

## Trail of Tears 1838 Evicted from their legally owned own land



The Northwest Territory, which included the area that would become Michigan, was a wild place. The British, Indians, a few French, soldiers, woodsmen, were busy fighting and killing each other. The Indians defeated the American armies several times until General Anthony Wayne won against them in 1794. The Indian chiefs finally realized that the Americans outnumbered and out armed them and they could not stop the Americans from coming in. After several months of talks a big feast was thrown at Fort Greenville Ohio. The Indians were given fire water, \$20,000 in goods and promised \$9,500 more a year in exchange for giving up most of their lands. They were promised that settlers would not settle any more on the Indian lands above a certain line. They signed the Treaty of Greenville. The Americans broke the treaty then killed or moved the Indians off of the land that was agreed on as belonging to the Indians forcing them to fight back costing thousands of lives on both sides.

Outnumbered, outweaponed, beaten, out educated, killed, wounded, starved, cheated, the Indians moved or were moved with cruel force further west and “civilized” man took over. Some of these peoples had settled down to farm on land given to them by treaty and land that their forefathers had lived on for centuries. They had settled down as farmers and had started schools, built roads, and were living peacefully. But an army of 7,000 men came and forced them to march a thousand miles in the bitter winter or 1838-9 without proper food or clothing. Over 4,000 men, women and children died. Look up Trail of Tears. The supreme court had even ruled in the Indians favor and Davy Crocket then a congressman had urged congress not to allow their removal, as did Chief Justice John Marshall, Daniel Webster and Henry Clay.

How can a country which was formed on the promise “that all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights” allow an army to remove peaceful people from their legal homes and force them to march 1000 miles on foot in a bitter winter without proper clothing or preparation or food and water? In World War II we locked up Japanese people who had done nothing wrong. And a very scary historical observation, recently government has broken down doors of homes without knocking, without a warrant, ransacked homes, and removed homeowners personal property. Also people have recently been held in jail without a hearing, in clear violation of the constitution and this practice is being allowed to continue. Look up “Patriot Act & Military Tribunal Act.” And the government did not compensate the homeowners for the losses. So you should ask can it happen here? It has happened in fact many times since. In summary let this be a lesson that we must be vigilant about our rights. A threat to one is a threat to all.