

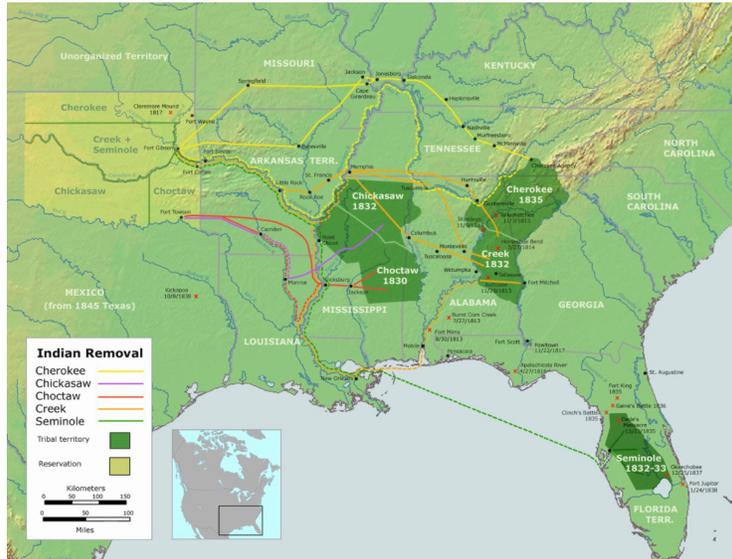
American Minute with Bill Federer

Trail of Tears, Oklahoma, Land Rush, Oil, & Cherokee Cowboy Will Rogers

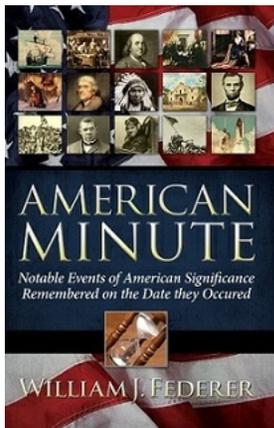
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Gold had been discovered in **Dahlonega, Georgia**, in 1828.

It was the **first major gold rush** in America ... [continue reading American Minute here ...](#)



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Unfortunately, most of the **gold** was located on **Cherokee land** in what is today north **Georgia**.

Conflict between **gold diggers** and **Indians** resulted in the **Democrat-controlled Congress** rushing through the **Indian Removal Act** in 1830, passing by a **single vote**.

It was signed by **President Andrew Jackson**, the founder of the **Democrat Party**, and carried out by

Democrat President Martin Van Buren.

Prominent **Cherokee** leaders **John Ridge** and **Elias Boudinot** felt that the Federal government would not change its decision, and that **Indian removal was inevitable.**

Though **unauthorized by the tribe**, they took it upon themselves to **negotiate** with **Washington politicians** to sign the **Treaty of New Echota of 1835.**

Elias Boudinot was the publisher of the ***Cherokee Phoenix*** -- the **first newspaper published by an American Indian tribe.**

He wrote **editorials** that the **best foresight** for the tribe was to have **land west of the Mississippi** which the **Federal government promised would never be taken from them.**

Opposing Indian removal was the **Scot-Cherokee Chief John Ross**, founder of **Ross' Landing** in Tennessee, which was later renamed "**Chattanooga.**"

He collected over **12,000 Cherokees** signatures and presented a petition to Congress **protesting the Indian Removal Act.**

Others who condemned the **Federal Government's** mandate were members of the **National Republican (Anti-Jacksonian) Party** and the **Whig Party**, such as:

- **Senator Henry Clay** (KY);
- **Senator Daniel Webster** (MA); and
- **Senator Theodore Frelinghuysen** (NJ);
- **Abraham Lincoln** (State Representative, IL); and
- **Congressman Davy Crockett** (TN).

Crockett gave an impassioned speech **in defense of the Indians**, stating:

"I believed it was a wicked, unjust measure ... I voted against this Indian bill, and my conscience yet tells me that I gave a good honest vote, and one that I believe will not make me ashamed in the **day of judgement.**"

The **Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole** made up the **Five Civilized Tribes**, who had:

- written constitutions;
- centralized governments;
- market economics;
- intermarriages with Americans of European descent;
- Christianity; and
- literacy.

A **Cherokee silversmith named Sequoyah** even created a distinct **Cherokee alphabet** in 1821.

Christian missionaries, such as **Jeremiah Evarts**, led the resistance to the Federal Government's removal of the Indians.

Many Christian missionaries were **arrested** by the **State of Georgia** and **sentenced to years of hard labor.**

Missionaries **Samuel Worcester** and **Elizur Butler** brought a case against **Georgia** that went all the way to the **U.S. Supreme Court.**

In their case, ***Worcester v. Georgia, 1832***, **Chief Justice John Marshall** ruled in favor of the **Cherokee.**

He declared that the **Cherokee Nation** was a "**distinct community**" with **self-government** "in which the **laws of Georgia** can have **no force.**"

Justice Joseph Story wrote March 4, 1832:

"Thanks be to God, the Court can wash their hands clean of the **iniquity of oppressing the Indians** and disregarding their rights."

Democrat President Andrew Jackson ignored the Supreme Court decision.

Noting that the **Supreme Court** had no power to enforce its opinions, but had to rely on the President to implement them, **Jackson** was attributed with saying:

"**John Marshall** has made his decision; now let him enforce it!"

Choctaw Indian leader George W. Harkins wrote a *Farewell to the American People*, 1831:

"Having determined to **emigrate west of the Mississippi river** this fall, I have thought proper in **bidding you farewell ...**

... We as **Choctaws** rather chose to suffer and be free, than live under the degrading influence of laws, which **our voice could not be heard** in their formation."

Alexis de Tocqueville, the French philosopher, witnessed the **Choctaw removals** while in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1831, writing:

"In the whole scene there was **an air of ruin and destruction**, something which betrayed **a final and irrevocable adieu**; one couldn't watch **without feeling one's heart wrung**.

The **Indians were tranquil**, but sombre and taciturn.

There was one who could speak English and of whom I asked why the **Chactas** were leaving their country. '**To be free,**' he answered."

General John E. Wool had sympathy for the Indians and **hesitated carrying out the inhumane removal**, resulting in **Democrat President Martin Van Buren** replacing him with **General Winfield Scott**.

46,000 Indians were removed by 1837.

Then came the **freezing weather of 1838-1839**.

The last **17,000 Cherokee Indians** were **forcibly removed** by the Federal Government from:

- **Georgia,**
- **Tennessee,**
- **Alabama, and**
- **South Carolina.**

Samuel Carter wrote in *Cherokee Sunset: A Nation Betrayed: A Narrative of Travail and Triumph, Persecution and Exile* (Doubleday, First Edition, 1976):

"Then ... there came the **reign of terror**.

From the **jagged-walled stockades** the **troops** fanned out across the Nation, **invading every hamlet, every cabin, rooting out the inhabitants at bayonet point**.

The **Cherokees** hardly had time to realize what was happening as they were **prodded like so many sheep** toward the **concentration camps**, threatened with knives and pistols, beaten with rifle butts if they resisted."

Christians protested the mistreatment, and **ministered to the Indians along the trail**, bringing them **food and blankets**.

Not able give their dead a full burial, they simply sang **Amazing Grace**, resulting in that song often being considered as an unofficial "**Cherokee National Anthem**."

President Ronald Reagan commemorated the estimated **5,000 who died** from the Federal Government's policy by designating the "**Trail of Tears**" a **National Historic Trail** in 1987.

The Evening Tribune published "The Insecurity of Social Security" (Albert Lea, MN, September 30, 1935, p. 4, col. 2):

"If you want to consider what '**social security**' does for and to people **look at the American Indian.**"

He has been a ward of the government, all his materialist wants looked after. Foolish question: **Has this helped or harmed him?"**

Tex Reynolds wrote in the column "Between the Lines," for the Racine, Wisconsin, newspaper *Journal-Times* (January 31, 1950, p. 1, col. 1):

"Those who are plugging for **socialism** in this country because they want government to take care of them, should **look at the poor American Indians** ... There is a classic example of **how government takes care of people who depend upon it!"**

The Houghton Line Magazine (E.F. Houghton Co., March, 1950):

"If you think you're going to be happy and prosperous by sitting back and **letting the government take care of you — look at the American Indians!"**

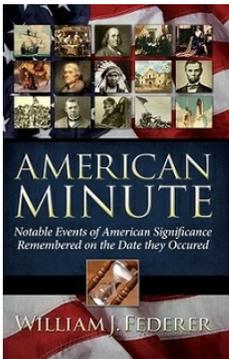
Oklahoma, which is the **Choctaw** word for "**red people**," became home to the **Five Civilized Tribes**, as well as many other tribes that were rounded up along the way.

Fifty years after the Trail of Tears, the Federal government **opened up** the remaining **Oklahoma Territory** for settlement.

It began with a gunshot at high noon on APRIL 22, 1889, beginning the famous **Oklahoma Land Rush**.

Within 9 hours some **two million acres** became the **private property** of settlers who staked their **claims for 160 acres to homestead**.

Riding as fast as they could, many found desirable plots already taken by "**Boomers**," who entered the territory ten years earlier, and "**Sooners**," who entered the territory just days or hours "sooner" than the Land Rush.



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In 1859, **Lewis Ross**, a brother of **Cherokee Chief John Ross**, was **drilling** for saltwater-brine to use as a food preservative and found a **pocket of oil** that produced **ten barrels of oil a day** for nearly a year.

In 1890, near the town **Chelsea, Rogers County, Oklahoma**, **Edward Byrd** drilled and found **oil** at a depth of only 36 feet, but was hampered by **severe government regulations**.

In 1897, the well "**Nellie Johnstone No. 1**" was drilled in **Bartlesville, Oklahoma**, and struck oil at 1,320 feet, beginning the **Oklahoma Oil Boom**.

Oil production rose quickly and impetus grew for **Oklahoma** to become the **46th State** in **1907**.

Within 10 years, **Oklahoma** became the **largest oil-producing entity in the world**.

The **oil industry saved the whale** from extinction, as prior to fossil fuels, the **major source of oil** was **blubber** from **whales** killed by **whaling ships**.

Oklahoma remained the **leading oil producing State** into the 1920's, hitting its peak in 1930.

In 1938, **Standard Oil of California** struck oil in **Saudi Arabia**.

This began a **shift in world politics**, as **Saudi Arabia** was the main country **spreading extremist Wahhabi Islam**.

Sir Lawrence of Arabia wrote in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, 1922:

"Wahhabis, followers of a **fanatical Moslem heresy**, had imposed their strict rules ... Everything was forcibly pious or forcibly puritanical."

Due to **technological innovations** in extracting oil, **Oklahoma** again became a major producer.

The Preamble of the **Oklahoma State Constitution, 1907**, states:

"Invoking the guidance of **Almighty God**, in order to secure and perpetuate **the blessing of liberty**; to secure **just and rightful government**; to promote our mutual welfare and happiness, **we, the people** of the **State of Oklahoma**, do ordain and establish this Constitution."

A **Cherokee delegate** to the **Oklahoma State Constitutional Convention** was **Clement Rogers** of **Rogers County**.

His son was **William Penn Adair 'Will' Rogers**.

His **mother** wanted him to become a **Methodist**

preacher.

During this era, there were popular **traveling shows**, such as:

- **Great Pawnee Bill's Show;**
- **Bee Ho Gray's Wild West;** and
- **Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show**, with notable figures Chief Sitting Bull, "Wild Bill" Hickok, Calamity Jane, and Annie Oakley.

Will Rogers got his start with **Texas Jack's Wild West.**

A Cherokee cowboy skilled in roping, **Will Rogers** became popular on stage in vaudeville shows and the Ziegfeld Follies.

He even performed before **President Woodrow Wilson**, roasting his political policies with hilariously witty remarks, which became his trademark:

- "The U.S. Senate opens with a prayer and closes with an investigation."
- "If we got one-tenth of what was promised to us in these acceptance speeches there wouldn't be any inducement to go to heaven."
- "With Congress — every time they make a joke it's a law. And every time they make a law it's a joke."
- "The short memories of American voters is what keeps our politicians in office."
- "This country has come to feel the same when Congress is in session as when a baby gets hold of a hammer."

- "Never blame a legislative body for not doing something. When they do nothing, that don't hurt anybody. When they do something is when they become dangerous."
- "Be thankful we're not getting all the government we're actually paying for."
- "The budget is a mythical bean bag. Congress votes mythical beans into it, and then tries to reach in and pull real beans out."
- "I don't make jokes. I just watch the government and report the facts."
- "If pro is the opposite of con, what is the opposite of Congress?"
- "If you ever injected truth into politics you'd have no politics."
- "The trouble with practical jokes is that very often they get elected."
- "Everything is changing. People are taking the comedians seriously and the politicians as a joke."

In 1908, he married **Betty Blake**, and together they had four children:

- **Will Rogers, Jr.**, who became a WWII hero and was elected to Congress;
- **Mary**, who became a Broadway actress;
- **James**, who was a newspaperman, and
- **Fred**, who died at age two of diphtheria.

He had a large **radio audience in the 1920's** and made

48 silent movies.

When movies had sound, he appeared in **21 feature films.**

One of his most notable roles was in **Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.***

Rogers had a syndicated column, "**Will Rogers says,**" in the ***The York Times,*** which reached **40 million readers.**

He wrote frequently for ***The Saturday Evening Post.***

Will Rogers stated:

- "There are two theories to arguing with a woman. Neither works."
- "Always drink upstream from the herd."
- "Everyone is ignorant, only on different subjects."
- "There is nothing so stupid as the educated man if you get him off the thing he was educated in."
- "The problem ain't what people know. It's what people know that ain't so that's the problem."
- "The minute you read something that you can't understand, you can almost be sure that it was drawn up by a lawyer.""
- "Hitler got his start in a beer hall and before he's through he'll give the world a hangover."

Will Rogers commented on taxes:

- "The income tax has made liars out of more Americans than golf."

- "I don't want to complain, but every time they build a tax structure, the first thing they nail is me."
- "The only difference between death and taxes is that death doesn't get worse every time Congress meets."
- "Next to guinea pigs, taxes have been the most prolific animal."
- "The government shoves you in the creek once a year and all that don't get wet you can keep."

Once, while entertaining **polio victims** and **severely handicapped** at the **Milton H. Berry Institute** in Los Angeles, he suddenly **left the stage** and rushed to the rest room.

Milton Berry followed him to give him a towel, only to find him weeping like a child. In a few minutes, he was back on the platform, as jovial as before.

Will Rogers fundraised for the **American Red Cross** during the Great Depression, served as **goodwill ambassador to Mexico**, and briefly served as **mayor of Beverly Hills**.

He was offered the nomination to be **Oklahoma's Governor**, but he declined.

The **State of Oklahoma** placed a **statue** of **Will Rogers** in the **U.S. Capitol's Statuary Hall**.

Called the Cowboy Philosopher, he said

"The farmer has to be an optimist or he wouldn't still be a farmer."

"Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you

just sit there."

An advocate of **aviation**, he was friends with the famous pilots **Charles Lindbergh** and **Wiley Post**.

Will Rogers flew with **Wiley Post** to **Alaska**, but getting caught in bad weather, they died in plane crash, August 15, 1935.

Oklahoma City named its international airport the **Will Rogers World Airport**.

The U.S. Post Office issued a **stamp** with **Will Rogers** image in 1948, and again in 1979.

With his cowboy philosopher wit, **Rogers** said:

"The **Lord** constituted everybody that no matter what color you are, you require the same amount of nourishment."

He remarked:

"Live in such a way that you would not be ashamed to sell your parrot to the town gossip."

Will Rogers quipped:

"**Lord**, let me live until I die,"

and

"The trouble with our **praying** is, we just do it **as a means of last resort**."

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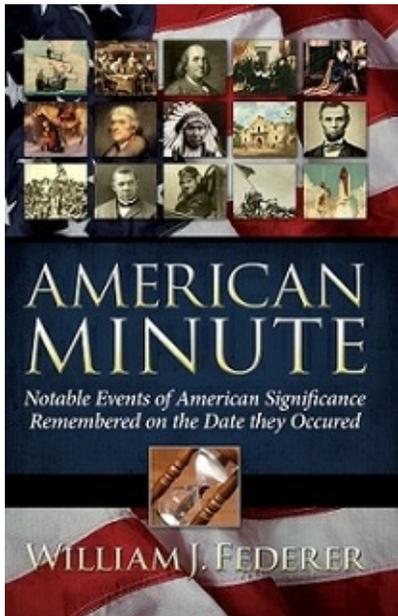
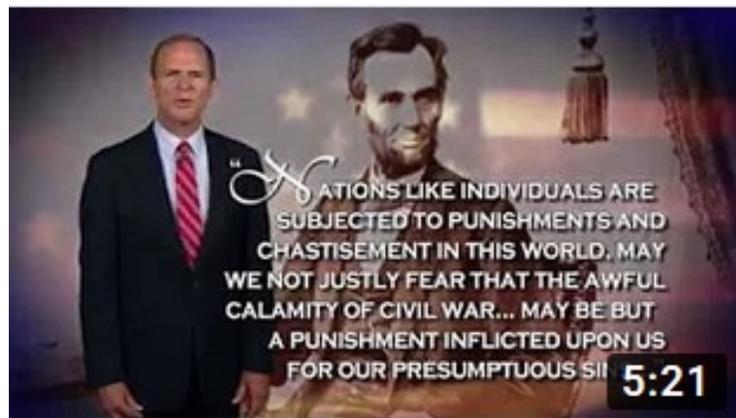
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