

**THE FIRST NATIONS  
INITIATIVE**

**AND FAITH ALONG THE TRAIL OF TEARS**

Don Randolph

# **FROM THE ROAD TO RELOCATION TO THE ROAD TO RECONCILIATION**

**WHEN I SHUT UP THE HEAVEN AND THERE IS NO RAIN, OR COMMAND THE LOCUSTS TO DEVOUR THE LAND, OR SEND PESTILENCE AMONG MY PEOPLE, IF MY PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, WILL HUMBLE THEMSELVES IN PRAYER, AND SEEK MY FACE AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS, THEN I WILL HEAR FROM HEAVEN, AND WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN AND HEAL THEIR LAND. 2 Chronicles, Chapter 7, Verses 13-14.**

**ARISE, SHINE, FOR THE GLORY OF THE LIGHT IS COME, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD IS RISEN UPON THEE. FOR BEHOLD, THE DARKNESS SHALL COVER THE EARTH, AND GROSS DARKNESS THE PEOPLE: BUT THE LORD SHALL RISE UPON THEE, AND HIS GLORY SHALL BE SEEN UPON THEE. AND THE GENTILES SHALL COME TO THY LIGHT. AND KINGS TO THE BRIGHTNESS OF THY RISING. LIFT UP THINE EYES ROUND ABOUT, AND SEE: ALL THEY GATHER THEMSELVES TOGETHER, THEY COME TO THEE: THY SONS SHALL COME FROM AFAR, AND THY DAUGHTERS SHALL BE NURSED AT THY SIDE. THEN THOU SHALT SEE, AND FLOW TOGETHER. AND THINE HEART SHALL FEAR, AND BE ENLARGED: BECAUSE THE ABUNDANCE OF THE SEA SHALL BE CONVERTED UNTO THEE. THE FORCES OF THE GENTILES SHALL COME UNTO THEE.**  
**Isaiah, Chapter 60, Verses 1-5.**

**This book was not written to condemn any individuals or group of people. It was written to educate and inform people of the plight of the First Nations people and the steps many are taking to bring reconciliation, closure and forgiveness to a Nation divided against itself. Many people around this country are working together to help bring First Nations and non-Native Americans together in peace. Only God can mend this Nation and the festering wounds which have brought it to its knees in these days of sorrow and grief. This Nation needs Revival, but true Revival will never come until people repent of their sins and start loving one another whoever they may be, regardless of their race or cultural background. Repentance always precedes Revival. Revival will always bring reconciliation and renewal. As Christians we have all been given the “Ministry of Reconciliation,” reconciling ourselves and others to Christ. 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, verses 11-21. We must never forget what God brought us out of and where we are going because of Christ’s selfless sacrifice on the Cross at Calvary. Christ who vindicated us also**

**commands us to love one another. Jesus said: “This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.” John, chapter 15, verse 12. Love is not a suggestion, but a command. He also said if we love Him we will keep His commandments. John, chapter 14, verse 15. If we love one another we are keeping His commandment.**

**Don Randolph**

## **DEDICATION**

**This Book is dedicated to all the poor souls who lost their lives and those who suffered grievously along the Trail of Tears Relocation which occurred during the tumultuous years of the Eighteen Thirties and all Native Americans who still suffer because of the way their ancestors were treated.**

**IN 1963 President John F. Kennedy said: “Before we can set out on the road to success, we have to know where we are going: and before we can know that, we must determine where we have been in the past. It seems a basic requirement to study the history of our Indian people. America has much to learn about the heritage of our American Indians. Only through this study can we as a nation do what must be done if our treatment of the American Indian is not to be marked down for all time as a national disgrace.**

**Reverend Billy Graham said: “THE greatest moments of Native history may lie ahead of us if a great spiritual renewal and awaking should take place. The Native American has been a sleeping giant. He is awakening. The original Americans could become the Evangelists who will help win America for Christ.”**

**“The reason we are not seeing the blessings of God on this nation is because of the breaking of Covenants.”**

**Lou Engle**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**The Trail of Tears Relocation of many Native Americans from Alabama, North Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee was a tragic part of early American History. Many Native Americans still resent non Native Americans because of this great tragedy. Native Americans all over this great Country of ours were wronged by politicians who promised them freedom and equality through various Treaties which were never kept by the Government. In no way are we implying that Native Americans were never guilty of atrocities against any Native or non-Native Americans. We realize there were people on each side of the equation who were guilty of genocide and massacre. However, we do not wish to dwell on the failures of the past, but we desire to create a greater future for all of us in order for us all to dwell together in unity, peace and harmony. As we live alongside one another we must all learn to live together and help all those who may be less fortunate than we are regardless of one's color or origin.**

**Many of the Native Americans who suffered and those who died along the Trail of Tears were Christians. They held prayer meetings as they travelled along the Trail. During their trials and tribulations on the Trail of Tears, their faith in God was sorely tested. Many of them perished, however their faith was unwavering. Surely these brothers and sisters in the Lord should be**

**added to the HALL OF FAME along with those spoken of in chapter 11 of Hebrews. The Native Americans whose faith was also tested and tried were found worthy to receive a Crown of Life after enduring the many trials they suffered along the Trail of Tears.**

**The First Nations Initiative is an ongoing work to help find solutions to the many problems which continue to plague Native American Tribes including poverty, alcohol abuse, hunger, jobs and education. We can all be agents of change to all of God's people as we work together toward the goals placed before us. There are several groups of Native Americans working alongside non-Native Americans to bring about unity so our country can go forward together as one nation under God.**

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## **CHAPTER 1**



### **THE TRAIL OF TREATIES**

**The term “FIRST NATIONS” relates to the indigenous peoples of North America. Native Americans prefer the term “First Nations” rather than “Indians.” The term “Indians” was given to Native Americans by Columbus when he first reached the shores of what we now call North America. Columbus was searching for a new trade route to the East Indies. Instead of landing in the East Indies he landed on one of the Islands in what is known today as the Bahamas. He named the first Island he landed on “San Salvador.” Native Americans today desire to preserve their Tribal or National identities as the FIRST NATIONS. Their ancestors were inhabitants of this Continent centuries before the Europeans sailed the Atlantic Ocean and landed on our Eastern Shores.**

The idea to relocate Native American Tribes from the Southeastern United States was conceived by George Washington and John Knox over 50 years prior to the Trail of Tears debacle. Their plan for relocation did not include the forcible relocation of the Tribes which eventually took place under the direction of President Andrew Jackson. Washington’s idea of Relocation was to be a voluntary one, not a forced one. The Tribes were to be compensated for their homes and lands, as well as given safe passage to

other locations. However, the plan of Washington and Knox was far from what actually took place under the direction of Andrew Jackson.

In 1830 Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. It was signed into Law by President Andrew Jackson. Jackson was a major proponent in the Relocation of the Indians. The Law required the United States Government to negotiate, through treaties, the removal of Native Americans from their Territories in North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. The Indian Removal Act was not just supposed to be a Law, but a Treaty the Native Americans would sign agreeing to their relocation. According to the terms of the Treaty, relocation was to be a voluntary peaceful one. Native American lands were to be traded for land in the Oklahoma Territory. The Law did not permit Jackson, or anyone else, to coerce or force Native Americans into giving up their Lands. However, President Jackson ignored the law and forced relocation of the Tribes to lands in the Oklahoma Territory.

The Indian Removal Act did give President Jackson the power to pay for transportation for the Native American Tribes to move wherever THEY chose to relocate. However, the treaty did not give Jackson the authority to forcibly remove the Tribes without a Treaty to a place which he wanted to send them.

## **THE TRAIL OF BROKEN TREATIES**

Prior to and after the Indian Removal Act of 1830 the United States had developed a history of making and breaking Treaties with the FIRST NATIONS people. The U.S. Government also abused its relative power over other indigenous Tribes. Their relations negotiations in dealing

with the FIRST NATIONS were no different in this regard. The United States committed itself to and signed many Treaties which they repeatedly broke over and over again. Their record of adhering to their portion of the Treaties which they themselves wrote was a dismal one. They may or may not have been sincere in their motives at the time they signed them, but they almost always reneged on their promises to the FIRST NATIONS. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 was no exception.

The United States Government signed many Treaties with Native Americans which they did not have the authority to sign. In 1874 the Government signed an agreement with the Indians to purchase the Black Hills of South Dakota where gold had recently been discovered. This agreement was signed by just a few individual members of the Lakota Tribe. This agreement was a clear violation of the 1869 Treaty with the Lakota Tribe who owned the Black Hills. The 1869 Treaty specifically required three-fourths of the men of the Tribe to sign the agreement, however the signatures fell far short of the number needed to ratify the Treaty. Congress soon afterward passed a law making the Agreement “null and void.”

Native American leaders sued the United States Government on several occasions to force them into abiding by the Treaties which they had signed in good faith. In 1902 and 1903 the Supreme Court ruled that Congress had the authority to terminate or change Native American Treaties without the consent of the Indians. What good is a treaty if one party has the power to terminate, change, or make void at their discretion any agreement which is signed by the two parties?

The abuse the Native Americans suffered over the years is one of the greatest tragedies ever perpetuated on a group of people in this nation. Although we cannot change the past we can work together to forge a better future for all of us. However, people must be willing to forget the past or they will never be able live in peace and harmony.

## CHAPTER 2



### THE TRAIL OF TEARS

There were five Native American Tribes which were forcibly removed from Territories belonging to them to lands west of the Mississippi River. They included Native Americans from the Choctaw, Seminoles, Creek, Cherokee, and Chickasaw Tribes. There are 554 recognized Native American Tribes in the United States today. Most of them were driven from their Ancestral Homelands by the U. S. Government and forced onto Reservations where many of them died due to lack of food and shelter and adverse weather conditions.

The Trail of Tears was a series of forced relocations which began in 1831 and culminated in the removal of the Cherokees in 1838 and 1839. There were actually five trails or five different routes which the different Tribes traversed to reach the Oklahoma Territory.

In December of 1831 the Choctaws were the first to be relocated. Many of them were placed in chains and given no food or necessary supplies to use along the Trail. Thousands of them died of starvation, exposure and disease as they travelled along the Trails.

During the years of 1832 to 1837 many Seminoles, Creeks, Chickasaw and Muscogee Tribes were taken from their Homelands and forcibly removed to Reservations

West of the Mississippi River. A few of them did relocate on their own, however, most of them refused to leave the homes and lands they and their ancestors had owned for many years. By 1837 over 46,000 Native American had been forcibly relocated to the Oklahoma Territory. Many of the Cherokee died along the Trail on their journey to the Reservations which were located in what was known then as the Oklahoma Territory. The largest number of deaths along the Trail of Tears were those among the Cherokees.

## **THE CHEROKEE RELOCATION**

The Cherokee were relocated during 1838 and 1839. They were the last of the Tribes to be relocated. When most people think of the Trail of Tears they think of the relocation of the Cherokee people. This is mostly because the Cherokee were the largest and most prominent of all the Tribes located in the Southeastern portion of the United States. It may also be because so much more has been written about the removal of the Cherokee than any of the other Native American Tribes. In this Book I am going to focus on the Cherokees and their plight before and along the Trail of Tears. We wish to in no way diminish the suffering and pain which the other Native American Tribes experienced on the Trail of Tears. In perspective, the death, pain and suffering which all the Tribes experienced on the Trail of Tears was heartless, barbaric and inhumane.

The forced relocation of the Cherokee began with the Treaty of New Echota in 1838. The Treaty of New Echota was signed on December 29, 1835. The Treaty ceded land to the United States Government in exchange for monetary compensation which was supposed to be paid to the Cherokee Tribes. The Treaty was signed by a Major

Ridge who was part Cherokee and a few other Cherokees who claimed to be representatives of the Cherokee Nation. They sold the land to the U. S. Government in exchange for Five Million Dollars. In reality, Ridge only represented a very small faction of the Cherokee people. John Ross, who was the Chief of the Cherokee Nation at that time had not been notified of the Treaty or the transaction.

In 1830 Gold had been discovered on Cherokee lands near Northwest Georgia near Dahlonega, Georgia. Many white settlers and gold speculators swarmed to the area to find gold without the permission of the Cherokee who owned the land at the time.

The Treaty of New Echota was ratified by only one vote in the U.S. Senate. The Cherokee people, led by John Ross, rejected the Treaty which led directly to the forced removal of the Cherokees in 1839. The Cherokee who lived on Indian owned lands were taken from their homes in North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia. The Cherokee who did not live on Indian Lands were allowed to remain in the area.

Many of the arrests of the Cherokee took place at a local Church which was located near Brasstown, North Carolina, and was pastored by Cherokee Native Peter Oganaya.

LT. JOHN BUTLER, WHO WAS STATIONED AT FORT BUTLER IN MURPHY, NORTH CAROLINA, WROTE IN HIS DIARY CONCERNING THE ARRESTS (written in his words):

“Many of the Cherokee were collecting at a place of worship of theirs, seven companies of us marched thither

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