

Trails of Tears Pilgrimage, July 10-17, 2023

Purpose: to trace and understand the historic forced relocations (1831-1839) of the Native Peoples known as “The Five Civilized Tribes” (Choctaw, Seminole, Creek/Muscogee, Chickasaw, and Cherokee) AND the consequences in contemporary society. (A reminder that many of the nations were integrated with African Americans and Scots-Irish peoples and their removal to Indian Territory/Oklahoma provided a context and land for additional enslavement across the south, as well as motivations for racial violence that would occur well into the 20th Century.)

Itinerary (8 days/7 nights):

- Day One/Monday – leave Columbia, MO 8:00 a.m. Lunch in Jackson, MO; visit Trails of Tears State Park (visitors center and Bushyhead monument). Travel along portions of the Northern Route (eventually to Eastern TN) to Hopkinsville, KY, visit Commemoration Park; overnight in Hopkinsville.
- Day Two/Tuesday – travel to Vonore, TN; visit Sequoyah birthplace. Travel to Birchwood, TN, to visit Cherokee Removal Park; overnight in Cleveland, TN.
- Day Three/Wednesday – visit Red Clay State Park, then travel to Calhoun, GA, to visit New Echota Cherokee Capital State Historical Park. Travel west along portions of the Benge Route (via Scottsboro, AL) to Pulaski, TN, to visit Trail of Tears Interpretative Center; overnight in Lawrenceburg, TN.
- Day Four/Thursday – Travel across TN and AR along portions of the Bell and water routes to Ft. Smith, AR; overnight in Ft. Smith.
- Day Five/Friday – Visit Ft. Smith Historical Park, and travel to Muskogee, OK, to visit Five Civilized Tribes Museum (possible stop at Ft. Gibson); travel to Creek/Muscogee headquarters in Okmulgee, OK; overnight in Muskogee.
- Day Six/Saturday – Travel/visit Choctaw headquarters/museum, Tuskahoma, OK; Chickasaw headquarters/museum, Sulphur; and Seminole headquarters/museum, Wewoka; overnight in Muskogee.
- Day Seven/Sunday – Sunday School and Worship at Old Baptist Mission Church (with Pastor Tim Bailey) and Bushyhead Cemetery, Westville; visit in the afternoon at Sequoyah’s Cabin, Sallisaw, OK (Optional visit to the Cherokee national museum, Tahlequah); last night in Muskogee.
- Day Eight/Monday – Travel/visit the Will Rogers Memorial Museum, Claremore, OK; Travel home along portions of the Cannon route through Missouri.

Arrangements will be made for presentations at museums and interpretative centers; there will be an opportunity to walk briefly on one or more of the trail segments. I will provide a tour booklet, orientations, guided discussions, maps, and reading materials, as well as a suggested bibliography. We will schedule two programs in late Spring in Columbia before the trip to review history, watch videos, and receive an overview of our trip. Submitted by Larry Brown, 12/15/22