



# Toward the Setting Sun: John Ross, the Cherokees and the Trail of Tears

*Brian Hicks*

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## **Toward the Setting Sun: John Ross, the Cherokees and the Trail of Tears** Brian Hicks

*Toward the Setting Sun* chronicles one of the most significant but least explored periods in American history, recounting the little known story of the first white man to champion the voiceless Native American cause.

Son of a Scottish trader and a quarter-Cherokee woman, Ross was educated in white schools and was only one-eighth Indian by blood. But as Cherokee chief in the mid-nineteenth century, he would guide the tribe through its most turbulent period. The Cherokees' plight lay at the epicenter of nearly all the key issues facing a young America: western expansion, states' rights, judicial power, and racial discrimination. Clashes between Ross and President Andrew Jackson raged from battlefields and meeting houses to the White House and Supreme Court. As whites settled illegally on the Nation's land, the chief steadfastly refused to sign a removal treaty. Only when a group of renegade Cherokees betrayed their chief and negotiated an agreement with Jackson's men was he forced to begin his journey west. In one of America's great tragedies, thousands died during the Cherokees' migration on the Trail of Tears.

*Toward the Setting Sun* retells the story of expansionism from the native perspective, and takes a critical look at the well-rehearsed

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