**Directions:** Below are five stories from people who actually participated in the Trail of Tears march. Please each one of the accounts below, and answer the following questions.

**1. What were conditions like for people traveling on the Trail of Tears?**

**2. How do you think this author felt about the Trail of Tears march?**

**3. What was the author's motive in writing? Why do you think they wrote this account down?**

**4. How would you feel if you had been forced to march on the Trail of Tears? What would you have done?**

*Lt. L.B. Webster*

We were eight days in making the journey (80 miles), and it was pitiful to behold the women & children who suffered exceedingly as they were all obliged to walk, with the exception of the sick.... I had three regular ministers of the gospel in my party, and ... we have preaching or prayer meeting every night while on the march, and you may well imagine that under the peculiar circumstances of the case, among those sublime mountains and in the deep forest with the thunder often roaring in the distance, that nothing could be more solemn and impressive. And I always looked on with ... awe, lest their prayers which I felt... ascending to Heaven and calling for justice to Him who alone can & will grant it... [might] fall upon my guilty head as one of the instruments of oppression.

*Private John G. Burnett*

Being acquainted with many of the Indians and able to fluently speak their language, I was sent as interpreter into the Smoky Mountain Country in May, 1838, and witnessed the execution and the most brutal order in the history of American warfare. I saw helpless Cherokees arrested and dragged from their homes, and driven at the bayonet point into the stockades. And in the chill of a drizzling rain on an October morning, I saw them loaded like cattle or sheep into six hundred and forty-five wagons and started toward the west.

One can never forget the sadness and solemnity of that morning. Chief John Ross led in prayer and when the bugle sounded and the wagons started rolling many of the children rose to their feet and waved their little hands good-by to their mountain homes, knowing they were leaving them forever. Many of these helpless people did not have blankets and many of them had been driven from home barefooted.

On the morning of November the 17th we encountered a terrific sleet and snow storm with freezing temperatures and from that day until we reached the end of the fateful journey on March the 26th, 1839, the sufferings of the Cherokees were awful. The trail of the exiles was a trail of death. They had to sleep in the wagons and on the ground without fire. And I have known as many as twenty-two of them to die in one night of pneumonia due to ill treatment, cold, and exposure.

*General Winfield Scott*

Chiefs, head-men and warriors! Will you then, by resistance, compel us to resort to arms? God forbid! Or will you, by flight, seek to hid yourselves in mountains and forests, and thus oblige us to hunt you down? Remember that, in pursuit, it may be impossible to avoid conflicts. The blood of the white man or the blood of the red man may be spilt, and, if spilt, however accidentally, it may be impossible for the discreet and humane among you, or among us, to prevent a general war and carnage. Think of this, my Cherokee brethren! I am an old warrior, and have been present at many a scene of slaughter, but spare me, I beseech you, the horror of witnessing the destruction of the Cherokees.

*Elizabeth Watts*

The soldiers gathered them up, all up, and put them in camps. They hunted them and ran them down until they got all of them. Even before they were loaded in wagons, many of them got sick and died. They were all grief stricken they lost all on earth they had. White men even robbed their dead\_s graves to get their jewelry and other little trinkets. They saw to stay was impossible and Cherokees told Gen. Scott they would go without further trouble and the long journey started. They did not all come at once. First one batch and then another. The sick, old, and babies rode on the grub and household wagons. The rest rode a horse, if they had one. Most of them walked. Many of them died along the way. They buried them where they died, in unmarked graves. It was a bitter dose and lingered in the mind of Mrs. Watts' Grandparents and parents until death took them. The road they traveled, history calls the "Trail of Tears". This trail was more than tears. It was death, sorrow, hunger, exposure, and humiliation to a civilized people as were the Cherokees.

Eliza Whitmire

The weeks that followed General [Winfield] Scott's order to remove the Cherokees were filled with horror and suffering for the unfortunate Cherokees and their slaves. The women and children were driven from their homes, sometimes with blows and close on the heels of the retreating Indians came greedy whites to pillage the Indian's homes, drive off their cattle, horses, and pigs, and they even rifled the graves for any jewelry, or other ornaments that might have been buried with the dead. The Cherokees, after having been driven from their homes, were divided into detachments of nearly equal size and late in October, 1838, the first detachment started, the others following one by one. The aged, sick and young children rode in the wagons, which carried provisions and bedding, while others went on foot. The trip was made in the dead of winter and many died from exposure from sleet and snow, and all who lived to make this trip, or had parents who made it, will long remember it, as a bitter memory.