*This is what I remember. It is the bits and pieces of the memories of a young boy; full of feelings and observations, but without complete comprehension. The boy is my great-great-grandfather, Samuel Cloud. The memory is from his vantage point, so I will share it with you in the same way. Source:* [*http://www.angelfire.com/ny4/HOMEPAGE/writings/tearsmemory.html*](http://www.angelfire.com/ny4/HOMEPAGE/writings/tearsmemory.html)

It is Spring. The leaves are on the trees. I am playing with my friends when white men in uniforms ride up to our home. My mother calls me. I can tell by her voice that something is wrong. Some of the men ride off. My mother tells me to gather my things, but the men don’t allow us time to get anything. They enter our home and begin knocking over pottery and looking into everything. My mother and I are taken by several men to where their horses are and are held there at gun point. The men who rode off return with my father, Elijah. They have taken his rifle and he is walking towards us.

I can feel his anger and frustration. There is nothing he can do. From my mother I feel fear. I am filled with fear, too. What is going on? I was just playing, but now my family and my friend’s families are gathered together and told to walk at the point of a bayonet.

We walk a long ways. My mother does not let me get far from her. My father is walking by the other men, talking in low, angry tones. The soldiers look weary, as though they’d rather be anywhere else but here.

They lead us to a stockade. They herd us into this pen like we are cattle. No one was given time to gather any possessions. The nights are still cold in the mountains and we do not have enough blankets to go around. My mother holds me at night to keep me warm. That is the only time I feel safe. I feel her pull me to her tightly. I feel her warm breath in my hair. I feel her softness as I fall asleep at night. As the days pass, more and more of our people are herded into the stockade. I see other members of my clan. We children try to play, but the elders around us are anxious and we do not know what to think. I often sit and watch the others around me. I observe the guards. I try not to think much about my hunger. I am cold.

Several months have passed and still we are in the stockades. My father looks tired. He talks with the other men, but no one seems to know what to do or what is going to happen. We hear that white men have moved into our homes and are farming our fields. What will happen to us? We are to march west to join the Western Cherokees. I don’t want to leave these mountains.

My mother, my aunts and uncles take me aside one day. “Your father died last night,” they tell me. My mother and my father’s clan members are crying, but I do not understand what this means. I saw him yesterday. He was sick, but still alive. It doesn’t seem real. Nothing seems real. I don’t know what any of this means. It seems like yesterday, I was playing with my friends.

I hear myself call her name, softly, then louder. She does not answer. My aunt and uncle come over to see what is wrong. My aunt looks at my mother. My uncle pulls me from her. My aunt begins to wail. I will never forget that wail. I did not understand when my father died. My mother’s death I do not understand, but I suddenly know that I am alone. My clan will take care of me, but I will be forever denied her warmth, the soft fingers in my hair, her gentle breath as we slept. I am alone. I want to cry. I want to scream in rage. I can do nothing.

We bury her in a shallow grave by the road. I will never forget that lonesome hill of stone that is her final bed, as it fades from my sight. I tread softly by my uncle, my hand in his. I walk with my head turned, watching that small hill as it fades from my sight. The soldiers make us continue walking. My uncle talks to me, trying to comfort me. I walk in loneliness.

I know what it is to hate. I hate those white soldiers who took us from our home. I hate the soldiers who make us keep walking through the snow and ice toward this new home that none of us ever wanted. I hate the people who killed my father and mother.

I hate the white people who lined the roads in their woolen clothes that kept them warm, watching us pass. None of those white people are here to say they are sorry that I am alone. None of them care about me or my people. All they ever saw was the color of our skin. All I see is the color of theirs and I hate them. The forced removal of the Cherokee in 1838-39 from their homelands in the east to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) is known as the “Trail of Tears” or “The Trail Where They Cried”.