

From reading Young Wolf's Will and Testament, it is clear that Cherokee society was changing. In addition to the belief in the Judeo-Christian god, there is a turn away from the tradition belief in inheritance. As seen in his will, Young Wolf left his property to his children and friends. In traditional Cherokee culture—a matrilineal one—the possessions, as Purdue and Green confirm, were to be willed to the husband's sister's children because his own children actually belonged to the mother's clan.

Also, women in the family farmed while men primarily hunted. This role seems to have changed as well. Leaving the farm equipment to his son tells the reader that Young Wolf (or his slaves) could have been farming. On the issue of slaves, Purdue and Green state:

Like many Cherokees in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Young Wolf had acquired African-American slaves. Slaves permitted Cherokee men to become responsible for farming without actually doing it themselves (27).

The slave ownership issue is just one of many ways that the Indian attempted to imitate the ways of the white man, who created wealth from owning human beings. The issue of property in the document brought with it controversy. At the time, increasing value was being placed on the buying, selling, and ownership of

real property. In fact, Young Wolf and other conspirators were caught attempting to cede land in Alabama. Shortly after, he was indicted for treason because as a commodity, as Purdue and Green verify, land loses its spiritual and cultural ties to the Cherokee ideals of property (26-27). All of these factors—from the children to the property to the slaves—provide a way for the last will and testament to function as a means of exhibiting acculturation and colonization of the American Indian, bringing yet another narrative to history.

Perdue and Green's text also includes Ethan Allen Hitchcock's (a major general in the United States army) 1841 journal. Hitchcock recounts his November 30 conversation with a certain man, Mr. Drew, while riding to Tahlequah, the Cherokee national capital. Mr. Drew was a mixed-blood and over forty years old:

We rode some 18 or 20 miles together and I kept him talking nearly all the way. He emigrated with his father in 1809 to this country [Western Indian territory], has traveled to the north since he grew up (Philadelphia, etc.). He says the ancient customs of the nation are all gone, the green corn and other dances, marriages of men with but one woman except with the most wild of the Cherokees (171-72).

In this entry, Hitchcock, a Euro-American man, records his conversation with the mixed-blood named Mr. Drew. It is through this journal and others like it that whites recorded a noticeable absence of traditional Cherokee beliefs. It is these

types of journals written by whites and Cherokees that bring revision to the Cherokee culture, removal, and American history.

Ethnographic genres such as letters and journals and other personal writings function in dynamic ways, bringing the reader as close to the actual event as possible. Also, these ways of retelling the Trail of Tears adds more alternative interpretations of the event. It is important to study these articles when reorganizing and retelling history so that the Trail of Tears remains the “Trail of Tears” and not simply a “journey west.”

Songs as Survival

Poetry and song are special types of genres related to the Cherokee Trail of Tears and the American Indian storytelling tradition. They function as means of communication for the Native American culture. Considering the culture had been an oral one for thousands of years—prior to Sequoya’s nineteenth-century invention of the Cherokee syllabry—stories, songs, and poems were passed down from generation to generation. As Amy Devitt states in her book *Writing Genres*:

Poetry or the lyric . . . has been associated with a function for readers with greater difficulty, often resorting to expressiveness, that poetry expresses readers’ deeper thoughts and emotions, that it helps readers to reflect on their worlds . . . Sonnets glorify love, monologues enable the poet to

comment on the speaker's perceptions, novels give order to the human condition (179).

If poetry or song “helps readers to reflect on their worlds” as Devitt asserts, then Native American poetry and song relative to the Trail of Tears historical event can create a space for the reader to reflect upon her/his world in context of the Trail of Tears event. The uniqueness of Conley’s *Mountain Windsong* lies in that it utilizes the genres of poetry and verse to create a suitable place to relate the storytelling tradition. Conley uses the love poem and song of Oconeechee and Whippoorwill (also known in the story as Waguli)—the mountain windsong—to open and close the book. Conley begins his historical novel with the grandson inquiring about the sound of the singing whippoorwill. It is here in the book where the story of the Trail of Tears begins, and the grandfather commences the Cherokee Trail of Tears narrative. And again, at the end of the book, Conley incorporates the song when the grandfather is finished telling the story. The epilogue explains, in poetic form, how Oconeechee and Waguli (Whippoorwill) were reunited again, and lived out their days in the mountains of North Carolina, birthing children who would carry on their Trail of Tears story, passing it along for the next generation to convey to their children and so forth and so on:

Now they say that they were married,
And they lived up there for years,

Though most folks have forgotten
Their long bitter trail of tears.
Cherokees say that when the wind blows
Softly through the misty hills,
That's the love song of Oconeechee
And her noble Whippoorwill (217).

Conley's use of this poem and the song to open and close the text not only reinforces Devitt's above statement that "novels give order to the human condition," but it also argues for the importance of the American Indian storytelling tradition that is crucial to the survival of the Native American culture. It is the storytelling tradition that is passed on from generation to generation that "gives order to" the Native American "human condition." Without their stories, they have not a past, and without a past, the culture deteriorates. Also, Conley's story, although historical fiction, details not only Cherokee survival during the removal west and, in some cases, the dangerous journey back, but it also shows how traditional storytelling is performed from one family member to another, in this case from elder to child.

Therefore, the genres of poetry and song are significant to not only persuading readers and listeners of the importance of the Trail of Tears, but they also function as a means of storytelling, a crucial aspect in Native American life.

It is important to include these genres in the retelling of history because they reinforce removal and also teach us about the Cherokee Indian culture.

Ethnographic Storytelling

In this final section, I want to supply the reader with an example of how historical fiction as genre can call upon ethnographic documents to function to persuade readers that the Trail of Tears event not only happened, but deserves a more primary place in current scholarship.

Robert Conley's book *Mountain Windsong: A Novel of the Trail of Tears* records the story of the Trail of Tears by weaving ethnohistory with the deep-rooted Native American storytelling tradition. Being a Cherokee author that writes about his own culture, Conley is familiar with this tradition that has held the Cherokees and other tribal peoples together for thousands of years. The oral tradition creates a space for the culture's stories to be told and passed down from generation to generation. In her book, *The Native American Oral Tradition: Voices of the Spirit and Soul*, Lois Einhorn reminds the reader that storytellers have "passed on historical events, community norms, cultural practices, and views of life" (2). These valuable pieces of knowledge that are passed down can be read about and lived vicariously through Conley's text.

The narrator of the novel is LeRoy, whom his grandfather calls Chooj, or boy. Throughout the book, the grandson tells the reader the story of the Trail of

Tears, via listening to his grandfather's story, about a love story between Oconeechee and Waguli, a young Cherokee couple who were separated by the Trail of Tears. Woven into that personal story are historical documents such as treaties and letters that add a greater understanding to the severity of the situation.

Within the grandfather's stories, Cherokee songs and poetry are heard and Cherokee beliefs and culture are learned. Also extremely prevalent in the Indian culture, Conley recreates the bond between elder and youth. Conley uses dialogue to illustrate this cultural relationship. For example, the special exchange between grandfather and grandson while fishing one day teaches Chooj about the Cherokee relationship to nature and its creatures:

A piece of fresh chicken meat was tied to the end of Grandpa's line, and he had let it down on the flat rocks just a few feet out into the water.

"Now just watch," he had said.

Grandma had killed and plucked the chicken for us, and we had taken it, the fishing pole, a long-handled fishnet, and a big plastic bucket with us down to the creek.

"Look," I said.

A fat, sinister-looking crawdad had crept out from under a flat rock and was making his way toward the meat.

"Jisduh," said Grandpa.

"What?"

"That's his name. Jisduh. Watch. There will be more."

He was right. In just a few minutes the meat was covered with them.

They were crawling over each other and falling off. Grandpa smiled, and his old eyes seemed to twinkle (21).

Conley includes many exchanges such as this one that intend to teach the grandson—and the reader—not only about the mentoring relationship of elder to youth, but also about the Cherokee knowledge and respect for nature. Also, through the grandfather's actions and stories, both Chooj and the reader learn some of the old ways.

In another conversation between the two, the grandfather is telling a story to Chooj about one of the false promises concerning the Osage land, where the United States government wanted to send the Cherokee. Chooj responds:

“I hate the government,” I said.

“No use in that chooj,” said Grandpa. “This all happened a long time ago. The people who were in the government then are all long dead. Besides, hate just makes you feel bad. Makes you sick. It eats you up from inside. I don't hate nothing or nobody. There are some that I sure can't figure out though, and I ain't got much use for them” (33).

Here, Cherokee wisdom and forgiveness are realized, both important lessons that the grandfather attempts to pass on to his grandson. And although many American Indians and Native American scholars still hold grudges against the United States government for its betrayal before, during, and after the Trail of Tears, I believe that Conley wants to teach an important lesson: knowing past relations with the U.S. government and the historical events that happened as a result of those dealings is of crucial importance to the Cherokee people (and other tribes for that matter) so that the voice of the Trail of Tears is never

silenced, but it is also important to move forward, and not to blame all white people living today for their ancestors' attempts at cultural genocide.

Amongst other ethnographical additives woven throughout the book, Conley includes documents that tell the political history between the U.S. and the Cherokee such as the agreement between the State of Georgia and the U.S. 24 April, 1802 and the landmark Treaty with the Cherokee, 1835, amongst others. He even includes a protest letter by Ralph Waldo Emerson written to President Van Buren, reprinted in part here:

It now appears that the government of the United States chooses to hold the Cherokees to this sham treaty [1835 removal], and are proceeding to execute the same. Almost the entire Cherokee Nation stand up and say, "This is not our act. Behold us. Here are we. Do not mistake that handful of deserters for us"; and the American President and the Cabinet, the Senate and the House of Representatives, neither hear these men nor see them, and are contracting to put this active nation into carts and boats, and to drag them over mountains and rivers to a wilderness at a vast distance beyond the Mississippi . . . I write this, sir, to inform you of the state of mind these Indian tidings have awakened here, and to pray with one voice more that you, whose hands are strong with the delegated power of fifteen millions of men, will avert with that might the terrific injury which threatens the Cherokee tribe (75-78).

By knitting Emerson's letter into the text, Conley also shows that white protest was yet another factor involved in the historical event. Emerson's letter gives audiences another perspective concerning the Trail of Tears: there was a greater public concern for the Cherokees than just the main political advocates and white missionaries living with the Cherokees. This is important to mention because

many people have learned that the only major components concerning Indian removal were the United States government, and in that place some will claim Andrew Jackson, and Cherokee removal supporters. This is yet another reason that genres such as these must be brought to the surface when dealing with the Trail of Tears, so that any diseased thinking like the examples listed in this chapter—and there are many, many others—can be brought to light and be remedied.

In this chapter I have attempted to demonstrate the importance of reexamining the Trail of Tears through the rhetorical lens of ethnohistory as genre. In trying to convince readers to examine and grasp an alternative history, I have provided examples of ethnographic resources such as visual media, treaties, maps, personal writing, and poetry and song that bring the reader closer to the actual event, and create a story that breathes rather than one that died along that long cold trail with the many victims of the Trail of Tears.

Underneath the umbrella of my argument, I examined four specific ethnographical forms and how each persuades readers to think differently about and contribute to a greater understanding of the Trail of Tears as an historical event. I have attempted to provide texts that support my argument for new readings and interpretations concerning the Trail of Tears.

In the next chapter, I examine the genre of witness as a rhetorical means of retelling history. Also, I consider the importance of witnessing—and writing down what is observed during—an event such as the Trail of Tears. Following

the theoretical base, the people who witnessed the Trail of Tears—government officials, doctors and missionaries, Cherokees, and others—tell the story from their own first-hand accounts. The next chapter intends, as this one has, to challenge the Euro-American paradigm that has taught the Trail of Tears as either a smooth copasetic removal process or as a footnote in history.

CHAPTER IV

THE RHETORIC OF WITNESS: PERSONAL ACCOUNTS FROM THE TRAIL OF TEARS

One each day, and all are gone . . . Looks like maybe all be dead before we get to a new Indian country, but always we keep marching on . . . People sometimes say I look like I never smile, never laugh in a lifetime.

An elderly Cherokee man's memory of walking the Trail of Tears

The above elder's recollection of the Trail of Tears devastation is an example of the rhetoric of witness. This man's first hand account of Indian removal intends to inform, persuade, and retell his own history of the Trail of Tears. While chapter two focused primarily on the rhetoric of ethnohistories to retell the story of the Trail of Tears as an historical event, this chapter argues that the rhetoric of witness as a dynamic genre also offers a way of retelling an event like the Trail of Tears.

The above example also creates a rhetorical space for the rhetor or person speaking that provides him a means of action. In her article "How Ought We to Understand the Concept of Rhetorical Agency? Report from the ARS"

Cheryl Geiser summarizes the dialogue concerning rhetoric and agency at the Alliance of Rhetoric Societies Conference, 2003. In part of her recounting of the conference, she states that there seems to be an emergence of a new way of thinking about rhetorical agency. She writes:

Indeed, developments on two fronts suggest that the concept of rhetorical agency may be on the cusp of a major rethinking. The first has concerned itself with describing how rhetorical agency functions in subaltern social groups that . . . have not had mainstream public forums. . . Instead of characterizing rhetors in terms of what they lack, these [young] scholars seem to be moving us toward a richer understanding of rhetorical agency by examining how rhetors without taken-for-granted access do, nevertheless, manage to exercise agency (10-11).

In these terms, subaltern groups “manage to exercise agency” anyway, even though traditionally they would not be awarded such privilege. The Cherokee man in the example above, who would normally lack a forum and/or agency, now becomes the rhetor; his act of social witness becomes agency. This rhetor’s agency not only changes his role, but it also changes society. Being provided agency, this Cherokee and others like him recreate a Trail of Tears that becomes social, universal, and dynamic. Throughout this chapter—and the next one—the subaltern group (in this case, the Cherokee Indians) employs agency to retell the story of the social Trail of Tears, speaking through first hand accounts.

These eyewitness observations that the rhetor utilizes presented in this chapter can be dynamic, rather than static: instead of serving as a structured

form, they internalize a function that is socially driven. In her book *Writing Genres*, Amy Devitt discusses how genre supports a social function, serving the needs of a particular community. She states:

The heart of genre's social nature is its embeddedness in groups and hence social structures. Rhetorical situations are likely to be perceived as recurring by the same group of people, whose experiences are similar enough and repeated in similar enough ways to be perceived as recurring situations. It is also groups of people who are in a position to pass genres on to new participants, who form the groups with which new members interact (36).

As Devitt explains, rhetorical situations recur repeatedly, involving people "whose experiences are similar enough and repeated" to be "perceived as recurring situations." By applying the many witnesses (Cherokee and non-Cherokee) who similarly experienced the Trail of Tears at different stages, on different routes, and different times of the year, and different years to Devitt's statement, the event becomes a recurring situation.

This recurring situation continues throughout history because the Trail of Tears narrative lives on through the storytelling tradition. It is this tradition that the Cherokees use to orally record first hand accounts of recurring situations. Then, people pass those stories down throughout generations of storytellers. As Devitt asserts, there are particular people who "pass genres on to new participants, who form the groups with which new members interact." The people who witnessed the events of the Trail of Tears such as the births, the deaths, the

sickness, the brutality, and the compassion on both sides of the cultural line passed on their eyewitness accounts to their children, prompting the “new [generation of tribal] members [to] interact” with each other and their own histories. The oral tradition is of crucial importance to the Native American culture; the passing down of histories from generation to generation stabilizes the American Indian social structure. Historically oral, the ethos of the story and of the storyteller was, and still is, paramount in the American Indian community. And it is this storytelling tradition that creates a more historically based narrative regarding the Trail of Tears event. This retelling is important because it brings the reader closer to a more realistic history, one that exposes colonization and oppression and their long-lasting effects.

The purpose in collecting and using these first hand accounts is so that the Trail of Tears can take its prominent place in history and society. By reexamining the voices of those who witnessed the Trail of Tears, history can be re-presented from a more diverse point of view rather than from that of only one dominant Euro-American voice.

The more research that is completed on the Trail of Tears, the more multiple histories will emerge. There were many more people who witnessed the Trail of Tears events than those who wrote or told about it. But it is the surviving accounts—functioning as evidence—that must be examined so that the Trail of Tears story retains and expands its realness and historical significance. In his book, *Native and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians*

Devon Mihesuah recognizes that the problem with many books and articles about American Indians “is not with what is included but what is omitted. There are many works on tribal histories and cultures that are fine examples of library and archival research, but the search usually ends there” (4). Mihesuah’s remarks argue for the need to find “what is omitted” from information regarding Native Americans and their pasts. This obviously applies to the Trail of Tears event as well; the omitted histories need to be discovered and revealed. Mihesuah provides one solution to finding and exposing what is not found in documents about Native Americans. He writes:

From a conscious ethnohistorian’s standpoint, scholars can only strive for accuracy by scrutinizing all available written data, by incorporating the accounts and interpretations of the participants and descendants of the participants—both Indian and non-Indian—into their analyses, and by holding their pro- or anti-Indian biases in check (5).

Herein lies the argument of this chapter: that by utilizing witness as a functioning genre, a more diverse telling of the Trail of Tears can come to life. Thus, “incorporating the accounts and interpretations of the participants and descendants of the participants—both Indian and non-Indian” the Trail of Tears as an historical event can become dynamic and multi-vocal. It is the discovery of these alternative voices that enables American citizens to see their country’s history in terms of colonization and continued oppression of Others, namely, in this case, American Indians.

In her article “Breaking the Silence: Writing as Witness” Gloria Bird (Spokane) sees her own story as:

Bearing witness to colonization and [her] writing as a testimony aimed at undoing those processes that attempt to keep us in the grips of the colonizer’s bondage . . . [and to] undoing the process of the colonization of our [Native American] minds (29).

Therefore, as a rhetor, Bird “bears witness to colonization” and “[to] undoing the process of the colonization of our minds.” Hence, writing down ones’ own experiences of the Trail of Tears—and, more importantly, sharing those personal narratives with others—can bring freedom from “the colonizer’s bondage” that has controlled Native Americans since early European contact.

As Bird asserts, there is a need to undo “the process of the colonization of our [Native American] minds.” Here, the point is to free the American Indian way of thinking about Euro-American control. One way to release the mindset of colonization is through sharing stories from the Trail of Tears event, and working together as a community to sift through the current effects of the past—loss of culture and lands, stereotyping and American representation, government agency issues—and bring cultural renewal to these lost voices. But first, the past voices must be examined and reexamined, discovered and rediscovered, liberated and reliberated so that the Trail of Tears as an historical event can not only become triangulated, but also can continue to flourish.

In addition to liberating these witnesses' words—and the words of their descendants who still carry other unheard stories—there remains a human rights issue concerning cultural genocide that needs to be addressed more fully. Just as Victor Montejo (Mayan) has worked hard to bring the stories of the Central American Mayan natives into the forefront of ethnographic study, so do the researchers who concern themselves with the genocidal attempts on native communities in the United States.

Montejo, a writer and ethnographer, provides his eyewitness account of a massacre where he taught school in a small Guatemalan village. In his text, *Testimony: Death of a Guatemalan Village*, Montejo speaks and acts for those people who could not write or speak (the illiterate or the dead) during that horrific event in Mayan history. He explains in his article “The Stones Will Speak Again: Dreams of an Ah Tz’Ib’ (Writer) in the Maya Land” that:

[he considers] it a moral responsibility of the Native writer to be a voice for the people and to let the world know about not only the achievements of his or her people but also the crimes committed against them. [He] believe[s] that the Native writer has much to do on the issues of human rights, especially in this time when the indigenous people of the world are making their presence felt more strongly than ever (204).

As Montejo asserts, the act of exposing the “crimes committed against [native people]” is a “moral responsibility of the Native writer.” Here, the function of witness as genre becomes something more than telling the story: it functions as

a vessel that attempts to persuade the reader to believe that the genocidal atrocities occurred. Providing readers these voices that speak of genocide holds importance because these types of narratives ultimately compete with those that the dominant culture tells. In the case of indigenous peoples—in the United States as well as Guatemala—versus government, each side brings its own truth; and, historically, the government’s past is the one that claims victory, and consequently taught to society. Now, however, that Native Americans “are making their presence felt more strongly than ever,” another side of history can emerge with greater presence. It is only when these genocidal and historical wrongs are exposed that the world begins to take notice. In the case of the Trail of Tears, researchers—native and non-native—can make historical wrongs right, not only bringing multiple interpretations of history, but also reverencing the oppressed people that experienced that past.

As Montejo provides articulation for his people in his book, this chapter assigns voice to those who are gone—but who were there—that witnessed the mayhem of the Trail of Tears. For these purposes, I have attempted to group the accounts by creating different sections that tell the Trail of Tears story from perspectives such as government representatives, people who accompanied the Cherokees, doctors and missionaries, and Cherokees themselves. In some cases throughout this chapter, I have included complete letters or journal entries for the full effect and for complete context consideration. In other examples, only excerpts are needed to explain a specific rhetorical eyewitness account.

Government Representation

Many government accounts of the Trail of Tears exist as told by generals, privates, and presidential leaders. In this section, I present as evidence some varied first hand military descriptions from the Trail of Tears. While some accounts create a relatively trouble-free removal process, others present a totally different story. Unfortunately, it is usually the stories that portray an easily-traveled road to the west that appear in textbooks and movies. This is why other reports are included here, ones that tell the side of the story that is not often heard or learned.

In his autobiography, General Winfield Scott, Commander of the United States Armed Forces during the Cherokee removal, recounts the process as mostly, on all accounts, a copasetic event. He describes how the Cherokees were well-taken care of, all provided with appropriate lodgings, good doctors, government monies, and comfortable rides. Scott optimistically describes how the Cherokees enjoyed the journey west in comfort and hope. This government report provides a positive ethos that utilizes the ethical, logical, and emotional appeals so that the reader believes that the Trail of Tears removal was no more than a traveling expedition west. Scott writes:

In a few days, without shedding a drop of blood, the Indians, with the exception of small fragments, were collected . . . well shaded, watered with perennial springs, and flanked by the Hiawassee [river]. The *locale* was happily chosen . . . The other camps of emigration were also shaded and watered. Scott caused the few sick to be well attended by good

physicians; all proper subjects to be vaccinated; rode through the principal camp almost daily, and having placed the emigration in the hands of the Cherokee authorities themselves—after winning the confidence of all—was at liberty, at an early day, to the great benefit of the treasury, to send all the volunteers to their respective homes, except a single company. . . . The Cherokees were receiving from the Government immense sums; as fast as decreed by a civil commission (then in session) in the way of damages and indemnities, which attracted swarms of gamblers, sleight-of-hand men, blacklegs, and other desperadoes. The camp was kept cleansed of all such vermin by the military police—a duty which, probably, would have been resisted if it had devolved on regular troops They [the Cherokees] took their way, if not rejoicing, at least in comfort. Many of the miseries of life they had experienced; but hope—a worldly, as well as a Christian’s hope cheered them on. Scott followed up the movement nearly to the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi, where he gave his parting blessing to a people who had long shared his affectionate cares. He has reason to believe that, on the whole, their condition has been improved by transportation (138-140).

What is interesting here is the rhetorical position Scott takes: he refers to himself in third person. For example, he states that “Scott caused the few sick to be well attended” and “Scott followed up the movement . . . where he gave his parting blessing.” By utilizing third person rather than first person, the general detaches himself from the incident, almost as if he is recording another person’s story rather than his own. Or, could it be that Scott’s detachment from first person functions as a way for the general to report the government’s words regarding removal rather than his own true account?

Like the shingly positive statements of President Van Buren and Secretary of War Joel Poinsett concerning removal examined in chapter two, Scott’s account lives in the same vein. By stating that “they [the Cherokees] took their way, if not rejoicing, at least in comfort “and “their condition has been

improved by transportation” suggests that the removal process was anything but a trail of tears. This rhetorical telling of Indian removal persuades the reader to imagine the tribal people migrating with attitudes of joy rather than sorrow.

In addition to these false feelings presented, the reader is also supposed to believe in the logic of removal, accepting the idea that the condition of the Native American has been improved due to the removal. Sadly, generations of readers have believed these very lies and, unknowingly or not, teachers have instructed new generations of American citizens of these same fabrications: that, amongst other cultural deceptions, the Native Americans generally enjoyed their journey to their new government-appointed homes in the west, and the process ultimately improved their lives.

And even though General Scott may have reported the removal process in the way that the United States citizens *needed* to hear it (or, rather, to believe it), other military personnel reported a Trail of Tears that followed in the lines of how multitudes of Cherokees remembered the event—as a death walk to a desolate land.

In “Conscience or Duty: General John E. Wool’s Dilemma with Cherokee Removal” Wool provides a very different view of the removal process from that of General Scott. In the following plea, this inspector general of the United States Army appeals to the reader’s emotions, describing the ways in which whites treated Cherokees. Wool recounts:



Figure 1. "General E. Wool." Wool and His Topogs Join Taylor.
<<http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/mexico/topo/photos/pg165.jpg>>.

The whole scene since I have been in this country has been nothing but a heartrending one, and such a one as I would be glad to get rid of as soon as circumstances will permit. Because I am firm and decided, do not believe I would be unjust. If I could, and I could not do them greater kindness, I would remove every Indian tomorrow beyond the reach of the white man, who, like vultures, are watching, ready to pounce upon their prey and strip them of everything they have or expect from the government of the United States. Yes, sir, nineteen-twentieths, if not ninety-nine out of every hundred, will go penniless to the west (Corn 37).

General Wool's "heartrending" account of the removal requests the reader to believe an opposite story from that of General Scott's, stating that "their [the Cherokee's] condition has been improved by transportation." Wool's words attempt to persuade the reader to believe his experience during the removal process: "the white man, who, like vultures, are watching, ready to pounce upon their prey and strip them [the Cherokees] of everything they have." This description travels down an avenue to a new history, one that provides multiple and competitive accounts. These seemingly opposite accounts of the Trail of Tears provide a rhetorical space for their users, and as more voices from Native Americans and Indian sympathizers before, during, and after the Trail of Tears are included and uncovered, history and its users will have greater choices to make regarding an understanding of the Trail of Tears and how America examines that event.

In addition to General Wool's account and others like it, Lieutenant R. H. K. Whiteley's detachment battled death and sickness, almost daily at times. John Ehle includes in his book *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation* Lieutenant Whiteley's horrific experience that recounts one child's death and one child's birth within the first couple of days. Whiteley also tells a story about a Cherokee man who was curious about trains. Many Cherokees had never seen transportation such as trains (or steamboats) prior to the Trail of Tears. Because of this unfamiliarity, many Cherokees called the machine an iron horse. Not knowing how this beast worked, a man was killed while attempting to

retrieve his hat from underneath the locomotive. In another account, he witnesses the death of four more children before the detachment reached the Arkansas River. Whiteley writes:

The weather was extremely hot, a draught had prevailed for months, water was scarce, suffocating clouds of dust stirred up by oxen and wagons, and the rough and rocky roads, made the condition of the sick occupants of the wagons miserable indeed. Three, four, and five deaths occurred each day. To avoid the heat the marches were started before sunrise and ended at noon. Before the end of the month there were between two and three hundred ill (339).

Lieutenant Whiteley's account strikes at the heart of the Trail of Tears. He witnesses what the effects of the "extremely hot" weather and the "drought that had prevailed for months" can do to human bodies that were already sick, traveling in wagons. And still, Whiteley records that in a month's time "between two and three hundred [fell] ill." This report does not end his first hand experience with the Trail of Tears. Again, on 1 August, the lieutenant writes:

Did not move this day, the party requiring rest and being more than one half sick; notwithstanding every effort used, it was impossible to prevent their eating quantities of green peaches and corn—consequently the flux raged among them and carried off some days as high as six and seven (339).

With conditions worsening, Whiteley writes that there were “more than one half sick” in the camp and that their starvation led the Cherokees to eat green peaches and corn, both of which created a vast sickness in the camp and killed “as high as six and seven” on some days. In all, seventy died from the peaches and corn and “of those 875 who had left Tennessee, 603 remained at the arrival, the others dead or fleeing” (Ehle 339). Other causes of death witnessed through Whiteley’s account—extremities, starvation, illness, and disease—only increases that number. In addition to these factors that led to Cherokees perishing in great numbers, there were other accounts of deaths resulting from childbirth, beatings, and murders that led to huge death tolls at the end of the removal. Here, the profoundness of death can surely be realized.

In addition to the reports of those who were sick and those who had perished from the journey west, an account by another lieutenant, Joseph W. Harris, explains the vast differences in attitudes between the Indians and the whites in terms of their reactions to suffering and death. While he listens to the dignity in the full-blooded Cherokee reactions to sickness and death, he only hears timidity in the white and mixed-blooded Indian response:

My blood chills even as I write, at the remembrance of the scenes I have gone through today. In the cluster of cedars upon the bluff which looks down upon the Creek & river, and near a few tall chimneys—the wreck of a once comfortable tenement, the destroyer had been most busily at work. Three large families of the poor class are there encamped, & I have passed much the day with them, & have devoted the larger portion of my cares to their sufferers—but in vain were my efforts: the hand of death

was upon them. At one time I saw stretched around me and within a few feet of each other, eight of these afflicted creatures dead or dying. Yet no loud lamentations went up from the bereaved ones here. They were of the true Indian blood; they looked upon the departed ones with a manly sorrow & silently digged graves for their dead and as quietly they laid them out in their narrow beds . . . There is a dignity in their grief which is sublime; and which, poor and destitute, ignorant and unbefriended as they were, made me respect them.

The grief of the whites of my party is now loud and more distressing, yet less touching than the untold sorrow of the poor Indian. The heartbroken wife or mother whose feelings had not from the cradle been nerved by the philosophy of the woods, could not, when a beloved child or husband was snatched within an hour from rosy health & from her bosom, brood over her anguish in silence. She must tell her misery to the world. The whites and the half breeds too are far more timid & far more selfish I find, in scenes of danger & of affliction than the full blooded Indian. They are ever alive to a thousand superstitious fears, and hugging closely each to his individual comfort, they churlishly & doggedly refuse all aid or relief to their suffering neighbors (Foreman 257-258).

So unique is Lieutenant Harris' observations because his words provide a sense of public remembrance. Reading "my blood chills even as I write, at the remembrance of the scenes I have gone through today" does something to the psyche. His private words written on a public form (paper) create a memory that sticks in the reader's mind. By writing down this personal observation, Harris creates a public space to memorialize the dead. Instead of gravestones, half-dead and dying bodies mark the ground: "at one time I saw stretched around me and within a few feet of each other, eight of these afflicted creatures dead or dying." This account functions to create a remembrance that otherwise would never have been told, remembered, and shared.

Another aspect of the lieutenant's entry allows the reader a rare look at how the Cherokees react to death as opposed to the whites and mixed-bloods. Harris states that the "dignity in their grief which is sublime" actually made him "respect" them [the Cherokees] while "the [white] heartbroken wife or mother . . . must tell her misery to the world." Also interesting to note is how the mix-bloods react similarly to whites rather than to Cherokees, another effect of colonization. By including "the half breeds too" as acting selfishly "in the scenes of danger and affliction," Harris witnesses the effects of colonization of those mixed-bloods who have followed the ways of the Euro-American parent.

The following excerpted journal is entitled "Birthday Story of Private John G. Burnett, Captain Abraham McClellan's Company, 2nd Regiment, 2nd Brigade, Mounted Infantry, Cherokee Indian Removal 1838-1839." And although this journal does record the graphic brutal acts [in the full text] as witnessed in the examples above, it also records how this man formed family ties with the Cherokees during his early youth, and how in the prime of his life he patrolled his friends during the emigration. To read this account in full, see Thomas Underwood's text *The Story of the Cherokee People*. The first part of this story recounts Burnett's early years when he establishes a life-long friendship with his Cherokee neighbors. Rhetorically, the story sets the foundation of how the reader should view the Cherokee Indians: as expert hunters, craftsmen, teachers, and friends. Burnett writes:

This is my birthday December the 11th 1890, I am eighty years old today. I was born at Kings Iron Works in Sullivan Country, Tennessee, December 11th 1810. I grew into manhood fishing in Beaver Creek and roaming through the forest hunting the Deer the wild Boar and the timber Wolf. Often spending weeks at a time in the solitary wilderness with no companions but my rifle, hunting knife, and a small hatchet that I carried in my belt in all of my wilderness wanderings.

On these long hunting trips I met and became acquainted with many of the Cherokee Indians, hunting with them by day and sleeping around their camp fires by night. I learned to speak their language, and they taught me the arts of trailing and building traps and snares. On one of my long hunts in the fall of 1829 I found a young Cherokee who had been shot by a roving band of hunters and who had eluded his pursuers and concealed himself under a shelving rock . . . I carried him to a spring bathed and bandaged the bullet wound, built a shelter out of bark peeled from a dead chestnut tree, nursed and protected him feeding him on chestnuts and roasted deer meat. When he was able to travel I accompanied him to the home of his people and remained so long that I was given up for lost. By this time I had become an expert rifleman and fairly good archer and a good trapper and spent most of my time in the forest in quest of game (37).

Here, Burnett speaks of the Cherokees in affirmative terms, providing the reader with a positive image of the American indigenous population. Telling the reader that he “[hunted] with them by day and [slept] around their camp fires by night” and “remained so long that [he] was given up for lost” attempts to place a belief in the reader that the Cherokees were not savages, as the majority of whites believe[d], but rather people who cared for others and openly taught outsiders their ways. Burnett even learned the Cherokee language and absorbed “the arts of trailing and building traps and snares.” This example show that the white man and the Indian can establish friendships and alliances. Even stronger to the story is that a cross-cultural relationship can define friendship. Even in the face of

death, Burnett saves a young Cherokee who had been shot, healing him and then returning him to his people.

Later in Burnett's journal, he joins the United States Army. In serving his country, he is assigned to the Cherokee removal. This work creates a conflict for the reader because we must now prepare for how Burnett will act as both military and friend to his cross-cultural family. He writes:

The removal of the Cherokee Indians from their life long homes in the year of 1838 found me a young man in the prime of life and a Private soldier in the American Army. Being acquainted with many of the Indians and able to fluently speak their language, I was sent as interpreter into the Smokey Mountain Country in May, 1838, and witnessed the execution of the most brutal order in the History of American Warfare. I saw the helpless Cherokees arrested and dragged from their homes, and driven at the bayonet point into the stockades. And in the chill of a drizzling rain on an October morning I saw them loaded like cattle or sheep into six hundred and forty-five wagons and started toward the west. . .

I made the long journey to the west with the Cherokees and did all that a Private soldier could do to alleviate their sufferings. When on guard duty at night I have many times walked my beat in my blouse in order that some sick child might have the warmth of my overcoat . . . The only trouble that I had with anybody on the entire journey to the west was a brutal teamster by the name of Ben McDonal, who was using his whip on an old feeble Cherokee to hasten him into the wagon. The sight of that old and nearly blind creature quivering under the lashes of a bull whip was too much for me. I attempted to stop McDonal and it ended in a personal encounter (37-39).

Private Burnett's account establishes ethos, attempting to persuade the reader how a friend of the Cherokee can remain a supporter, even when duty calls him to play a different role: "walking [his] beat in [his] blouse in order that some sick

child might have the warmth of [his] overcoat” and attempting to stop the horrific sight of “an old and nearly blind creature quivering under the lashes of a bull whip.” When Burnett takes on the role of soldier, he still remains an ally to the people who had given him friendship and an education in the Cherokee ways. Burnett states that he “did [his] best for [the Cherokees] when they certainly did need a friend. Twenty-five years after the removal [he is] still loved in their Memory as “the Soldier who was good to us” (Underwood 43). Burnett's journal and others like it reveal those special historical relationships between the European and the Indian that speak to honesty, friendship, and love.

Accompanying Parties

The multivocality of the Trail of Tears not only includes military voices, but also consists of stories of people that either traveled with or witnessed parts of the forced exodus. These voices include anonymous observers and doctors who witnessed the western march. The following observation entitled “The Suffering Exiles: A Travelers View of One of The Last Emigrant Parties” was included in a special issues of the *New York Observer*, 26 January 1839. Only known as “A Native of Maine, Traveling in the Western Country” this person gives an account filled with such strong suffering and pathos that few would find difficulty in imagining and realizing the intensity of the Trail of Tears. The excerpt below concentrates on the severe sights the traveler saw while accompanying the

detachment for a short while. The unknown author's description details the severe conditions—and how the Cherokees survived that weather—and the dreadful sights of the massive migration. The anonymous traveler writes:

On Tuesday evening we fell in with a detachment of the poor Cherokee Indians . . . about eleven hundred Indians—sixty wagons—six hundred horses, and perhaps forty pairs of oxen. We found them in the forest camped for the night by the road side. . . under a severe fall of rain accompanied by heavy wind. With their canvas for a shield from the inclemency of the weather, and the cold wet ground for a resting place, after the fatigue of the day, spent the night . . . many of the aged Indians were suffering extremely from the fatigue of the journey, and the ill health consequent upon it. Several were then quite ill, and one aged man we were informed was then in the last struggles of death. . .

The sick and the feeble were carried in wagons—about as comfortable for traveling as a New England ox cart with a covering over it—a great many ride on horseback and multitudes go on foot—even aged females, apparently nearly ready to drop into the grave, were traveling with heavy burdens attached to the back—on the sometimes frozen ground, and sometimes muddy streets, with no covering for the feet except what nature had given them. . . We learned from the inhabitants on the road where the Indians passed, that they buried fourteen or fifteen at every stopping place, and they make a journey of ten miles per day only on an average. One fact which to my own mind seemed a lesson indeed to the American nation is, that they will not travel on the Sabbath . . . When the Sabbath came, they must stop, and not merely stop—they must worship the Great Spirit too, for they had divine service on the Sabbath—a camp-meeting in truth (174).

The traveler's eyewitness account persuades the reader that what s/he saw truly happened. The traveler's description recounts that a "great many ride on horseback and multitudes go on foot . . . on the sometimes frozen ground, and sometimes muddy streets, with no covering for the feet except what nature had

given them.” This description pulls at the reader’s emotions, creating in the reader a sense of being able to do nothing but to believe that this event truly occurred and to grieve for these people.

In the next section of the piece, the traveler responds to the events happening around her/him during this horrific time. S/he writes:

The Indians as a whole carry in their countenances every thing but the appearance of happiness. Some carry a downcast dejected look bordering upon the appearance of despair . . . When I passed the last detachment of those suffering exiles and thought that my native countrymen had thus expelled them from their native soil and their much loved homes, and that too in this inclement season of the year in all their suffering, I turned from the sight with feelings which language cannot express and “wept like childhood then.” I felt that I would not encounter the secret silent prayer of one of these sufferers armed with the energy that faith and hope would give it (if there be a God who avenges the wrongs of the injured) for all the lands of Georgia! (174-5).

This account and others like it detail the emotions involved in the Trail of Tears. As this traveler’s eyewitness account of the Cherokees carrying “a downcast dejected look bordering upon the appearance of despair,” s/he can only take so much of the sight before s/he must turn, and cry like a child. Thanks to newspapers like the *New York Observer* who published such accounts, varied observations of the Trail of Tears emerged, including those that directly opposed the government’s reports regarding the Cherokee removal.

In addition to travelers such as this one that briefly may have accompanied the parties, there were physicians on hand amongst the

detachments that attempted to monitor and care for the multitudes. One of these doctors was named G. S. Townsend; he accompanied the Cannon detachment. According to Vicki Rozema in *Voices of the Trail of Tears*, Dr. Townsend's journal listed all medicines, supplies, deaths, and the causes of those deaths while marching on the Trail of Tears. Rozema lists the more well-stocked items and equipment; here, they are listed in full for their historical significance and unique qualities:

castor oil, magnesia, cayenne pepper, cream of tartar, extract of liquorice, ammonia water, anti-bilious pills, Epsom salts, essence of peppermint, alum, borat soda, pulverized rhubarb, gum opium, laudanum, Rio coffee, brown sugar, imperial tea, rice, whiskey, cognac, bicarbonate of potassium, camphor, nitre, elixir of vitriol, spirits of turpentine, wormseed oil, shake root, calomel, mustard, mercurial ointment, sculpture quinine, and syrup made from squills, a bulbous member of the lily family. His hospital equipment included thumb lancets, male and female syringes, apothecary scales and weights, pillboxes, vials, tin cups, tin buckets, and a medicine sock (93-94).

The list of medicines and apparatuses that Dr. Townsend utilized prompts questions regarding how these items were used and rationed with so many of the Cannon detachment ill and dying. In the following excerpt, Dr. Townsend writes about the sickness and detainment that the group experienced along the way to Indian country:

I have the honor to report my return here, on the 23d Inst. [instant—i.e., the present month] from the Cherokee Nation West, which place I left on the 31st Decr. having accompanied a Detachment of Cherokees, on their emigration thither, as attending Physician . . .

I shall briefly detail the events of the Journey, as connected with my official duties. The detachment left the Agency, in general good health, the only cases of disease were confined to six or seven children, who had been labouring for several months, under Cholera Infantum, and whose emaciated appearance gave but little hopes of recovery. The weather altho' at the middle of October, remain[ed] warm and dry and continued so until after our arrival at the Ohio River, at which place we were detained for two days, in consequence of high winds. Whilst here four cases of fever, of a violent and malignant character, occurred in the family of Mr. Starr, all of whom eventually recovered. On our arrival at the Mississippi, we were also detained two days, in crossing, and the emigrants, necessarily exposed to the miasmatic exhalations of the immense swamp, which skirted the shores of the River, the deleterious effects of which soon became manifest by the demands made for my services. The detachment continued its progress until 25th November, when I found the increasing number of cases, rendered it absolutely necessary for the detachment to discontinue its march, in order that I might have some chance to combat with the formidable and overwhelming diseases that seemed to threaten the party with destruction.

I accordingly addressed a note to the Conducting Agent, giving my views of the subject. He did not hesitate to accede to my proposal, for indeed, the wagons, would have been unable to have hauled the sick, as many as 60 at that time being dangerously ill and could not bear transportation. Ten days elapsed before I felt myself authorized to pronounce their removal free from danger, and even then, cases were daily occurring, until two thirds of the whole party had passed through the pestilence (Rozema 95-96).

Dr. Townsend states the extremity of the problem, urging that “it [was] absolutely necessary for the detachment to discontinue its march, in order that [he] might have some chance to combat with the formidable and overwhelming diseases that seemed to threaten the party with destruction.” Here, the doctor’s words provide a first hand account of the vast disease-infected population. Then, using

real numbers, “as many as 60 at that time being dangerously ill,” he uses the logical appeal, creating not just an imaginary picture, but a factual number that is recorded.

Another interesting observation that Dr. Townsend notes is how other people traveling with the Cherokees also fell ill, something that is also too often rarely discussed in texts or movies. Continuing his professional account, Dr. Townsend explains the sickness and gives his conclusive remarks concerning the possible causes of the rampant disease overtaking the detachment:

Nor was the disease confined exclusively to the emigrants, nearly all of the Drivers were sick, some of whom had to be left on the road, and substitutes hired. We finally arrived at our place of destination on the 29th of December without further detentions.

The causes which operated in producing the great amount of sickness as above stated were mainly attributed to the unwholesome stagnant water which we were compelled to use throughout Illinois, the exposure to marsh effluvia, and the freedom with which the emigrants indulged in the use of fruits of every description, more particularly Grapes which proved a certain prelude to violent attacks of Dysentery and Bowel complaints, of a dangerous character (Rozema 96).

In addition to his account about his Cherokee patients, Dr. Townsend cites that “nor was the disease confined exclusively to the emigrants, nearly all of the Drivers were sick, some of whom had to be left on the road, and substitutes hired.” By including this observation, Dr. Townsend adds something new to the mix; he creates a human driver that can become ill and die. Here, there is no

special treatment for the driver or the Cherokee. Both disease and Dr. Townsend are respecters of no race.

The Missionary March

In addition to travelers and doctors, missionaries also traversed the harsh trail west with the detachments. While it is generally known that some missionaries held to the goal of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to the American Indians, there were other missionaries who used the mask of religion to “civilize” Native Americans, creating imitation white people in regards to religion, language, dress, agriculture, and gender roles. With good or bad intentions, missionaries were part of the removal process, recording what they witnessed along the Trail of Tears.

One unnamed missionary who had been present when Major Ridge’s detachment left on 3 March 1837 recounts:

It is mournful to see how reluctantly these people go away, even the stoutest hearts melt into tears when they turn their faces towards the setting sun—& I am sure that this land will be bedewed with a Nation’s tears—if not with their blood. . . . Major Ridge is . . . said to be in a declining state, & it is doubted whether he will reach Arkansas (Ehle 363).

The sadness in this missionary’s account is poignant because it reflects upon the emotion of the Trail of Tears and how “even the stoutest hearts melt into tears

when they turn their faces towards the setting sun—and I am sure that this land will be bedewed with a Nation's tears." Unfortunately, this missionary's words were prophetic ones because it is the Cherokee Nation's tears that remain part of the historical experience of the colonization of the United States. And though the writer "doubted whether [Major Ridge] will reach Arkansas," he did arrive safely; however, he was later murdered along with some of the other Ridge party leaders that established new homes in the west.

While the Ridge party was one of the earlier detachments to make it to the new Indian Territory, Chief John Ross' group was one of the last to arrive. According to John Ehle's text *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation*, the old-settler chiefs who were already in the new Indian country asked Ross about rumors of tumultuous politicking and new law making. Missionary Cephas Washburn provides this account from that meeting:

When Ross himself arrived he was visited by some intelligent individuals of the "old settlers," who mentioned this report to him & told him that such a course would occasion great commotion. He denied the truth of the report & said that he & his people were ready to come under the government and laws already existing here. This quieted the people, & the newcomers were everywhere welcomed by the old settlers & aided in finding suitable places for residence. All supposed that the Cherokees were reunited as one people, henceforth to live in harmony (Ehle 372).

And though Missionary Washburn functions as a witness, recording the events of the meeting between Chief John Ross and the "Old Settlers," other missionaries

such as the Reverend Daniel Butrick (traveling with the Taylor detachment) actually fought for the Cherokee cause. Even before marching with the Cherokees, the Reverend was an advocate for the Cherokee people; he, along with some other prominent missionaries, was arrested for this cause. The following is a personal diary entry that Butrick wrote concerning his views on removal:

American citizens are so much worse than the Indians that the latter cannot live near them . . . without having their property torn from them, their minds corrupted, and their virgins debauched. Therefore they must leave and retire to the more virtuous and civilized inhabitants of the forest . . . While the white man can go and come without fear of robbery, oppression, and murder, the poor Indian must watch night and day to preserve one little pony to plough his field, or one poor cow to nourish his family, or one creature of any kind to furnish his meat. Or, if riding alone, he is in constant danger of having his horse torn from him by the hands of ruffians. If seeking the fruit of his own soil, he is in danger of being seized, dragged to prison, and most infamous punishments (Carter 125).

Here, in Butrick's diary, we find yet another white witness finding empathy with the Indian. This passage functions to tell the Trail of Tears from a missionary/advocate's perspective. Butrick not only thinks that "American citizens are so much worse than the Indians that the latter cannot live near them," but he also plainly states that it is the Indian, not the white man, who must protect himself "night and day" from the "hands of ruffians." This splendid example of American Indian cruelty strongly argues for a need to revisit history.

With eyewitness accounts such as these that are brought to the surface, users of history can come to a greater understanding of the Trail of Tears.

Later, while traveling with the Taylor detachment, Butrick expressed the following reflection on New Year's Eve, 1838:

Monday, Dec. 31—This morning we were permitted to read the texts for this last day of the year. O what a year it has been! O what a sweeping wind has gone over, and carried its thousands into the grave; while thousands of others have been tortured and scarcely survive, and the whole nation comparatively thrown out of house & home during this most dreary winter. . .

But what have they done to the U. States? Have they violated any treaty? or any intercourse of law; or abused any of the agents or officers of the U. States? Or have they refused to accommodate U. States citizens when passing through the country? No such thing is pretended. For what crime then was this whole nation doomed to this perpetual death? This almost unheard of suffering? Simply because they would not agree to a principle which would be at once death to their national existence, viz. that a few unauthorized individuals might at any time, set aside the authority of the national council & principle chief, and in opposition to the declared will of the nation, dispose of the whole public domain, as well as the private property of individuals, and render the whole nation houseless & homeless at pleasure. Such a treaty the President of the U. States sanctioned, the Senate ratified, and the military force was found ready to execute. And now we see some of the effects.

The year past has been a year of spiritual darkness. We have had but few happy seasons, as for myself, I have by no means been faithful to my trust. I have wanted faith & love & zeal. A great part of the time my heart has been grieved to hear the awful profanements and see the scenes of wickedness which have been brought before us (Rozema 147-148).

By using rhetorical questions and emotional urgency, Missionary Butrick prompts the reader to not only imagine what a year living with the Cherokees and

traveling on the Trail of Tears might have been like, but his words also require the reader to consider greater questions involving humanity. He looks to the past, placing blame on the few people who signed the treaty that would ultimately pass through legislation, leading to the deaths of thousands of people.

Cherokee Voices

Of the many people who witnessed the Trail of Tears, it is the Cherokees that sit at the center of the removal process. On the very day a Cherokee detachment set off, William Shorey Coodey, a Cherokee nephew of John Ross, wrote a letter entitled “An Omen in the Sky.” In this letter to John Howard Payne, Coodey describes the departure from the stockade camps where the Cherokees were held. He writes:

At noon all was in readiness for moving. The trains were stretched out in a line along the road through a heavy forest. Groups of persons formed about each wagon, others shaking the hand of some side-friend or relative who would be left behind. The temporary camps, covered with boards and some of bark, that for three summer months had been their only shelter and *home* were crackling and falling under a blazing flame. The day was bright and beautiful, but a gloomy thoughtfulness was strongly depicted in [the] linements of any face. In all the bustle of preparation there was a silence and stillness of the voice that betrayed the sadness of the heart.

At length the word was given to “move on.” I glanced along the line and the form of Going Snake, an aged and respected chief whose head eighty winters had whitened, mounted on his favorite pony passed before me and led the way in advance, followed by a number of young men on horseback.

At this very moment a low sound of distant thunder fell on my ear. In almost an exact western direction a dark spiral cloud was rising above the horizon and sent forth a murmur. I almost fancied a voice of divine indignation for for the wrongs of my poor and unhappy countrymen, driven by brutal power from all they loved and cherished in the land of their fathers, to gratify the cravings of avarice. The sun was unclouded—no rain fell—the thunder rolled away and sounds hushed in the distance. The scene around and before me, and in the elements above, were peculiarly impressive & singular. It was at once spoken by several persons near me, and looked upon as omens of some future event in the west (164-165).

From the offset there was, as Coodey explains, an omen. As he remembers, the day was “bright and beautiful, but a gloomy thoughtfulness was strongly depicted in [the] linements of any face. In all the bustle of preparation there was a silence and stillness of the voice that betrayed the sadness of the heart.” This statement informs the reader that something awful is to transpire. That forecast only became stronger and more disheartening as the detachments continued west.

In addition to Coodey, other Cherokees detailed the emotional conditions of their people. The following account recorded by another full-blooded Cherokee found in John Ehle’s book *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation* makes this profound statement that cries the meaning behind the Trail of Tears. The unnamed author states:

Long time we travel on way to new land. People feel bad when they leave Old Nation. Womens cry and made sad wails. Children cry and many men cry, and all look sad like when friends die, but they say nothing and just put heads down and keep on go towards West. Many days pass and people die very much (358).

It was reports like this one that witnessed the emotional distress such as hearing about the women wailing and the children and men crying and “all look sad like when friends die, but they say nothing and just put heads down and keep on go towards West” of the Trail of Tears that should be more often shared with American society. Here, the function of witness as genre allows voices such as these to come alive and speak to the current scholarship of Native American history.

Eastern Witness

Not all of the Cherokees removed west during the Trail of Tears. In fact, most of the currently enrolled 12,000 Cherokees living and working on the Qualla boundary in Eastern North Carolina, Swain County, are descendants of the Cherokees who escaped into the North Carolina mountains. Amongst the Cherokees that have already spoken in this chapter, Tsali is yet another key figure in the Trail of Tears story. As mentioned in the introduction, he gave his life so that his people, a remnant of approximately a thousand souls who were hiding in the North Carolina mountains, could remain there peaceably. These people are now known as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Although General Scott employed Will Thomas to hire Euchella, another leader of a Cherokee band that hid in the mountainside, to capture Tsali and bring him to the camp for his execution, it was Will Thomas himself that went to

Tsali with General Scott's offer—Tsali's life for his people—and waited on his reply. As Mooney records the story, Thomas traveled to Tsali's hiding place, walked through the rifle-carrying Indian guards, and announced Scott's proposition. In reply, "the old man listened in silence and then simply said, 'I will come in. I don't want to be hunted down by my own people.'" They [Tsali and his two oldest sons] came into the camp voluntarily and were shot . . . "one only, a mere boy, being spared on account of his youth" (Mooney 158).

In another account, Charles Lanman in "Euchella and Tsali" states that it was due to Euchella's band's efforts that Tsali and other so-called soldier murderers were brought in and tried for their crimes. While tied to a tree, awaiting his execution, Tsali speaks his last words to Euchella. He states:

And is it by your hands Euchella, that I am to die? We have been brothers together; but Euchella has promised to be the white man's friend, and he must do this duty, and poor Charley [Tsali] is to suffer because he loved his country. O, Euchella! If the Cherokee people now beyond Mississippi carried my heart in their bosoms, they never would have left their beautiful native land—their own mountain land. I am not afraid to die; O, no, I want to die, for my heart is very heavy, heavier than lead. But Euchella, there is one favor that I would ask at your hands. You know that I had a little boy, who was lost among the mountains. I want you to find that boy, if he is not dead, and tell him that the last words of his father were that he must never go beyond the Father of Waters, but die in the land of his birth. It is sweet to die in one's own country, and to be buried by the margin of one's native stream (235).

Tsali's speech to Euchella establishes an ethos that functions to reveal the deception directly involved the white man's dealings. Tsali states to Euchella

that the two men “have been brothers together; but Euchella has promised to be the white man’s friend, and he must do this duty, and poor Charley [Tsali] is to suffer because he loved his country.” Trust in the Cherokee brotherhood has been compromised due to the white man’s false promises. This situation sets the tone for the reader to recognize that false relationships can lead to cultural, spiritual, and physical death.

Yet, another question remains: Which Tsali account is the accurate story? In this story involving Euchella, the son is lost in the mountains during Tsali’s speech. Contrastingly, some narratives have Tsali’s youngest son at the execution site, as shown in the outdoor drama “Unto These Hills,” performed in Cherokee, North Carolina. In addition to other inconsistencies, Mooney states that the only one to survive was the youngest, and “this boy, now an old man, is still living, Wasitŭ’Na, better known to the whites as Washington” (158).¹ Although we will never know the exact story, the version that reaches the most people is the view according to the drama performed in Cherokee, North Carolina each summer.

This chapter ends with the words of the Cherokee Chief John Ross, warrior for his people. During the Civil war, Ross’ enemy, Stand Watie (Cherokee member of the Ridge party during the Treaty of 1835, Elias Boudinot’s brother, and later a general in the Confederate army) and his military troop, burned Ross’ home and set his slaves free, both of which caused him to lose the

¹ For other issues on discrepancies contained in the varied Tsali stories see Duane King and Raymond Evan’s “Tsali: The Man behind the Legend.” In *Journal of Cherokee Studies* 4.4 (1979).

majority of his wealth. Afterwards, a federal commissioner recorded the following words that Ross spoke during his dying moments. These words instill the strength of years of service to his people and the United States. Ross states:

I am an old man, and have served my people and the Govt of the United States a long time, over fifty years. My people have kept me in the harness, not of my seeking, but of their own choice. I have never deceived them, and now I look back, not one act of my public life rises up to upbraid me. I have done the best I could, and today, upon this bed of sickness, my heart approves all I have done. And still I am, John Ross, the same John Ross of former years, unchanged (Ehle 383).

Ross's deathbed words are powerful not only because of their deathbed confession form, but also because they function as a witness to many years of his own history. Ross as rhetor looks back on his life, stating that he never betrayed his people and that "not one act of my public life rises up to upbraid me . . . my heart approves all of I have done. And I still am, John Ross . . . unchanged." Ross' words function here as a means of self reflection; they act as a witness to him being at peace with his past decisions, therefore, attempting to persuade his readers that he was a Cherokee chief that made good decisions for his people. Ross creates and recreates himself through his words. Even at death, he establishes ethos that attempts to create a Cherokee Chief Ross for the reader/listener that needs to be remembered as a strong leader who cares about the Cherokee people and their survival.

In this chapter, I have attempted to argue for the reexamination of history through a rhetorical lens that sees the genre of witness. I have selected voices that tell their own experiences of the Trail of Tears, functioning in ways that bring users of history closer to the actual event. I have attempted to provide a greater selection of eyewitness accounts from the Trail of Tears who lived to write, speak, and hand down the stories about their experiences. And although not all of these voices were Cherokee, the soldiers, doctors, missionaries and others are important to the goal of not allowing the colonizer to keep hold of history.

The next chapter deals specifically with the hardships of the often-forgotten female voices that surround the Trail of Tears. The genre presented functions to tell history from the point of view of both Cherokee and white women who were strong in speech, in action, and in protecting the lives of the people. These female rhetors take on the courageous act of telling the Trail of Tears in their own rhetorical ways.

CHAPTER V

CHEROKEE WOMEN AND RHETORIC: ENDURING COLONIZATION AND THE TRAIL OF TEARS

I am in hopes if you Rightly consider it that woman is the mother of All—and that woman Does not pull Children out of Trees or Stumps nor out of old Logs, but out of their Bodies, so that they ought to mind what a woman says, and look upon her as a mother.

Cherokee Indian Women to President Franklin (1787)

The Cherokee women quoted above establish ethos by showing Franklin that as a man he “ought to mind what a woman says, and look upon her as a mother.” This ethos was not unique to Native American culture, matriarchal by nature. It was not until European contact that women’s roles in indigenous society began changing and the rhetorical ethos of woman as mother, warrior, and counselor, amongst other roles, became endangered. Although the letter to Franklin dates 1787, it still exhibits the female Cherokee appeal that persuades readers that Indian women embodied strength, equality, and a voice that—prior to European contamination—was highly revered and respected. Just as M. Annette Jaimes with Theresa Halsey state in their article “American Indian Women: At the Center of Indigenous Resistance in Contemporary North America”:

Women have always formed the backbone of indigenous nations on this continent. Contrary to those images of meekness, docility, and subordination to males with which we women typically have been portrayed by the dominant culture's books and movies, anthropology, and political ideologues of both rightist and leftist persuasions, it is women who have formed the very core of indigenous resistance to genocide and colonization since the first moment of conflict between Indians and invaders (311).

As Jaimes and Halsey assert, it is these false representations of “meekness, docility, and subordination to males” that create a degrading ethos that has historically—and tragically—adhered to the American Indian woman.

Regrettably, generations of the dominant culture have taught American citizens to characterize Cherokee women as animals—to be tamed and controlled by men, as they please—rather than presenting them as historical and rhetorical figures who were valued: councilors during war and peace; laborers in the field and at home; and, matriarchs of the tribe. Unfortunately, most of American society still views the Native American woman as a savage who embodies either a wild warrior sex object, as seen in Figure 1, or a monstrous looking drudge; in essence, the true cultural female representation remains mostly nonexistent.

In this chapter, I argue for the reexamination of the Cherokee woman, utilizing the genre of women's voice through speeches, first hand accounts, and other portrayals that function to reveal a more varied, historical Cherokee female representation. First, I discuss genre theory as it relates to this chapter. Then, the rest of this chapter is devoted to women's voices and first hand narratives

involving the Trail of Tears. This second part, concerning women's voices, reveals how Cherokee women saw themselves in society and during the Trail of Tears removal. The last part of this chapter includes narratives of how others saw Cherokee women during the Trail of Tears.



Figure 1. Native American Woman.
<<http://www.angelfire.com/ga4/runningwolf/Woman2.jpg>>.

Amy Devitt writes in her book *Writing Genres* that genres are not only actions, making them dynamic, but they can also function to change with contexts and readers. She writes:

The function of genre, then, might be said to change as its readers and contexts change . . . A text participates in multiple genres all the time . . . so a text could shift genre participation over time and situation. Since genres adapt to changing historical circumstances . . . perhaps whole genres, too, can shift from one genre function and situation over time (182).

Devitt's appeal concerning genre theory persuades readers that genre functions to "change as its reader and context change" and that "perhaps whole genres, too, can shift from one genre function and situation over time." In the case of Cherokee women's voices before, during, and after the Trail of Tears, the function does change, as Devitt proposes. The work of women's voices as genre before the Trail of Tears persuaded and advised Indian councils to look to women with respect and to warn the councils of European ways. The action of voice after the Trail of Tears changed, becoming virtually silent, due to an increase of European encroachment and a general devaluing of women's words. Today, we read those same speeches and public words as a means to provide information about Cherokee culture. In addition, we read such genres so that we can retell history from a multi-vocal viewpoint.

In addition to reexamining women's voices as functioning genres, this chapter's structure will be chronological: it begins with a pre-European foundation; and, then moves through European contact, contamination, and rhetorical response; and, finally, ends with the Trail of Tears event.

Pre-European Society

To understand Cherokee women's rhetoric in the context of indigenous society, we must first examine a pre-European past. The Cherokee familial structure was made up of seven matrilineal clans: Wolf, Deer, Long Hair, Wild Potato, Bird, Paint, and Blue. When a woman and man married, the man lived in the house that his wife owned or built (but did not adopt her clan), and when a child was born, s/he belonged to the mother's clan. An eighteenth-century observer found in David Corkran's *The Cherokee Frontier: Conflict and Survival, 1740-62* describes the Cherokee woman's role in the household: "the women rules the roost and weres the britches and sometimes will beat thire husbands within an inch of thire life. The man will not resist their poure if the woman was to beat his branes out" (9). Although this observer's statement suggests that "the women rules the roost and were the britches," a characteristic that could be attributed to a matriarchal society, his generality that they "will beat thire husband within an inch of thire life" attempts to persuade the reader that Cherokee wives were violent and disrespectful to their husbands. It is generalities such as these

that carry negative stereotypes concerning Native American women from generation to generation.

In addition to the tribal matriarchal family structure, women also held other roles, for example, in labor and council. Although Cherokees believed in holding land in common, women, according to Carolyn Ross Johnston in *Cherokee Women in Crisis*, took care of any “domestic improvements” involving the land that they worked and the homes in which they resided. Johnston asserts that “women also owned the agricultural fields they cultivated” (12). Theda Perdue states in “Native Women in the Early Republic: Old World Perceptions, New World Realities” that she is not surprised that women were harmfully portrayed as laborers in early eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because their work was overwhelming. Perdue writes:

They procured much of the food: they grew vegetables, gathered berries and nuts, dug roots, made sugar and salt, and caught fish. They cooked this produce or preserved it for later use. They also prepared meat men provided. Women cut firewood, carried water, and made shoes and clothing. Among many peoples, they erected their houses (105-106).

As Perdue states, the women “procured much of the food,” and “cut firewood, carried water,” and “erected their houses.” Reexamining history in terms of the division of labor persuades readers to reconsider their own representations regarding indigenous women.

In addition to the hard labor that Cherokee women endured, they also contributed to the decision making processes of their tribal councils. Corkran explains women's roles in war and peace:

In prehistoric times War Women were said to have accompanied war parties to perform menial tasks about the encampments. The War Women also had the disposition of captives. Women's councils may have had a voice in the decision for war. Certainly they had a peace role, for the official women accompanied peace missions. Although no white man appears ever to have heard a Cherokee woman speak in council, women were undoubtedly present at treaty-making as official observers, perhaps even as behind-the-scenes councilors. The titles War Woman and Beloved Woman suggest war and peace organizations among the women similar to those of men. Holders of these titles, like their male counterparts, probably were women of the regal line. There must also have been mysteries and ceremonials, but the only evidence of these appears in occasional organized public demonstrations by the women (8-9).

According to Corkran, Cherokee women not only held roles during war such as “[having] the disposition of captives,” but also “were undoubtedly present at treaty-making as official observers, perhaps even as behind-the-scenes councilors.” These actions establish a rhetorical appeal that supports the idea of a matriarchal society, one where women were not subservient.

After reexamining women's roles in Cherokee society, it does not seem shocking to read European James Adair's account that the Cherokees “have been a considerable while under petticoat government, and allow their women

full liberty to plant their brows with horns as often as they please without fear or punishment” (Corkran 9).

If Cherokee women’s rhetorical actions such as voicing concerns or making judgments seemed difficult for the early Europeans to comprehend, the accounts of the many warrior women who fought in battle must have looked completely alien. In his book *Myths of the Cherokee* James Mooney recounts the story of a woman who killed her husband’s (a Cherokee chief) murderers in battle. He writes:

His wife, whose name was Cuhtahlatah (Gatûñ’lătĭ, “Wild hemp”?), on seeing her husband fall, snatched up his tomahawk, shouting ‘Kill! Kill!’ and rushed upon the enemy with such fury that the retreating Cherokee rallied and renewed the battle with so great courage as to gain a complete victory (395).

Through his example, Mooney provides a different image of the female Cherokee, one that represents a courageous warrior that “rushed upon the enemy with such fury that the retreating Cherokee rallied and renewed the battle with so great courage as to gain a complete victory.” This account prompts the reader to believe that this battle’s victory was due to this Cherokee woman’s (Cuhtahlatah’s) bravery and courage.

Mooney cites yet another Cherokee woman who gave her life in battle during Rutherford’s expedition against the Cherokee people (1776):

After the main body had retreated, an Indian was seen looking out from behind a tree, and was at once shot and killed by soldiers, who, on going to the spot, found that it was a woman, painted and striped like a warrior and armed with bow and arrows. She had already been shot through the thigh, and had therefore been unable to flee with the rest (395).

These roles such as fighter, farmer, counselor and tribal matriarch maintained for thousands of years; matriarchy and equity were normal attributes of the Cherokee tribal system. Being so, then, it stunned mid eighteenth-century Cherokee leader Little Carpenter when he met with a white governor for a conference and no white women were in attendance. As the meeting continued, the Cherokees sent their women's "good wishes" to the governor, explaining that women were present during their councils. He then inquired about the governor's (absent) women, asking:

Since the white man as well as the red was born of woman, did not the white man admit women to their councils? The governor waited two or three days to answer the Cherokee leader, and when he did, he only said that "the white men do place confidence in their women and share their councils with them when they know their hearts are good" (Corkran 110-111).

At this moment, the difference between Cherokee and European ideals concerning women become quite noticeable. The fact that it took the white governor two or three days to answer why women were not present at government meetings shows that he, and his own culture, probably never

considered women being at hand, therefore disregarding them as serious decision makers. Even his words “when they know their hearts are good” imply that men must be absolutely sure of a woman’s heart prior to her being permitted to offer council. The governor’s delay and off-putting remarks, therefore, is evidence that in white society women played a more subordinate, submissive role.

European Contamination

As discussed above, Cherokee women’s rhetorical roles held strong for thousands of years. It was not until increased contact with European ways that Cherokee women began to lose the aspects that shaped their identities: their roles, their lands, and their voices. As William Anderson states in his introduction to *Cherokee Removal: Before and After*, the gold discovered on Cherokee land, “the issue of states’ rights, and the emergence of scientific racism [and] the invention of the cotton gin” were not the only factors involved in the attempts at cultural genocide (ix).

Theda Perdue asserts in her piece “Cherokee Women and the Trail of Tears” that this decline in women’s roles became more prevalent after the American Revolution, when the Cherokees turned to the U.S. government for assistance, primarily out of extreme distress and desperation. The government, in turn, hoped to create “replicas of white pioneer farmers in the anticipation that

they would then cede additional territory” (95). Through this civilization process, gender roles changed: men became the farmers, heads of households, and owners of African slaves—just like the white southern farmer. In 1808, children’s interests became: “as heirs to their father’s property, and to the widows’ share,’ thereby changing inheritance patterns and officially recognizing the patriarchal family as the norm.” And, as Perdue reports, “there is no evidence of women participating” at the 1808 council (95).

All of these effects that Perdue lists concerning farming, property rights, and decreased participation in council meetings provide the evidence needed to persuade readers that European ways had disastrous effects on Cherokee women. Once the talons of European colonization and civilization programs clenched the Cherokee woman’s lifestyle, there would be no turning back. An unquestionable attempt at genocide would become more than just an imagined threat; it would become a reality.

The Cherokee Female Appeal

Changing gender roles and the loss of leadership in tribal council did not prevent Cherokee women from pushing against the establishment, a force that endeavored to eradicate them. For example, Cherokee women such as Beloved Woman Nancy Ward, a Cherokee War Woman (shown in Figure 2), attempted to warn the Cherokee Council about European ways and dealings. This woman’s

speeches, in partnership with other Cherokee women, establish ethos by using language that fights for Cherokee land, protects Cherokee rights, and warns the tribal council about European dirty dealings and deceptive ways.



Figure 2. Nanye'hi. Nancy Ward, after marrying Bryant Ward. Also known as War Woman and Beloved Woman. Photograph of Statue. <<http://www.sequoyahmuseum.org/nancyward5.html>>.

Part of the importance of including these speeches (warnings) is to show the traditional role of Cherokee women and their rhetorical skills as speakers. As

noted in chapter three, Cheryl Geisler piece “How Ought We to Understand the Concept of Rhetorical Agency? Report from the ARS” discusses the different dialogues concerning rhetorical agency at the 2003 Alliance of Rhetoric Societies Conference. Within her recapitulation of the conference, Geisler includes a discussion on the skill of the rhetorical agent. She asks: “to what extent does her [the rhetor’s] skill matter?” In attempting to speculate, Geisler supplies some possibilities. She writes:

Here we begin an inquiry into the role of the rhetor’s conscious assessment of situations and choices in response to those assessments. In the traditional view articulated by Campbell, “Central to any competent communication is an assessment of audience and a conscious structuring of one’s message to maximize the possibilities of evoking from the hearers the desired response.” Borrowing a musical metaphor from Bakhtin, Jasinski suggests that, “speakers and writers manifest rhetorical agency when they display an ability to identify and manage or . . . orchestrate resources. . . .” According to Jasinski, an improvisation metaphor may allow us to sidestep the critique of liberal humanism by acknowledging the contingency of all action while at the same time allowing the rhetor the power to respond to those shifting circumstances (13).

As Geisler reports, the rhetor’s “conscious assessment and choices in response to those assessments” matters in the rhetor’s skill and agency. The traditional “assessment of audience and a conscious structuring of one’s message” and the rhetor’s “ability to identify and manage or . . . orchestrate resources” both apply to the Cherokee women speakers below. While the first address to the Cherokee Council shows the rhetors’ consciousness of their male audience as sons, the

second address to the council “responds to those shifting circumstances,” the loss of culture and land. These women rhetors exercise agency in ways that work in society: they establish ethos as Mother; speak prophetically, warning their sons of the white man; and finally, react to their son’s unwise decision not to listen to their mothers, speaking to the immense loss of their ancestral lands.

In the following examples Nancy Ward, along with other Cherokee women, petition the Cherokee National Council on the issue of land. To view Nancy Wards other writings see Karen Kilcup’s *Native American Women’s Writing c. 1800-1924: An Anthology*. These two petitions reprinted here are found in that text. The first petition persuades Council not to cede any more lands. The speech begins by establishing a matriarchal ethos:

{Petition to the Cherokee National Council}

(Cherokee Women and Ward, May 2, 1817)

The Cherokee Ladys now being present at the meeting of the chiefs and warriors in council have thought it their duty as mothers to address their beloved chiefs and warriors now assembled.

Our beloved children and head men of the Cherokee Nation, we address you warriors in council. We have raised all of you on the land which we now have, which God gave us to inhabit and raise provisions. We know that our country has once been extensive, but by repeated sales has become circumscribed to a small track, and {we} never have thought it our duty to interfere in the disposition of it till now. If a father or mother was to sell all their lands which they had to depend on, which their children had to raise their living on {it} would be indeed bad & {so would it be} to be removed to another country. We do not wish to go to an unknown country which we have understood some of our children wish to go {to} over the Mississippi, but this act of our children would be like destroying your mothers (29).

In the first part of this speech, Nancy Ward and the other Cherokee women appeal to the council's tradition, reminding them of the matriarchal structure. The text states that the Cherokee women "have thought it their duty as mothers to address their beloved chiefs and warriors now assembled." Addressing the audience in this manner, in terms of genre, functions as a means of claiming respect and a listening ear, both characteristics of how a child acts toward its mother.

Soon after, the mothers address the land issue, speaking to issues surrounding the history of the land, the people, and the continued ceding of that land. The mothers state that to sell any more land would be like "destroying your mothers." Using these words, the speakers appeal to the council's emotions, persuading it not to cede again.

The second part of this speech further pleads with Council about land cession. The mothers speak to their children, warning them about treaties and talks with whites:

Your mothers, your sisters ask and beg of you not to part with any more of our lands. We say ours. You are our descendants; take pity on our request. But keep it for our growing children, for it was the good will of our creator to place us here, and you know our father, the great president [Monroe], will not allow his white children to take our country away. Only keep your hands off of paper talks for it is our own country. For {if} it was not, they would not ask you to put your hands to paper, for it would be impossible to remove us all. For as soon as one child is raised, we have others in our arms, for such is our situation & {they} will consider our circumstances.

Therefore, children, don't part with any of our lands but continue on it & enlarge your farms & cultivate and raise corn & cotton, and your mothers and sisters will make clothing for you which our father the president has recommended to us all. We don't charge any body for selling any lands, but we have heard such intentions of our children. But your talks become true at last & it was our desire to forwarn you all not to part with our lands.

Nancy Ward to her children: Warriors to take pity and listen to the talks of your sisters. Although I am very old yet {I} cannot but pity the situation in which you will here of their minds. I have great many grand children which I wish them to do well on our land (29).

These women's words function to warn the Cherokee council not to continue on with their current ways. The mothers inform the council to "keep your hands off of paper talks for it is our own country. For {if} it was not, they would not ask you to put your hands to paper, for it would be impossible to remove us all." This part of the speech appeals to common sense, working to teach the Cherokees and other audiences that if the whites believed that the land truly belonged to the Cherokees, they would not ask them to sign any treaties concerning the land.

The second petition included here also speaks to the Cherokee National Council. This speech functions to create a public memory of what the Cherokees once had: the land and trust with the white man. Then, the speech functions to inform its Cherokee listeners and other audiences about the current land loss and colonization:

{Petition to the Cherokee National Council}

(Cherokee Women and Ward, June 30, 1818)

Beloved Children,

We have called a meeting among ourselves to consult on the different points now before the council, relating to our national affairs. We have heard with painful feelings that the bounds of the land we now possess are to be drawn into very narrow limits. The land was given to us by the Great Spirit above as our common right, to raise our children upon, & to make support for our rising generations. We therefore humbly petition our beloved children, the head men & warriors, to hold out to the last in support of our common rights, as the Cherokee nation have been the first settlers of this land; we therefore claim the right of the soil (29).

The first part of this speech informs the Cherokee council that the women have heard what is about to happen to their land: it is “to be drawn into very narrow limits.” The women urge the council to “hold out to the last in support of our common rights, as the Cherokee nation have been the first settlers of this land; we therefore claim the right of the soil.” These words reinforce the idea that the Cherokees held a right to the land first, persuading readers to reconsider the colonizing role of the United States (and other local) government. The next lines of the speech comment on the current state of Native America at that time. The women write:

We well remember that our country was formerly very extensive, but by repeated sales it has become circumscribed to the very narrow limits we have at present. Our Father the President advised us to become farmers, to manufacture our own clothes, & to have our children instructed. To this advice we have attended in every thing as far as we were able. Now the thought of us being compelled to remove {to} the other side of the Mississippi is dreadful to us, because it appears to us that we, by this

removal, shall be brought to a savage state again, for we have, by the endeavor of our Father the President, become too much enlightened to throw aside the privileges of a civilized life.

We therefore unanimously join in our meeting to hold our country in common as hitherto.

Some of our children have become Christians. We have missionary schools among us. We have heard the gospel in our nation. We have become civilized and enlightened, & are in hopes that in a few years our nation will be prepared for instruction in other branches of sciences & arts, which are both useful and necessary in civilized society.

There are some white men among us who have been raised in this country from their youth, are connected with us by marriage, & have considerable families, who are very active in encouraging the emigration of our nation. These ought to be our truest friends but prove to be our worst enemies. They seem to be only concerned how to increase their riches, but do not care what becomes of our Nation, nor even of their own wives and children (29-30).

These Cherokee women's words work to show the effects of colonization. In addition to being reduced to live on small allotments of land, the Cherokees have "become farmers, manufacture [their] own clothes, & have [their] children instructed." Some people in the tribe have also become Christians. In a state of colonization, the prophetic warning spoken in the 1817 petition to the Council now comes to pass in the second appeal in 1818: "These [white men] ought to be our truest friends but prove to be our worst enemies. They seem to be only concerned how to increase their riches." In essence, Cherokee lands are diminishing at a rapid rate; colonization has taken a stronghold in the community, and the idea of removal is fast becoming a reality. One can only speculate what might or might not have occurred if the Council would have heeded their mothers' and sisters' advice the first time.

And although the rhetoric found in the petitions from the Beloved Mother Nancy Ward was strong and wise—attempting to persuade the Cherokees to hold on to the land and culture—the matriarchal intention did not prevail. It came to pass that 1818 was the last year that women were permitted to speak at the National Council as a collective voice. Perdue writes:

In 1820 the council provided that representatives be chosen from eight districts rather than from traditional towns, and in 1823 the committee acquired a right of review over acts of the council . . . As the Cherokee government became more centralized, political and economic power rested increasingly in the hands of a few elite men who adopted the planter lifestyle of the white antebellum South . . . In 1826 the council called a constitutional convention to draw up a governing document for the nation. According to legislation . . . No person but a free male citizen who is full grown shall be entitled to vote (Cherokee 97-98).

As Perdue states, “political and economic power rested increasingly in the hands of a few elite men who adopted the planter lifestyle of the white antebellum South.” At this point, Cherokee women were not the tribal leaders and advisors that they once were. Even the whites soon began direct attacks on those Cherokee women that attempted to voice concerns or show Indian tribal leadership. The below warning was printed in the *Cherokee Phoenix*, dated 16 July, 1831:

CHEROKEE WOMEN BEWARE

It is said that the Georgia Guard have received orders, from the Governor we suppose, to inflict corporeal punishment on such females as shall hereafter be guilty of insulting them . . . According to our understanding of insult, we think, first, it is very undignified for a female to exercise it under any circumstances; and second, it is equally undignified for any gentleman to inflict a corporeal punishment on a female who may be guilty of such a crime (Carter 114).

This excerpt, printed almost a decade prior to the 1838 Trail of Tears event, portrays the U. S. military in terms of allowing its white soldiers of the Georgia Guard as having every right “to inflict corporeal punishment on such females as shall hereafter be guilty of insulting them.” Therefore, white male domination over white women now extended to Cherokee women, a group that historically had not known male supremacy.

Cherokee Women Remember

The lives of the Cherokee women who outlived the deadly forces of the Trail of Tears as children were changed forever. They were forced to adjust to new homes, new rules, and, in some cases, new lives without the parents with whom they had left. Even before leaving on the mass exodus, Jane Bushyhead, daughter of the Native American preacher Reverend Jesse Bushyhead, prepared to leave, writing to her friends that she may not ever see again. The following

letter is written to a childhood friend called Martha. The child Jane Bushyhead writes:

Red Clay Cherokee Nation March 10, 1838

Beloved, Martha,

I have delayed writing to you so long I expect that you have relinquished all thought of receiving any thing from me. By my Dear Martha I have not forgotten my promise. I have often wished to enjoy your company once more but it is very uncertain whether I shall ever again have that pleasure. If we Cherokees are to be driven to the west by the cruel hand of oppression to seek a home in the west it will be impossible. My father is now in Washington City. He was one of the delegates who went to Florida last Oct. We do not know when he will return. Not long since Mr. Stephen Foreman received a letter from father. He was absent when the letter came home and before he arrived the troops had been there and taken it to the Agency given it to General Smith and he handed it round for all to read. It is thus all our rights are invaded. About two months ago my youngest brother died. He was sick almost two months. I was not at home when he died but they sent for me to attend his funeral. He was burnt very badly last fall and it is very likely his death was occasioned by it however we do not exactly know.

It will not be long before our next vacation. Then we expect to go home. Perhaps it may be the last time we shall have the privilege of attending school in this nation. But we are not certain.

If we should remove to the Arkansas I should still hope to continue our correspondence. Please to present my best respects to your father & family Miss E. Jones and Miss Betsy Tirtle write with me in love to you.

Your, sincere friend,

Jane Bushyhead (Ehle 321).

Facing the removal process was extremely realistic for this schoolgirl, as the letter shows. However, the knowledge of severity, danger, disease, and violence

concerning removal is not present in Jane's letter; she instead concentrates on continuing "[their] correspondence" after her arrival in Arkansas.

The reader will notice a strong difference between Bushyhead's correspondence prior to her removal experience and those girls who wrote after experiencing the Trail of Tears, from the roundup to the treacherous journey west. One such story is that of Joanna (McGhee) Jones' mother, twelve years old at the time of the removal. Jones told her daughter that before even being able to leave their homesteads:

The white people came into their houses and looked things over. When they found something they liked they would say, "This is mine. I am going to have it, etc." Jones said, When they were gathering their things to start they were driven from their homes and collected together like so many cattle. Some would try to take along something which they loved, but were forced to leave it, if it was of any size (Johnston 66).

This child was not the only one made to feel "like so many cattle." Other children were also treated like animals, and sometimes beaten. A five year old called Eliza Whitmire gives her account years later. This recollection is a combination of experiences that Eliza remembers and those she heard while growing up in the west. She writes:

The weeks that followed General Scott's order to remove the Cherokees were filled with horror and suffering for the unfortunate Cherokees and their slaves. The women and children were driven from their homes,

sometimes with blows and close on the heels of the retreating Indians came greedy whites to pillage the Indians' home, drive off their cattle, horses, and hogs, and they even rifled the graves for any jewelry, or other ornaments that might have been buried with the dead. . . . The trip was made in the dead of winter and many died from exposure from sleet and snow, and all who lived to make this trip, or had parents who made it, will long remember it, as a bitter memory (67).

Eliza's view of removal promises "a bitter memory" for those who endured the event. She persuades the reader by detailing the "horror and suffering" that occurred.

Another Cherokee woman who remembers her childhood Trail of Tears experience is Mrs. Rebecca Neugin, who passed away at almost one hundred years old near Hulbert, Oklahoma in 1932. Although the majority of her piece in Grant Forman's *The Five Civilized Tribes: Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole* pertains to the creating of cooking utensils and clothing, her recollection of the exile as captured in Foreman's text is one from her early childhood. She writes that:

[she] could recall only one incident of that experience and that was of her pet duck that she cherished and would not leave behind. She carried it in her little arms until she squeezed the life out of it and grieved to see it thrown by the road side. The poignant memory of that childish love and grief remained with her more than ninety years (283).

Mrs. Neugin's words capture what many older Cherokee women never left behind: the memory of the Trail of Tears. Even though these women were just

young girls at the time of removal, their memories are embedded with experiences of being rounding up into stockades, treated with little to no respect, and witnessing friends and family members die: in essence, they remember the Trail of Tears.

Women in View and the Trail of Tears

Cherokee women endured just as much anguish, if not more, as did their male counterparts. Reexamining history through the removal narrative functions uniquely because it allows women to be centered within the story, giving them authorship, something with which Indian women today still struggle. And although some of the people who recorded the stories included here are not female, they still attempt to establish ethos for the women at the center of the Trail of Tears narrative: the mothers, the daughters, the elders, the caretakers, and the storytellers.

Neglect for human life, brutality, sexual abuse, and torment became prevalent during the capture, round up, and exodus processes during the Trail of Tears. The following account describes a feeble woman's strength in a time of forced evacuation. In his birthday story, Private John Burnett recounts this woman's struggle up until her strength gave way to death. She was attempting to cross the Trail of Tears, accompanied by three little children:

In another home was a frail Mother, apparently a widow and three small children, one just a baby. When told that she must go the Mother gathered the children at her feet, prayed an humble prayer in her native tongue, patted the old family dog on the head, told the faithful creature good-bye, with a baby strapped on her back and leading a child with each hand started on her exile. But the task was too great for that frail Mother. A stroke of heart failure relieved her sufferings. She sunk and died with her baby on her back, and her other two children clinging to her hands (Underwood 41-41).

This story recounts how this woman, like so many others, was torn from her home, and made to begin her eight-hundred-mile plus journey. From this account, “a stroke of heart failure relieved her sufferings.” This description persuades readers that the Trail of Tears must have been more severe than traditionally believed, especially if something as devastating as death, in the form of “heart failure,” acted as a relief.

Other women enduring similar situations were represented as dying or dead animals, or creatures to be observed lying on the sides of roads or riding in wagons. For example, Reverend Daniel Butrick records in his 10 June 1838 journal that:

As we were leaving the camps we passed a woman lying senseless. On her arrival today, being unwell, she was not able to endure the sight of some friends she saw in the camps, and immediately on seeing them, she fainted and fell to the ground (Rozema 139).

Butrick states that “as we were leaving the camps we passed a woman lying senseless.” This narrative functions to present a dissimilar removal story from that taught by the dominant culture; it shows an utter disregard for this woman, as the detachment merely “passed [by her] lying senseless,” leaving her to die. Another of Butrick’s reports states that “when the company was driven from Lafayette [Georgia], one woman fainted and fell in the road, as she was driven on” (Rozema 139).

In addition to the neglect and disregard for the dying Cherokees, these women also endured degradation and sexual torture. In the following journal entry, Reverend Butrick writes about the cruel treatment that six white guards enacted upon two Cherokee women:

The poor Cherokees are not only exposed to temporal evils, but also to every species of moral desolation. The other day a gentleman informed me that he saw six soldiers about two Cherokee women. The women stood by a tree, and the soldiers with a bottle of liquor were endeavoring to entice them to drink, though the women, as yet were resisting them. He made this known to the commanding officer but we presume no notice was taken of it, as it was reported that those soldiers had those women with them the whole night afterwards (Perdue, Cherokee 100).

Putting these women in a place of forced submission—roles they had not known prior to European contact—created an environment that welcomed men to act as oppressors. Adding further to the intentional humiliation, the commanding officer did not attempt to protect these women, allowing “those soldiers [to have] those

women with them the whole night afterwards.” This example and others like it illustrate to the reader that women’s roles drastically changed during removal: in exchange for their positions as matriarchs, caregivers, decision-makers, warriors, agriculturalists, and land owners, they adopted roles in categories such as objects of man’s physical, mental and sexual abuse and the subservient slave.

Motherhood March

During the roundup and while marching west, Cherokee women were quickly assured that even their most revered roles as matriarchs and mothers were not to be protected or respected. In his birthday story, Private John Burnett gives an account of women being hauled from their homesteads and separated from their children prior to being forced into the stockades. In one account, he depicts the disrespect shown to mothers attempting to prepare a child in death for the earth. He writes:

In one home death had come during the night, a little sad faced child had died and was lying on a bear skin couch and some women were preparing the little body for burial. All were arrested and driven out leaving the child in the cabin. I don’t know who buried the body (Underwood 41).

This tragic story appeals to the readers’ emotions, prompting a sobering realization that even the roles of motherhood were forced to be forsaken.

Yet there exists still other examples of how mothers were forced to take care of children—alive or dead—either at the guards’ commands or during a spare moment. Nick Comingdeer recounts his father’s experience in *Cherokee Women in Crisis*. Comingdeer’s father states that:

[he] had seen many old Cherokees carrying their dead children all day until the detachment stopped for the night. Then the fathers of the dead children, with help of other Cherokees in the group, would dig a shallow grave and bury them (Johnston 73).

Comingdeer creates an image—“Cherokees carrying their dead”—that appeals to readers’ emotions. Reading this account depicts a Trail of Tears that incorporates other voices and situations that are not often presented.

Another example written by “A Native of Maine, Traveling in the Western Country” reminds the reader that death is not a respecter of persons: the wealthy Cherokees endured some of the same heartaches as everyone else that traveled on the Trail of Tears. The unknown narrator writes:

One lady passed on in her hack in company with her husband, apparently with as much refinement and equipage as any of the mothers of New England; and she was a mother too and her youngest child, about three years old, was sick in her arms, and all she could do was to make it comfortable as circumstances would permit. . . . She could only carry her dying child in her arms a few miles farther, and then she must stop in a stranger-land and consign her much loved babe to the cold ground, and that without pomp or ceremony, and pass on with the multitude . . . (175).

The traveler establishes ethos in her/his description by narrating the mother's actions: she "must stop in a stranger-land and consign her much loved babe to the cold ground, and that without pomp or ceremony, and pass on with the multitude." This story prompts the reader to empathize, realizing that the reality of death is universal.

The Cherokee removal was not only a time to bury, but it was a time to give birth as well. Cherokee women marching on the Trail of Tears had no other choice than to stop whenever possible to give birth to their children. As Reverend Butrick's journal reports: "Another in the company, being seized with the pains of childbirth, stopped with her mother an hour or two, and then with her child, assisted by her aged mother went on to overtake her friends" (Rozema 140). On a positive note, another baby born to the Trail of Tears 3 January, 1839 on the west bank of the Mississippi River was Eliza Missouri Bushyhead. She survived the genocidal event, growing up to be known as "Aunt Eliza," a woman known to help many young people as well as being "active in the political affairs of the Cherokee Nation and worked to preserve Cherokee history and relics" (Gilbert 91).

But even though women such as these delivered children that survived the rest of the journey, there were other mothers who saw the deaths of their newborns only days into life. The following account reveals the horrors of violence toward one newborn baby. Bettie (Perdue) Woodall's mother revealed to her that:

On one occasion she told of an officer in charge of one of the wagons, who killed a little baby because it cried all the time. It was only four days old and the mother was forced to walk and carry it, and because it cried all of the time and the young mother could not quiet it, the officer took it away from her and dashed its head against a tree and killed it (Johnston72).

Scenes like these can only be described as horrific. Imagining that an “officer took [the baby] away from [the mother] and dashed its head against a tree” adds yet another narrative of violence to the story of the Trail of Tears. Mothers were forced to carry on during times of birth, sickness, and death. And yet they endured, and so did the children who survived that long walk.

A Comforting Voice

In closing this chapter, there is a woman who remains a picture of hope in Cherokee removal history. Walani [Walini´], known distinctively for her voice, was also called the Cherokee woman who sang along the Trail, as seen in Figure 3. Her verses functioned to comfort and encourage those others who walked the Trail of Tears after her.

Song helped to cope with the horror, the death, and the torture that the Cherokees experienced while walking along the Trail of Tears. Her verses provided images of the new Cherokee homeland to come, a sign of hope for those whose walks were treacherous in every way.



Figure 3. Walini'. Photograph. James Mooney.
<<http://www.wcu.edu/chokeestudies/images/walini.jpg>>.

Here, reprinted is one of the songs that this Cherokee woman sang in order to give hope to the hopeless and provide comfort to the comfortless:

Where the bounding deer awaits us
And the feasts are spread before us

Short in verse, Waliní's song functioned to impart encouragement in the souls of so many Cherokees that were painfully walking the Trail of Tears. She persuaded her people that there were actually "bounding deer" and "feasts spread for [them]" in Indian country. Although this was not totally the case, it gave the Cherokees something to trust in and to anticipate. Joan Gilbert writes in *Trail of Tears across Missouri* that "as the travelers reached southwest Missouri, they could hope the end of the trail was near. They hoped to soon see the new homeland that Walani sang of" (73). Therefore, this woman's, Waliní', rhetoric invoked a supposed optimistic ending to a horrendous journey. Her function as rhetor—woman and singer—was to soothe, love, and instill hope, all characteristics that a Cherokee woman in a traditional matriarchal structure would have traditionally possessed.

In this chapter, I argued for the reexamination of the Cherokee woman, exposing women's voice as genre through speeches, narratives, and portrayals that function to reveal a varied historical female representation. Moving chronologically from pre-European and early European contact to contamination and the Trail of Tears event, I have endeavored to reveal a more realistic picture of Cherokee women during these times in history. Also, my attempt has been to

show aspects of these women prior to European contact, proving that they were not the sex objects or harsh-seeming trolls that many still imagine them to be.

After arguing that Cherokee women's roles changed drastically after European contact, I attempted to use examples that would depict the treatment that these women endured while walking on the Trail of Tears to show the lack of respect for them, a dramatic change from the reverence Cherokee women were once paid prior to the colonizer's contact. It is these women's voices that I hope will continue to be increasingly heard in texts and media. It is their ways of narrating history that contributes to a more multi-vocal, equally-gendered history surrounding the Trail of Tears.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

If I had known that Jackson would drive us from our homes I would have killed him that day at the Horseshoe.

Junaluska, Cherokee warrior who saved Andrew Jackson's life during battle

Hindsight is, perhaps, 20/20. This dissertation experienced many changes, and, in hindsight, I have welcomed the work because each suggestion and every decision that has been made has transformed this project into what it is: an exploration and finding of rhetoric, history, culture, and self. In writing this dissertation I endeavored to achieve multiple professional and personal goals. Professionally, I have hoped to add to the dialogue concerning the rhetoric of American Indian historical events such as the Trail of Tears. By belonging to such a community, my desire has been to assist in spreading new rhetorical interpretations of culture and history, thereby righting the wrongs of the past.

Underneath this umbrella of scholarship, I attempted to utilize genre theory as a theoretical framework. By employing Amy Devitt's work as a resource and genre theory as a theoretical support, I illustrated the ways in which genre can become dynamic, functioning in the retelling of the Trail of Tears story. As Devitt asserts in her book *Writing Genres*, "genres function for a group of

language users to fulfill the group's needs" (34). For my purposes, that group is the Cherokee Indians and other people directly involved in the Trail of Tears experience.

Chapter two discussed the importance of historical revisionism and genre theory as it relates to this dissertation, providing alternative readings of history. I chose genre theory as the theoretical framework for this dissertation to exemplify how the people involved in the Trail of Tears used language and other types of communication to make their ways in the world. Thinking about genre in terms of function (rather than just form) allows for history to be retold from new perspectives and varied terministic screens. Chapter one also included illustrations of dynamic genre, pulling from fields such as topography, anthropology, ethnography, and demography, all of which carry the visual rhetoric that functions to show, rather than tell, history.

In chapter three, ethnohistory as genre was my primary focus in the retelling of the Trail of Tears event. Ethnohistory as genre not only reexamines history, but does it in a way that constructs and responds to situations. Genre also, to quote Devitt, "helps people do things in the world" (13). Using ethnographic tools such as visual media, treaties, maps, personal writing, and poetry and song all can help people recreate, reexamine, and retell history, bringing new and diverse histories, stories—in addition to a greater awareness—to society concerning the Trail of Tears historical event.

Chapter four examined the rhetoric of witness. Here, the eyewitness accounts as genres functioned to bring many different types of narratives such as military, medical, faith-based, and personal stories to the surface of the discussion. As Devitt explains, rhetorical situations recur repeatedly, involving people “whose experiences are similar enough and repeated” to be “perceived as recurring situations” (36). By applying the many witnesses (Cherokee and non-Cherokee) who similarly experienced the Trail of Tears at different stages, on different routes, and different times of the year, and different years, to Devitt’s statement, the event becomes a recurring situation within the community and over time via the Native American storytelling tradition.

Chapter five concentrated on women’s voice as genre. The many voices found therein worked together as a genre to fill the void of silence that has plagued Cherokee women for many years. In this chapter, genre theory functions to “change as its reader and context change” and “shift from one genre function and situation over time” (Devitt 182). In the case of Cherokee women’s voices before, during, and after the Trail of Tears, the function does change, as Devitt proposes. The work of women’s voices as genre before the Trail of Tears persuaded and advised Indian councils to look to women with respect, and to warn the councils of European ways. The rhetorical action of voice during and after the Trail of Tears changed drastically, becoming virtually silent, due to an increase of European encroachment and a widespread devaluing of women’s words and roles.

In addition to the professional goals discussed above, personal objectives also held importance in this process. One of the greatest aims of this dissertation was to continue on with my search of self. Through reading and utilizing historical revisionism and genre theory, I was able to reexamine myself as a reader, researcher, and writer. In these terms, I stretched myself far beyond what I thought I could. Also, through the continual reading and rereading of the many horrific stories from the Trail of Tears, I learned more about my mother's ancestors and their attributes. And these voices within the narratives have made me conscious of the Cherokee's strength, courage, compassion, endurance, and tenacity to survive: I am thankful.

I have learned that my work, like all other work is an invention because, as Tom Carr in his article "Varieties of "Other": Voice and Native American Culture" states, "what we create are fictions or inventions, no matter how objective we try to be" (198). Through Carr's words, I realized that within each piece of writing exists a unique self, a voice. Like the poem in my introduction, I probably see Tsali in a completely different way, as a cultural martyr, from other scholars and students that read his story. This personal interpretation of Tsali is what brought me to create the poem in the shape of a cross. This, of course, is an interpretation of an event that I saw in my history, much like other people's stories about their own histories. As Carr states:

Moreover, as Clifton (1990) points out, we must realize that we are all inventions—whites, Indians, all peoples—culturally constructed categories of humans (Clifton 1990, 25). In other words, we are all human others. Using this as a starting point enables us to begin to understand the other by asking rather than by assuming, by measuring what we take to be certainty (198).

It is this “measuring what we take to be certainty,” as Carr asserts, in regards to historical revisionism and the Trail of Tears that has been one of my main focuses during this dissertation. Hopefully, this interpretation and measuring will prompt others to ask questions regarding their own histories, discovering scholars, theorists, ethnologists, and other storytellers who will speak to them along the way.

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APPENDIX: LIST OF CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS AND LAND CESSIONS

Chronology of the Cherokee Removal as found in Purdue and Green's *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*

In the chronology, dates in boldface pertain to the Cherokees; dates in regular type, to non-Cherokee events.

- c. 1700:** First Cherokee contact with British traders.
- 1756-63: French and Indian War (Seven Years War).
- 1760-61:** Cherokee War and first invasion of Cherokee towns.
- 1763: Proclamation from the Crown prohibits settlement west of Appalachians.
- 1776-83: American Revolution
- 1776:** Colonial invasion of Cherokee towns.
- 1781-89: Articles of Confederation.
- 1783:** North Carolina grants Cherokee land to its citizens; Cherokees cede land to Georgia.
- 1783: Peace of Paris ends the American Revolution.
- 1785:** Treaty of Hopewell, the first treaty between Cherokees and United States, establishes peaceful relations.
- 1788: U.S. Constitution ratified.
- 1789: George Washington inaugurated.
- 1790: Congress passes first Indian Trade and Intercourse Act.
- 1791:** Treaty of Holston proposes the "civilization" program.
- 1793: Invention of the cotton gin makes cotton a more popular export than deerskins.
- 1794:** Chickamaugas make peace.
- 1796:** George Washington initiates "civilization" program among Cherokees.

- 1796: John Adams elected president.
- 1800:** Moravians establish mission among the Cherokees.
- 1800: Thomas Jefferson elected president.
- 1802:** The United States and Georgia enter into a compact regarding future Indian land cessions.
- 1803: Louisiana Purchase.
- 1804: Moravians open a mission school.
- 1808:** Cherokees' first recorded laws establish a police force and protect patrilineal inheritance.
- 1808: James Madison elected President.
- 1808-1810:** First major Cherokee migration west of the Mississippi.
- 1810:** Cherokees outlaw blood vengeance in accidental deaths.
- 1812-15: War of 1812.
- 1813-14:** Creek War in which Cherokees fought with U.S. soldiers and "friendly Creeks" against "Red Stick" Creeks.
- 1816: James Monroe elected President.
- 1817:** American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and Baptist missionaries arrive among the Cherokees. Cherokees adopt articles of government that give only the National Council the authority to cede lands. Cherokees exchange eastern land for territory in Arkansas.
- 1819:** Cherokees cede additional territory in the East in exchange for western lands; some Cherokees in North Carolina receive reservations outside the Nation.
- 1821:** Sequoyah introduces a Cherokee syllabry.
- 1822:** Cherokees establish a supreme court.
- 1824: John Quincy Adams elected President.
- 1826-27:** Creeks cede their last land in Georgia. Georgia asserts state sovereignty over the Cherokee Nation.

- 1827:** Cherokees write a constitution asserting national sovereignty and providing for legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
- 1828:** The *Cherokee Phoenix* begins publication. Arkansas Cherokees relocate to Indian Territory.
- 1828: Andrew Jackson elected President.
- 1828-29:** Georgia extends state jurisdiction over Cherokee nation and nullifies Cherokee law.
- 1829:** Jeremiah Evarts publishes “William Penn” essays. Andrew Jackson announces his removal policy.
- 1830:** Lewis Cass publishes his defense of Jackson’s removal policy. Indian Removal Act authorizes the president to negotiate removal treaty. Georgia outlaws Cherokee national government, requires loyalty oath for white citizens living within the Cherokee nation, and creates the Georgia Guard to enforce state law within the Cherokee Nation.
- 1831:** In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, the U.S. Supreme Court declares the Cherokee Nation a “domestic dependent nation.”
- 1832:** In *Worcester v. Georgia*, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds Cherokee sovereignty in Georgia.
- 1835:** Treaty of New Echota, negotiated between the Treaty Party and the United States, provides for removal of Cherokees to lands west of the Mississippi.
- 1836:** U.S. Senate ratifies Treaty of New Echota.
- 1836: Martin Van Buren elected President.
- 1838-1839:** Removal of the Cherokee Nation.

Nineteenth-Century Cherokee Eastern Land Cessions as found in Russell Thornton's *The Cherokees: A Population History*

Cherokee Treaty	Cession	Square Miles
Treaty of October 24, 1804, with United States	Tract in Georgia, known as Wafford's Settlement	135
Treaty of October 25, 1805, with United States	Tract in Kentucky and Tennessee, west of Tennessee River and Cumberland Mountain	8,118
Treaty of October 27, 1805, with United States	Tract in Tennessee of one section at Southwest Point	1.25
Treaty of January 7, 1806, with United States	Tract in Tennessee and Alabama, between Tennessee and Duck Rivers	6,871
Treaty of March 22, 1816, with United States	Tract in northwest corner of South Carolina	148
Treaty of September 14, with United States	Tract in northeastern Georgia	583
	Tract in southern Tennessee	435
	Tracts in northern Alabama, between Cypress and Elk rivers, and above Mouth of Spring Creek on Tennessee River	?

Treaty of February 27, 1819, with United States	Tract in northern Alabama	1,154
	Tracts in Tennessee	2,408
	Tracts in North Carolina	1,542
	Tracts in Georgia	837
Treaty of December 29, with United States	Tracts in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, being all remaining lands east of the Mississippi River	12,316