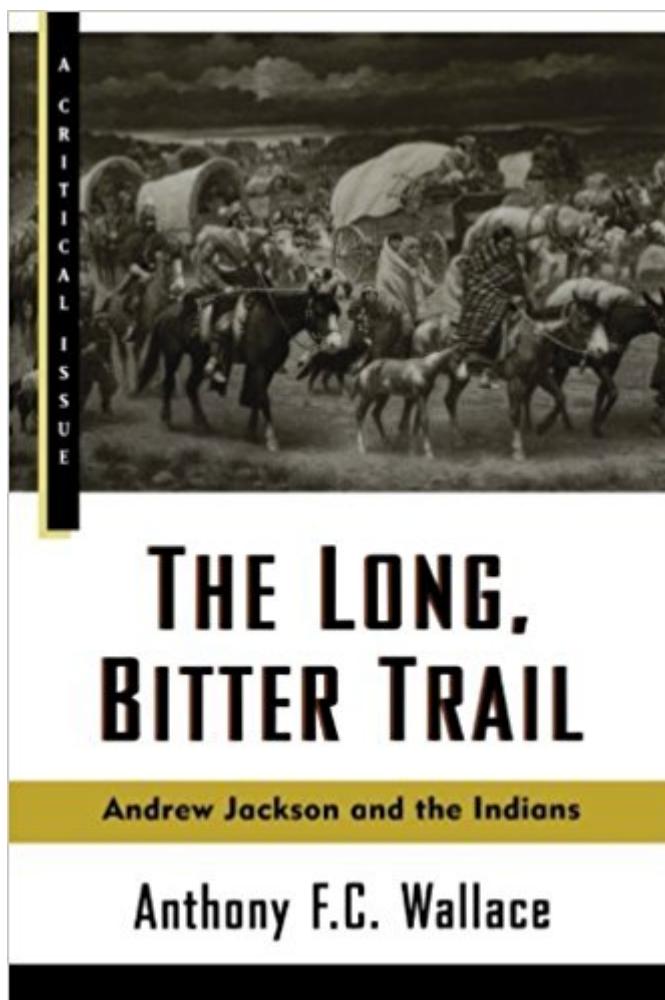


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# The Long, Bitter Trail: Andrew Jackson And The Indians (Hill And Wang Critical Issues)



## **Synopsis**

The Hill and Wang Critical Issues Series: concise, affordable works on pivotal topics in American history, society, and politics. This account of Congress's Indian Removal Act of 1830 focuses on the plight of the Indians of the Southeast--Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles--who were forced to leave their ancestral lands and relocate to what is now the state of Oklahoma. Revealing Andrew Jackson's central role in the government's policies, Wallace examines the racist attitudes toward Native Americans that led to their removal and, ultimately, their tragic fate.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Wallace, who won a Bancroft Prize in 1978 for *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village*, turns to Native American history in this retelling of the story of the Trail of Tears. This refers to the forced removal in the 1830s of thousands of Indians, particularly the Cherokee and the Choctaw, from the American east to west of the Mississippi River. The author expands his focus to examine the relocation of numerous Indian groups. Central to the story is Andrew Jackson, who assumed the presidency confronted with a government divided over the question of Indian removal and who soon became one of its major proponents. Responses of the Natives ranged from legal action and ultimate resignation on the part of some to warfare on the part of the Seminole. In a concluding chapter, Wallace shows how the effects of removal continue to the present day. All of this is told in a straightforward manner. Although he points to certain well-known white historians who give short

shift to this history, he overstates the uniqueness of his study. While it is a good introduction to the topic, this volume is far from the only modern historical treatment. Two documentary appendixes will be helpful to readers new to the subject. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

YA-The Indian Removal Act of 1830 summarily dismissed the rights of Native Americans to their homelands east of the Mississippi and mandated their relocation to the wilds of the Oklahoma plains. The infamous Trail of Tears is indeed a riveting tale of political expediency, greed, and sorrow. In this book, Wallace recounts in a balanced and clear manner the influences that gave rise to a governmental policy that regulated the disenfranchisement of Native peoples within American boundaries. The author carefully traces the movement and activities of the Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles through the Trail of Tears to their eventual destinations and fortunes. While almost scholarly in tone, the calm and precise narrative remains arresting because of the strength of its subject matter. Carol Beall, Immanuel Christian School, Springfield, VA  
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This is the best single book I have read about what the administration of Andrew Jackson did to the five civilized tribes of Southeastern Indians during the time of his two administrations. Jackson himself perpetuated the lie that they were nomadic peoples like western Indians beyond the Mississippi river. The Cherokee were the people who made Jackson's circle the angriest. They invented their own alphabet and published their own newspaper. Some Cherokee just like Jackson owned slaves. The Seminoles, on the other hand, welcomed runaway slaves and married some of them. Wallace tells this despicable tale well and has assembled mortality data about what the Indian Removal Act of 1830 did to each tribe. There are excellent maps that display how removal was arranged for each tribe as well. I highly recommend this book. It is clearly written and packs a lot of information into a relatively brief book.

well done

good book

It helped me with my project but I wish it helped me a bit more and gave more detailed chapters.

In this brief work, The Long, Bitter Trail by Anthony F.C. Wallace provides a new perspective to

American Indian policy in the 19th century. Wallace is a well-known historian and a professor of history and anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. In this piece, Wallace argues against the claims of many historians who believe the Indians were either a threat or needed to be civilized. The focus of this book, as the author states, is "looking at both the land-hungry white Americans and their Native American victims" (13). Moreover, Wallace argues that white self-interest determined the fate of the Indians. The Long, Bitter Trail is a brief work that is well organized, but fails to be objective. Wallace divides his book into an introduction, four chapters, and an "aftermath (epilogue)." This book effectively organizes its chapters in chronological order with each chapter setting up the next. In his introduction, Wallace provides background about Andrew Jackson's life and politics with Indians. He argues that Andrew Jackson like many other politicians had his own financial interest in some of the land acquired from Native Americans. The first chapter examines a brief history of the Indians and their contacts with Europeans and American settlers. This chapter is effectively titled, "The Changing Worlds of the Native Americans." The world of the Native Americans in the southeast was changed for the worse as settlers spread diseases such as small pox. The northeast Indian relations started out peacefully because Native Indians and European settlers were interested in exchanging goods with one another, but interests changed when a series of wars between France and Britain occurred in colonial America, which placed the Indians in the middle of the conflict. These wars were fought over land and became the new interest of Europeans living in colonial America. The United States continued these wars over land with the Native Americans and eventually defeated the northeastern Indians. He concludes in this chapter that after the United States defeated the northeastern Indians, the United States turned its interest to the "more civilized" southeastern Indians, which leads to the next chapter that dealt with these tribes (28-29). The second chapter deals with Federal policy and the Indians. This chapter focuses on the reasons and financial interests of politicians who would determine the fate of the southeastern Indians. Wallace claims, "And now, when the policy of civilizing and assimilating the Indians was accused of being a failure, if not a mistake to begin with, the idea of colonizing the Indians west of the Mississippi gained favor" (39). Wallace believes that moving the Indians west of the Mississippi allowed the United States to acquire more territory by American settlers moving westward. The third and fourth chapter focuses on how the Indians were relocated off their land. The third chapter is properly titled "Removal Act" as the author examines the different policies that dealt with removing the Indians from their lands. In particular, this chapter focuses on Andrew Jackson's policies to relocate the Cherokees, Creaks, Chickasaws, and Choctaws west of the Mississippi. The author also discusses how Politicians and missionaries had different interests of the Indians. The eastern politicians

wanted the Indians land while the missionaries wanted to "Christianized" the Indians. Chapter four focuses on the Trail of Tears, which relocated the Cherokees west of the Mississippi. The author discussed how the Native Americans were forced off their lands by the Federal government through the use of the military. The aftermath chapter focuses on the legacy of the Indian Removal Act and its consequences. The author believes this had a dramatic effect on the lives of Native Americans. Indians continually became victims of the Federal government's policy. The Federal government's allotment system had negative effects on the Native Americans, which included poverty, reduced health, and poor education (119). The author concludes, "Two hundred years of national indecision about how the United States should deal with its Native Americans have not come to an end" (120). The Long, Bitter Trail does an effective job organizing its content through chronological order, which makes this book easily read and understood. Wallace is not objective in this book because he is portrays whites as always being the aggressors with the Indians always being the victims. There are other books that are more objective because they demonstrate that atrocities were committed on both sides. For example, The First Frontier by R.V. Coleman argues whites and Indians constantly broke treaties with one another. Wallace, on the other hand, did not deny any wrong doing of the Indians. Wallace should have expanded on some of his controversial arguments. For instance, Wallace argues, "It was not the 'savagery' of the Indians that land-hungry whites dreaded; it was their 'civilization'" (11). He fails to follow up on this claim and instead he writes about the consequences of the trans-Mississippi removal of the Southern Indians after this bold statement. The author also wrote that Jackson believed that "The Indians were savage, cruel, bloodthirsty, cannibalistic butchers of innocent white women and children, and should be driven into submission or extinction" (54). Yet Wallace neglects to explain this bold statement or state the source. After this, Wallace went on to write, "But Jackson's relationships with individual Indians could be warm, even intimate" (54). Wallace did not attempt to explain why this differed from Jackson's general belief of Indians. Wallace's failure to explain his controversial statements weakens his argument. Other historians such as Robert Remini would disagree with how Wallace portrayed Jackson. Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars by Robert Remini portrays Andrew Jackson as being friendlier and cooperative to Indians who wanted to preserve their culture. Remini also argues that Jackson enforced treaties between whites and the Indians with equal treatment to those who broke them. Wallace should have addressed such viewpoints from Robert Remini along with the other historians who he has criticized. Wallace's controversial statements express a lack of objectivity and leave these ideas open for debate because he failed to be convincing. Overall, The Long, Bitter Trail is well organized and well written, but this book has several weaknesses. Wallace's arguments are not

convincing enough because he does not provide enough evidence nor does he explain all of his statements. Although the author tries to cover an abundance of material in a short amount of pages, the author clearly states his arguments. This book would provide a good introduction and counter points for high school students who are being introduced to this topic, but for an expert, this book provides a lack of new information except criticism on other works on Indian policy.

An Indian activist or just an amateur historian, everyone should read this book. Though short, it gives an excellent narrative of the removal of Indians and their trauma from the East by the American government. This book is amazingly well written and is for both students (like myself who read it in a class) or for casual readers. Please consider this book to find out more about the emerging stories of what really happened to Native Americans.

Few events in American history are as shameful as the removal of the Indians from the American Southeast in the 1830s. Despite prior treaties and remarkable success in assimilating American culture, the tribes in the region - Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles - were driven west by the voracious demand of Americans for land. In this book, Anthony Wallace provides a survey of the development of federal policy towards the tribes in the early 19th century and its impact upon them. For much of the early 19th century, Indian policy was mired in a conflict between people advocating Indian "reform" (who saw Indians as capable of being taught the ways of white civilization) and proponents of a policy of removing Indians from land slated for settlement. The election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency in 1828 decided this conflict. A westerner with a reputation as an Indian fighter, Jackson sided with removal advocates, endorsing a bill that made removal to lands west of the Mississippi River federal policy. Though supporters of removal argued that the policy was necessary given the unredeemable savagery of the Indians, as Wallace points out, the success of the tribes in the region undermined this justification. More dependent on agriculture than other tribes, the Indians of the Southeast had an easier time adapting to American cultural standards than their counterparts in other regions, with some tribal members even owning slaves. This didn't save them from removal however, and the Cherokees discovered just how hollow the promise of assimilation was when Jackson ignored a Supreme Court ruling that rejected Georgia's claim of state sovereignty over the Indians, thus depriving the tribes of the only hope of protection from expulsion. The result was the "Trail of Tears," the forced migration to Indian Territory that resulted in the deaths of thousands of Indians. Wallace provides a summary of Jackson's Indian policy that is both balanced and readable. His coverage of white attitudes, which runs across the

spectrum from the hostility of settlers to the sympathy of white missionaries, is refreshingly nuanced. His coverage of the Indians is equally good, and he pulls no punches in demonstrating the extent to which the tribal leadership was complicit in removal. Readers seeking to learn more about the "Trail of Tears" and the policies that brought it about would do well to start with this book.

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