

Summary: The Cherokee

Living in the Southeast

Long ago, the Cherokee lived in the mountains in the Southeast. They depended on forests, rivers, and soil for their food. They hunted and fished. They gathered fruit and nuts. They grew vegetables and sunflowers in the piedmont.

The Cherokee built towns along rivers. Many Cherokee families in these towns had summer homes and winter homes. The winter homes were small and warm. Cherokee towns had walls around them. They also had a town center. People used the town center for meetings. Sometimes religious ceremonies were held there.

Sharing their history was important to the Cherokees. A Cherokee named Sequoyah invented a way to write the Cherokee language. The Cherokee were then able to read and write about their history.

Cherokee History

After settlers came to the South, life changed for the Cherokee. The settlers fought the Cherokee for their land. They fought over resources.

In the 1830s, the government forced most of the Cherokee to leave their homes in the south. They traveled hundreds of miles west to what is now Oklahoma. Four thousand Cherokee died. This sad trip is called the Trail of Tears.

Today the Cherokee live in Oklahoma, North Carolina, and other places. They are proud of their history and traditions.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

piedmont *noun*, gently rolling land at the base of mountains

history *noun*, the record of past events

tradition *noun*, a culture's special way of doing something



After You Read

REVIEW What resources did the Cherokee use for food? Circle three resources the Cherokee used.

REVIEW Why did the Cherokee move to Oklahoma? Underline the answer.