



imaginary theatre company

2010–2011 SEASON

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by Kathryn Schultz Miller
Directed by Jason Cannon

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by Kathryn Schultz Miller
Directed by Jason Cannon

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The Company

Snow Owl and others / **Ann Ashby**

President Andrew Jackson and others / **Lakeetha Blakeney**

Walking Bear and others / **Jordan Reinwald**

Chosen One / **Christian Vieira**



Financial assistance for this theatre has been provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; the Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis; and the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission.

setting the scene



During the 1800s, our young nation was just beginning to find itself. Settlers were streaming into the New World to explore endless opportunity and possibility. Native Americans like Chosen One, Walking Bear and Snow Owl were all curiously and cautiously receiving the new visitors and their ways. What would the white man bring?

As time passed, it became clear that even though the country was large, there simply wasn't room for both the Native Americans and the settlers. Would Chosen One's suspicions of the white man come true? Or would Andrew Jackson prove to be an ally for the Native Americans and help them preserve their homes and traditions? What is the Trail of Tears?

who's who?



As the world rapidly changes around him, **CHOSEN ONE** struggles to honor and protect the traditions of his people from the white man.

Chosen One's father, **WALKING BEAR**, is less concerned about the threat of the white man and more fascinated by how his people can benefit from the white man and his ways.

SNOW OWL, Chosen One's wife, cares less about the old ways and more about being civilized and living like the white man.

ANDREW JACKSON, our nation's seventh president, appears to be a friend of Chosen One and his people ... but is he really?

Throughout the play various **settlers, congressmen and soldiers** come and go, all with a point of view about Native Americans and their place which, according to them, is not with the white folks.

what's the story?

Imagine a land where the mountains are so high they touch the sky. A place with crystal clean waters and morning mists that fall about you like smoky clouds. Where are you? You're on the lush mountainside where the Cherokee live in harmony with nature.

This harmony with nature is a large part of the Cherokee history and tradition. Even as Chosen One hunts, he is constantly talking to nature. Before shooting at the deer he stalks, he apologizes for having to hurt the animal. When Chosen One misses, the deer explains that Chosen One is not hungry or cold so he will not be catching the animal today. You see, the Great Spirit asks that the Cherokee love and appreciate their world. They are only supposed to take only what they need, nothing more. If the Cherokee protect the beauty of nature, then nature will provide for them.

Times are changing on the mountainside, though. White settlers have started to pour in, and they bring with them new ideas and new ways of doing things. While Walking Bear and Snow Owl are fascinated with these new visitors, Chosen One is suspicious of the white people and fears the effect they will have on the Cherokee. Both Snow Owl and Walking Bear already seem to be abandoning the old Native American ways for those the settlers bring. Money, clothing and more "civilized" traditions all seem to threaten the Cherokee, or so it seems to Chosen One.

To make matters worse, the white settlers don't seem to think much of Chosen One and his people. They think the Cherokee are inferior, uncivilized savages that need to go. At first, the white man buys the land from

the Native Americans, but eventually the settlers want to kick the Cherokee off their land.

With the election of President Andrew Jackson comes hope that the Native Americans have an ally in the government. Jackson is known for his battles against the Osage in the South—enemies of the Cherokee. Surely the new president will defend Chosen One's right to the land!

A meeting with the president doesn't go exactly as planned for Chosen One. Through trickery, the United States government produces a signed agreement from "tribal chiefs" that says the Native Americans will leave their land and head west (the treaty wasn't actually signed by chiefs—it wasn't even signed by someone who speaks Cherokee!).

With seemingly no alternative, Snow Owl and Walking Bear prepare to leave their homeland. Infuriated, Chosen One slides further and further from his family and friends. He refuses to turn his back on Cherokee traditions. When the General comes to force the Native Americans to leave, Chosen One escapes and hides in the wilderness. While so many other tribes of people are forced to leave their lives behind, Chosen one decides to remain and fight for his people. Who will win the fight?

Please feel free to adapt these materials to suit your classroom needs and reproduce them for future use.

The activities in this guide address the following Missouri Show Me Standards and Illinois Learning Standards.

MO: CA1, 3, 4, 7; FA2, 3, 5; SS2, 5, 6,7; IL: 1, 2, 3, 5, 16, 25, 27

words to the wise

cherish: to protect and care for lovingly

fawn: a young deer in its first year

civilized: an advanced stage of social, cultural and moral development

savage: fierce, violent, uncontrolled and primitive

pagan: a person holding religious beliefs other than those of the main world religions

literate: able to read and write

brethren: fellow members of a group or order, often religious

misconception: a view or opinion that is incorrect because it is based on faulty thinking or understanding

treaty: a formally concluded and ratified agreement between groups or countries

paraphernalia: miscellaneous articles associated with a particular institution or activity

wane: to get progressively smaller; to appear to decrease in size

render: to give in return; to cause to become

apprise: inform or tell

read more about it

Conley, Robert. *The Cherokee Nation: A History*, University of New Mexico Press, 2008. There's much more to the Cherokee than the Trail of Tears. Read all about the Cherokee heritage, culture and history in this book!

Ehle, John. *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation*, Anchor Books Doubleday, 1997. The clash between Native Americans and settlers is far more epic than what can be captured in a short play—dig in to the details with this book and learn all about the Cherokee tribe and its journey on the Trail of Tears.

***The Trail of Tears: Cherokee Legacy*, 2006, Rich-Heap Films, 115 minutes, DVD.** You've seen the play, now check out the movie narrated by James Earl Jones, an actual Cherokee descendent!

<http://www.cherokee.org/>

Want to know more about the largest Native American tribe in the United States today? Check out the official homepage for the Cherokee Nation for news, info and history!

The Real Trail of Tears

The Trail of Tears is much more than a dusty path upon which Native Americans like Walking Bear and Snow Owl traveled when they were being forced to relocate west. It refers to a long, painful process by which many tribes were forced to leave their homelands behind. It's a part of the process by which American settlers have slowly overtaken and all but entirely erased Native American culture and tradition.

While the Trail of Tears hurt many Native American tribes, the root of the movement centers around the Five Civilized Tribes—Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole. These five tribes were considered civilized because overall they responded well to the new settlers, adopting their ways and remaining peaceful with their new neighbors. Each of the Five Civilized Tribes existed as independent nations, but as the population of settlers continued to increase, tensions began to rise between the nations and the settlers. In particular, southern states seemed most at odds with the Native American—Georgia in particular was locked in heated disputes with the Cherokee over territory.

The Indian Removal Act, signed into legislation by President Andrew Jackson in 1830, was designed to put an end to the rising quarrels by relocating Native Americans west of the Mississippi into Indian Territory (in what is present day Oklahoma). As it was written, the Act was to encourage the voluntary removal of tribes through peaceful treaties. In practice, however, the tribes were pressured, tricked and even forcibly removed from their homelands.

The first tribe to voluntarily head west was the Choctaw Nation in 1831, followed respectively by the Seminole, the Creek, the Chickasaw and finally the Cherokee in 1838. All said and done, over 60,000 Native Americans were pushed across the nation to the new Indian Territory. Many thousands were killed while many more were plagued by disease and starvation during their migration.

While the Choctaw Nation went peaceably and served as the model for the following migrations, the Seminole would not go peacefully. The tribe resisted, sparking a war that would last 10 years and cost the United States \$20 million. The war ended in a sort of shambles, with many exiled while others retreated into the Everglades (the Seminole were native to Florida).

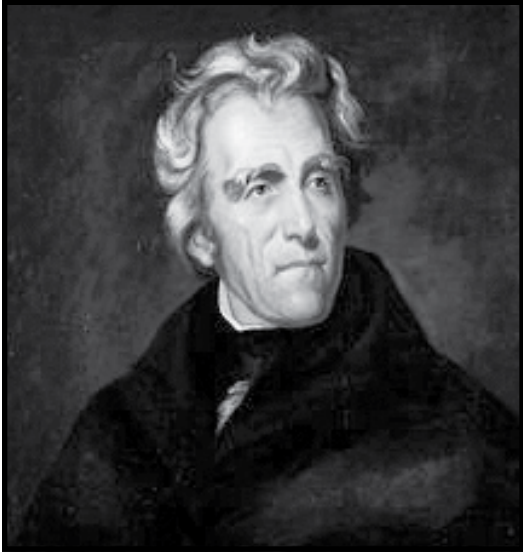
A series of questionable treaties led to the migration of the Creek in 1836, while the Chickasaw tribe was simply bought out for \$530,000. Unlike the other tribes, the Chickasaw did not have land waiting for them in Indian Territory—the money was it.

The Cherokee, at the heart of one of the primary disputes causing the Indian Removal Act, were the last to be relocated. They too were ousted through a series of questionable treaties, but the stakes were much higher for them. The disputed territory between the Cherokee Nation and the state of Georgia included land upon which gold was discovered. In fact, the gold found on Cherokee lands spurred the first gold rush in our nation's history in 1829. Four thousand of the 15,000 relocated Cherokee would die on the Trail of Tears, never making it to the new Indian Territory.

The desired end result for the United States government—25 million acres freed up for settlement and silence of Native American disputes with settlers—made this sad series of events a success for the white man.

President Andrew Jackson

While it's easy to paint Andrew Jackson as a villain in this story, there is much more to both the man and his presidency than the Indian removal. As one of our first presidents and early settlers, Andrew Jackson played a key role in helping to define a young America.



Quick Vitals:

- * Seventh president of the United States (1829-1837)
- * He's the guy on the \$20 bill
- * Had 10 children, all were adopted
- * Nickname: Old Hickory

Interesting Tidbits:

- * Was a military governor in Florida (1821) and a senator in Tennessee (1797-1798) before becoming president
- * Fought in the American Revolutionary War—entered service at age 13!
- * After being captured by the British, refused to shine a British officer's shoes, even after being slashed by the officer
- * Fought alongside and against Native Americans more than once in his military career including in the War of 1812 (where he fought alongside the Cherokee, Choctaw and Southern Creek Indians against the "Red Stick" Creek Indians) and the First Seminole War (against the Seminole and Creek Indians)

- * The first president that someone attempted to harm and assassinate (he was assaulted and later someone attempted to shoot him!)

While He Was President:

- * Lowered federal debt to the lowest it had been since the nation's first fiscal year
- * Tried to abolish the Electoral College, as he believed it was unnecessary
- * Unified states and established federal law as imminent and applicable over individual state's interests (prior to his presidency, states could nullify federal laws as they pleased)
- * Admitted both Arkansas and Michigan as states during his time as president (1836 and 1837, respectively)

Bet You Didn't Know:

- * Jackson has appeared on not only the \$20 bill, but also on \$5, \$10, \$50 and \$10,000 bills!
- * The assassination attempt on Jackson went curiously amiss, twice. When would-be assailant Richard Lawrence pulled his pistol out to shoot the president, the gun misfired. Lawrence then pulled out a second pistol, which luckily also misfired. Afterwards, both guns were tested and worked perfectly, leading many to believe that Jackson was protected by God, just as God protected the young nation.
- * Famous frontiersman Davey Crockett served under Jackson in the Tennessee Militia
- * Nickname (Old Hickory) comes from his bravery and success on the battlefield, as he was said to be as "tough as old hickory" wood

Cherokee Nation

Though *Trail of Tears* seems like a sad story charting the beginning and end of a people, it is in no way the complete story of the Cherokee! Their tribe, along with other Native American tribes, has a rich culture and history, maintaining a strong presence in the world even today.

Cherokee Mythology

The Cherokee believe that in the beginning, the Great Spirit (also called “the Apportioner,” or one who divides and shares) created the world as a great floating island in the middle of the sea. It hung from the sky by four cords attached to the four different directions—north, south, east and west. In the sky realm lived all the animals, and the first to come down to the island was Water Beetle. He couldn’t find enough dry land to rest upon, and so he dove deep into the sea, bringing mud back up with him. This mud grew in every direction and formed the Earth. Other animals came down to help, including Buzzard who made mountains and valleys with his wings and Red Crawfish who was burned when the Sun was set too low.

When the world was ready and the Great Spirit had completed his creation, all the animals and humans came down to live on the Earth. The Great Spirit left the Sun and the Moon (sister and brother) to watch over the world as our elders. In fact, according to Cherokee belief, the Sun is our grandmother and the moon is our older brother. The Cherokee believe that everything and everyone has a kinship. You might have noticed, for example, in the play when Chosen One calls the deer his brother.

As the Cherokee believe we’re all interconnected, they feel that all suffering and disease comes from unnecessarily killing animals or otherwise harming the environment. As the Sun says in the play, the Cherokee believe in taking only what they need from nature. To wrong an animal or nature is to do harm to one’s own family and one’s self. In this way, the Cherokee believe very strongly in the notion that good is rewarded and that evil is punished.



What Does “Cherokee” Mean?

You might be surprised to find out that “Cherokee” isn’t actually a Cherokee word, nor does it have any Cherokee meaning! You see, Cherokee is an English word thought to be how settlers

pronounced what the Cherokee actually call themselves. The Cherokee language is Southern Iroquoian and they actually call themselves Tsalagi, which means “Principal People.” The language is recorded on paper through syllabary, or using a set of symbols to represent syllables that make up words.

The Little People

While the Cherokee tribe believes in one Creator Spirit, the Great Spirit, they also believe that there are various spirits inhabiting the world around them. One such kind of spirit is the Little People. These miniature Cherokee are invisible beings (unless they wish to be seen) who live throughout nature—in caves and thickets, for example. They enjoy drumming, dancing and can sometimes be mischievous (especially when you try to bother them too much!). They are best known for helping lost children, whether they are actually lost in the forest or in the middle of a series of difficult events. If you try to find the Little People and bother them for help, they will cause you to be very confused. Since the Little People don’t like to be disturbed, the Cherokee do not seek them out or speak of seeing them for at least seven years after they are seen.

Stomp Dance

The Cherokee Stomp Dance is a part of a larger, day-long religious celebration honoring the Creator Spirit. While feasting, sermons and game playing dominate the day, the Stomp Dance takes over the night. The first dance begins just after sundown and includes only tribal elders, medicine men and clan heads. They dance around a sacred fire that burns constantly. After the first dance, others in the tribe are invited to dance, and all visit and feast into the night.

Stickball

As you can see, the Cherokee people weren't savage and unsophisticated like the settlers believed. In fact, the Cherokee even enjoyed games like stickball—a game very similar to modern day lacrosse. Sometimes associated with religious festivals, stickball was played with a ball made of mushroom, yarn and leather. In order to score, a team needed to hit the ball on top of a pole 40 feet high. Men could only catch and throw the ball with special spoons while women could use their hands.

Today

Today, the Cherokee live in three federally recognized tribes—Cherokee Nation, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The first two are headquartered on Indian Territory in Oklahoma while the Eastern Band is located in Cherokee, North Carolina. The Cherokee Nation alone has more than 300,000 members, making it the largest federally recognized Native American tribe in the United States.

But Cherokee life extends far beyond Indian Territory, as many people claim Cherokee ancestry. Just a few of the famous names you won't find actually enrolled with any of the three Cherokee tribes are Johnny Depp, Chuck Norris and Cameron Diaz. You might be surprised who has Cherokee ancestors, as over 700,000 people in America identify themselves as Cherokee!



Animal Adventure

Imagine that you could live in harmony with nature like Chosen One. How fun would it be to talk with animals? What do you think they could teach you? What would you like to tell them? In the space below, write out a conversation that you would have with an animal just like it were a scene in the play. Think about what your animal might be able to tell you, and what you might be able to tell your animal. Where would you find the animal? What would they be doing? What kind of adventure could you share?

W.W.C.O.D?

What Would Chosen One Do?

In the play, the Sun tells Chosen One to cherish the world that he lives in and only take what he needs to survive. This comes from the Cherokee belief that nature is sacred and that to harm nature is to harm ourselves. In the following situations, can you pick what Chosen One would do? Hint: In some situations there may be more than one answer . . . can you find the best one?

1. There on the curb beneath your feet is a trail of ants. What would Chosen One do?
 - a. Step on the ants and laugh as they are smashed and scatter
 - b. Pick up some ants and put them in Snow Owl's hair
 - c. Carefully go around the ants, not harming them

2. You're at the park playing an intense game of b-ball with your friends. After the game is over, you down your favorite sports drink to stay hydrated. After you're finished you have an empty bottle. What would Chosen One do?
 - a. Find a trash can to throw away the bottle
 - b. Throw the bottle at your battered opponent, leaving it on the court when you leave.
 - c. Hold onto the bottle until you can find a recycling bin for plastics

3. As you're walking home from the bus stop one day, you find a robin's nest that has fallen from a tree on the edge of the sidewalk. Inside, several small hatchlings are chirping. What would Chosen One do?
 - a. Run for your life—these baby birds are crazy!
 - b. Move the nest to the middle of the road . . . that should teach them to fly
 - c. Find an adult to help you put the nest back into the tree

4. You've just finished a large pile of candy from your secret Halloween stash from last year, and your stomach is about to burst. All you want to do is lie down in the grass and relax under a warm sun, but you've got rather large pile of candy wrappers that might blow away in the wind. What would Chosen One do?
 - a. Eat the candy wrappers. They're high in protein, aren't they?
 - b. Fashion a rope out of the candy wrappers and tie up your kid sister
 - c. Find a trash can to throw away the wrappers instead of leaving them as litter

5. While you're out in the back yard, you see a baby rabbit hopping around in some taller grass. What would Chosen One do?
 - a. Talk to the rabbit, telling it your favorite joke
 - b. Throw rocks at the rabbit to get it the heck off your stinking property
 - c. Just watch the rabbit and admire its grace and beauty

Family Tree

Chosen One shows us the importance of our heritage in making us who we are. Explore your own past and chart it on this family tree.

