

Document 1

The Trail of Tears in Brief

All concerned historians consider the Trail of Tears, or the relocation of Indians in 1838, as the beginning of Native Americans' holocaust. Decades before and even after the American Independence, the Native tribes lived peacefully in the Eastern states, integrating and trading with the newly developing white communities, while helping the US troops whenever called upon. The Cherokee fought by the side of Andrew Jackson when he was commander of the Tennessee Militias. But things changed drastically, especially after the election of Andrew Jackson as president of the United States in 1829. He strove desperately to convince Congress to approve his notorious bill of the Indian Removal Act in 1830.

Afterwards, he openly led a systematic campaign to demonize tribes, accusing them of being anti-Christ, less intelligent, less ambitious, less principled, and, worse, unfit to have any immediate contact with white communities until they cast off their savage habits and became Christians.

In 1838, the US government, led by President Martin Van Buren, Jackson's successor, put into effect Jackson's bill. It began forcibly relocating the East Coast Indian tribes to a new land across the Mississippi River in Oklahoma State. All the Natives were ordered to evacuate. The tragic march of about 17,000 Cherokees began on October 18, 1838, and only half of the total evacuees reached the final destination on March 26, 1839.

Document 2

Progress



Progress : painting analysis

The painting is an allegory set on an American landscape, with the right half of the painting representing eastern America, and the left half of the painting representing western America. The first thing to notice about the painting is the variations in light seen when comparing the east and the west. The rightmost edge of the painting is bright, but as the painting shifts left it begins to grow darker, with the furthest left edge being marked by a foreboding sky adorned with storm clouds. Similarly, the gentle rolling hills of the east give way to jagged mountains as the painting moves left into the west. From these landscape features alone, Gast creates the idea that the East is warm and welcoming, while the West is dark and ominous. This creates a platform which, upon Gast's introduction of characters into the painting, plays a great deal on the viewer's emotions.

The next thing to notice is the dominating figure in the middle of the painting. The figure is a woman who resembles an angel, and the light aforementioned clearly exudes from her. She appears to be moving westwards, illuminating the way as she goes. Amy Greenberg writes: "It is the benign domestic influence of [her] allegorical figure, [...] Gast seems to indicate, that is responsible for the smooth and uplifting transformation of wilderness into civilization."[1] When looking at the painting, this claim certainly seems to hold true. The painting features covered wagons, then stagecoaches, then trains, all moving west. This presents the idea of technological advancement being brought further West as American folk continue to settle the frontier, a thought which was very widespread at the time.

By incorporating these common ideals into "American Progress," Gast immediately established common ground with any American viewing the painting at the time. By creating the heavenly woman in the center, who bears the innovative telegraph wire in her left hand, Gast introduces the main argument of the painting: the idea that it was the heavenly duty of Americans to expand the country all the way to the Pacific Ocean. This idea surely resonated with people at the time. This aggressive use of pathos is most likely the main reason many Americans at the time connected with the argument the painting presented.

The opinions people shared about American Indians in the nineteenth century played a significant role in the perspective people took regarding the Indians' inclusion in the image. In the nineteenth century Indians were thought of as mere savages, and driving them out of an area of land may have been considered an example of cleansing in some American's eyes.