Name _____ Date _____

Westward Expansion: Manifest Destiny and the Trail of Tears

Directions: Read the passage about westward expansion. Then answer each question.

Westward Expansion and the Trail of Tears

Land, Removal and a Growing Nation

In the early 1800s, American settlers pushed west in search of farmland. Much of the land they wanted already belonged to Native American nations. In the Southeast, the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole nations held large homelands.

The Cherokee Nation had its own written constitution and a newspaper printed in English and Cherokee. Still, the pressure on its land grew. After a gold strike in northern Georgia in 1828, miners and settlers crowded onto Cherokee land. Georgia passed laws that claimed power over the Cherokee Nation.

In May 1830, President Andrew Jackson signed a law called the Indian Removal Act. It let the president trade land west of the Mississippi River for the lands Native nations held in the East. Removal was supposed to happen through treaties, but the government used heavy pressure and, in the end, force. The Choctaw were the first nation to sign a removal treaty, and their removal began in 1831. The Seminole fought a long war in Florida rather than leave.

The Cherokee fought removal in the courts. In 1832, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Georgia's laws did not apply inside the Cherokee Nation. Jackson, who supported Georgia, did nothing to enforce the decision. In December 1835, a small group of Cherokee men agreed to the Treaty of New Echota. It gave up all Cherokee land in the East in exchange for money and land in the West. None of the signers was an elected leader of the Cherokee Nation. In 1836, the U.S. Senate approved the treaty 31 to 15, just enough to reach the two-thirds it needed. Principal Chief John Ross and most Cherokee rejected it, and more than 15,000 Cherokee later signed a petition asking Congress to cancel it.

Under the treaty, the Cherokee had two years to move. When the deadline came in May 1838, U.S. soldiers and state militias forced Cherokee families out of their homes and into camps. Most of the Cherokee set out between August and December 1838. They traveled hundreds of miles, through a hard winter, to Indian Territory, in what is now Oklahoma. Disease, hunger and cold killed many people in the camps and along the way. Historians estimate that about 4,000 Cherokee died. The Cherokee's forced journey is remembered as the Trail of Tears.

By the 1840s, many Americans believed the United States was meant to spread across North America to the Pacific Ocean. Many thought God intended it. In 1845, this belief got a name: Manifest Destiny. Not everyone agreed, and some Americans feared that new land would spread slavery. Texas joined the Union in 1845, and a treaty with Britain in 1846 gave the United States the southern part of the Oregon Country. In 1848, after a war with Mexico, the United States gained California and most of the Southwest. Native

nations in these lands now faced the same kind of pressure.

1. What was one cause of the growing pressure on Cherokee land, according to the passage?

A. The discovery of gold drew miners and settlers.

B. Britain paid the Cherokee to attack American settlers.

C. The Cherokee stopped printing their newspaper in English.

D. The Supreme Court ordered the Cherokee to move west.

2. Name the law and the journey these sentences describe. Use the word bank.

Word bank
Oregon Country • Indian Removal Act • Manifest Destiny • Trail of Tears
Treaty of New Echota

Signed in 1830, the _____ let the president trade western land for the lands Native nations held in the East. The forced journey of the Cherokee to Indian Territory is remembered as the _____.

3. The passage gives a year for each of these events. Which one happened first?

A. The Supreme Court ruled on Georgia's laws about the Cherokee.

B. A small group of Cherokee men agreed to the Treaty of New Echota.

C. Miners struck gold in northern Georgia.

D. The Indian Removal Act became law.

4. According to the passage, what was one result of the Indian Removal Act?

A. Miners struck gold in northern Georgia.

B. Texas joined the Union as a new state.

C. Choctaw removal began in 1831.

D. The United States gained the southern part of the Oregon Country.

5. A student claims that the federal government did not protect the Cherokee even after they won in court. Which sentence from the passage best supports this claim?

A. "Georgia passed laws that claimed power over the Cherokee Nation."

B. "In 1832, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Georgia's laws did not apply inside the Cherokee Nation."

C. "Jackson, who supported Georgia, did nothing to enforce the decision."

D. "The Cherokee fought removal in the courts."

6. Each claim below is about Indian removal. Match each claim to the passage detail that best supports it.

Write the letter of the matching answer on each line.

1. _____ Removal cost many Cherokee lives.
2. _____ The Cherokee Nation governed itself before removal.
3. _____ Some Native nations fought rather than move west.
4. _____ The Treaty of New Echota barely won enough votes in the Senate.

Choices for question 6

A. The Seminole fought a long war in Florida.

B. Texas joined the Union in 1845.

C. The Senate approved it 31 to 15, just enough for the two-thirds it needed.

D. Historians estimate that about 4,000 Cherokee died.

E. It had a written constitution and a newspaper in English and Cherokee.

7. Choose two sentences from the passage that show the Cherokee did not leave their homeland by choice.

☐ A. "The Choctaw were the first nation to sign a removal treaty, and their removal began in 1831."

☐ B. "In 1845, this belief got a name: Manifest Destiny."

☐ C. "The Cherokee Nation had its own written constitution and a newspaper printed in English and Cherokee."

☐ D. "When the deadline came in May 1838, U.S. soldiers and state militias forced Cherokee families out of their homes and into camps."

☐ E. "Principal Chief John Ross and most Cherokee rejected it, and more than 15,000 Cherokee later signed a petition asking Congress to cancel it."

8. People who believed in Manifest Destiny held a view about the nation's future. What was it, according to the passage?

A. Britain should keep the whole Oregon Country, and Mexico should keep California.

B. The nation should stop growing at the Mississippi River and build up its cities.

C. The United States should give its western lands back to the Native nations living there.

D. The United States was meant to spread across North America to the Pacific Ocean.

9. Find the sentence in the passage that shows some Americans rejected Manifest Destiny.

A. "Many thought God intended it."

B. "Texas joined the Union in 1845, and a treaty with Britain in 1846 gave the United States the southern part of the Oregon Country."

C. "Not everyone agreed, and some Americans feared that new land would spread slavery."

D. "In 1845, this belief got a name: Manifest Destiny."

10. What did the war with Mexico bring the United States, according to the passage?

A. The United States gained California and most of the Southwest.

B. Texas left the Union and became part of Mexico again.

C. The United States gained the southern part of the Oregon Country.

D. The Seminole were allowed to stay in Florida.