

United States Indian Removal Policy

Primary Documents

Document 1

Source: "Amicable Settlement of Limits with the State of Georgia" agreement between the United States Congress and the Georgia State Legislature (1802)

"In exchange for Georgia's cession of claims to certain western lands. The United States shall, at their own expense, obtain for the use of Georgia, as early as can be peaceably obtained on reasonable terms, the Indian title to all the other lands within the State of Georgia".

Document 2

Source: General Andrew Jackson, treaty negotiator, to President James Monroe (March 4, 1817).

"I have long viewed treaties with the Indians an absurdity not to be reconciled to the principles of our government. The Indians are the subjects of the United States, inhabiting its territory and acknowledging its sovereignty, then is it not absurd for the sovereign to negotiate by treaty with the subject?"

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Document 3

Source: President James Monroe, "Plan for Removing the Several Indian Tribes West of the Mississippi River"—Communication to the Senate (January 27, 1825)

"I am deeply impressed with the opinion that the removal of the Indian tribes from the land which they now occupy is of a very high importance to our Union, and may be accomplished on conditions and in a manner to promote the interests and happiness of those tribes....For the removal of the tribes within the limits of the state of Georgia, the motive has been peculiarly strong, rising from the compact with that State, whereby the United States are bound to extinguish the Indian title to the lands within it, whenever it may be done peaceably & on reasonable conditions".

Document 4

Source: President Andrew Jackson, First Annual Message to Congress (December 18, 1829)

"It has long been the policy of the government to introduce among them the arts of civilization, in the hopes of gradually reclaiming them from a wandering life. This policy has been, however, coupled with another wholly incompatible with its success. Professing a desire to civilize & settle them, we have at the same time lost no opportunity to purchase their lands and thrust them farther into the wilderness....A portion, however, of the Southern tribes, having mingled much with the whites and made some progress in the arts of a civilized life, have lately attempted to erect an independent government within the limits of Georgia & Alabama....I informed the Indians inhabiting parts of Georgia and Alabama that their attempt to establish an independent government would not be countenanced by the Executive of the United States, and advised them to emigrate beyond the Mississippi, or submit to the laws of those states".