

Supplemental File 1. Samples of student work

Nunna-daul-Tsuny (Trail Where They Cried)

100 Union St. Nashville, TN 37201

It was a cold rainy Monday in 1838 when Nashvillians gathered in the public square. As they looked around, they saw hundreds of Cherokees, including pregnant women, young children, and elderly, as well as members of wealthy land and slave-owning families, each waiting their turn to cross the bridge and leave their ancestral lands behind. These were among the 17,000 Cherokee dispossessed of their land and sovereignty, and forced to relocate from Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina and Alabama to Oklahoma. An estimated 4,000 Cherokees lost their lives on Nunna-daul-Tsuny (Trail Where They Cried).

In the 1700s, European settlers began encroaching on lands inhabited by indigenous people in the Tennessee region. Although a number of tribes had ties to the region, the Cherokees and the Chickasaws were the only tribes recognized by the U.S. government as landowners within the future state boundaries. Indeed, when the state entered the Union in 1796, these two tribes claimed nearly 75% of the territory of Tennessee. In the first years of Andrew Jackson's presidency, settlers discovered gold in Monroe County, and prospectors flooded the region, disregarding treaties recognizing indigenous claims to the land. The U.S. government incited violence against indigenous people and negotiated a series of new treaties that dramatically reduced—and ultimately erased—any Cherokee land claims in the state. In 1830, President Andrew Jackson pushed Congress to pass the Indian Removal Act, which led to the forceful removal of five Native American tribes—the Cherokee, Choctaws, Creek, Chickasaws, and Seminoles—from their land in southern states. This removal opened up thousands of square miles of land to settlers, a significant portion of which had been under cultivation by Cherokee families.

After being temporarily held in stockades, the U.S. military split the Cherokees into detachments of approximately 1,000 people and forced tribal members to make a grueling 1000-mile journey to Oklahoma by foot. These groups traversed by three routes; the northernmost route passed through Nashville. On October 22, 1838, the second detachment assembled in Nashville's Public Square, and many Nashville residents gathered to bear witness. Two days later, the Nashville Whig wrote, "Barefooted and badly clad, they cannot all hope to withstand the fatigues of travel and the inclemency of the season." Some local residents, including church elders and Nashville's women of charity, offered assistance. Many others, perhaps overwhelmed by the magnitude of need, stood by and did nothing.

It was only in 2013 that the exact location of the trail's Cumberland crossing was discovered. Through archival research and scouring the Cumberland River area, Patrick

Cummins, President of the Native History Association, and fellow indigenous historian Toye Heape discovered a partial bridge foundation on the Western bank of the river. The National Park Service validated this finding as the first bridge to cross the Cumberland River, and the only documented surviving bridge structure related to Nunna-daul-Tsuny. The Trail of Tears National Historic Trail continues across the river, through northeast Nashville, and it eventually parallels Interstate-24 as it approaches Kentucky. The Cherokees who survived the journey emerged to build a unified Nation in Oklahoma. Today, they are 190,000 tribal members strong.

Today, through a partnership with the National Park Service and local indigenous groups, visitors can travel the route which the Cherokees journeyed on The Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. To honor those that journeyed the Trail, walk north through Nashville's public square, down the stairs to the Gay Street Connector, where you can view the top of the original abutment. As you overlook the Cumberland River, listen for the whisper in the rustling trees and the river below reminding us of those who were forced to leave their homes, those who lost their lives along the way, and those that survived. The Tennessee Department of Transportation plans to install a viewing platform and interpretive signs in the future.

Dawn Harris is a graduate of Vanderbilt University's Community Development and Action program. Patrick Cummins is the President of the Native History Association.

The Original Tennessee State Penitentiary

100 Bomar Blvd, Nashville, TN 37209

One of the most architecturally striking buildings in Nashville is also the site of one of the most inhumane prisons in American history. Located on the 1,200-acre Cockrill Bend of the Cumberland River, the prison was primarily built by incarcerated men from nearby penitentiaries. Despite having an initial capacity of 800, when the fortress-like prison opened in February 1898, 1,403 inmates were admitted on the first day. Immediately, the prison suffered from massive overcrowding and quickly devolved into atrocious living conditions plagued by medical, sanitation, and safety hazards. The surpassed capacity was not matched with increased staffing, and the supervision and protection of the inmates suffered.

In 1902, a band of prisoners blew up the right wing of Cell Block D, killing one inmate and allowing two others to escape. Another incident involved an 18-hour seize of the segregated white wing. A mass escape occurred in 1938, and later a fire destroyed the dining hall. Major riots broke out in 1975 and 1985. As threats, attacks, riots, and escapes became a daily norm, the prison acquired a reputation for negligence and corruption. Inmate health was further compromised by forced labor, initially on the large farm surrounding the then-rural prison, and later, by making durable goods. It was not uncommon for inmates to work 16-hour days, laboring in high heat with no

water, safety gear, or breaks, and to be paid in pennies. In 1990, the death toll of the Tennessee State Penitentiary (excluding those whose lives ended by execution) was the highest of any prison in the country.

In 1983, Scotty Grubbs and four other inmates filed a lawsuit contesting the inhumane living conditions. They claimed that “the conditions were so bad as to guarantee inevitable serious physical and psychological deterioration.” Ultimately, the United States District Court agreed, ruling the Tennessee State Penitentiary unfit for human habitation. The prison closed, never to hold prisoners again. For many, the memories of pain and suffering live on, and the future of the infamous building remains uncertain. While some would like to see those memories buried and the building demolished, others have mobilized a robust grassroots movement to preserve the building and the prison history. In an era of increased concern over the privatization of prisons, the building stands as a stark reminder of the inhumanity so often associated with incarceration, whether publicly or privately operated.

The building is closed to the public, though visitors can still view the Gothic-style facility from the road, and glimpses of the buildings dilapidated interior can be seen in movies such as *The Green Mile* (1999), *The Last Castle* (2001), *Ernest Goes to Jail* (1990), and *Marie* (1995).

Samantha Forcum is a graduate of Vanderbilt University’s Community Development and Action program, and Frank Lee is a historian and professor at Middle Tennessee State University. The authors were assisted by a former inmate, who wishes to remain anonymous.

John Seigenthaler Pedestrian Bridge

S. 1st St., near Victory Ave, Nashville, TN 37213

Named after the esteemed Nashville journalist, writer, and outspoken proponent of First Amendment rights, the John Seigenthaler Pedestrian Bridge is one of Nashville’s most popular attractions. Spanning a portion of the Cumberland River, the bridge connects East Nashville to the city center, and is heavily used by residents who commute daily by foot or bike, and by those seeking easy access to amenities on both sides of the river. Given its visibility from dozens of Nashville buildings and passing cars, the bridge is a frequently used route for Nashville’s protests.

On April 5, 2014, the bridge carried nearly 500 immigrant families, activists, and allies across the Cumberland River for the “Two Million Too Many” march. The march, organized by the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) and led by undocumented youth activists, was part of a national day of action. Organizers sought to pressure the Obama administration to stop deportations, to end the disastrous Secure Communities program that facilitated cooperation between local jails

and federal immigration enforcement agents to carry out deportations, and to expand the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to provide deportation relief to all 11 million undocumented immigrants, not just Dreamers. The march was held to draw attention to the shameful milestone the Obama administration had just reached: deporting two million people, more than all previous presidents combined.

The march started near Nissan Stadium. The atmosphere was joyful and defiant as musicians played protest songs and activists led chants through megaphones. Immigrant families held giant banners that read "OBAMA DEPORTS PARENTS" and "OBAMA: DEPORTER IN CHIEF." Children held colorful hearts that read, "Don't deport my mom," and "Keep families together." Undocumented youth carrying a banner that read "Two Million Too Many" led the march, and hundreds of protestors followed them across Seigenthaler Bridge towards the city center.

As the marchers entered downtown, some tourists and people working initially stared, perplexed. But then Latinos working on the rooftop of Joe's Crab Shack began to wave, shout, and cheer for the marchers, and street performers joined in, singing and dancing with children. The march culminated in a press conference at Public Square Park, where organizers spoke of the harmful effects that deportations had on their families and community, the movement's demands of the Obama administration, and pledged to keep fighting. The event was widely publicized by news outlets, where one youth activist explained, "[President Obama] gave deferred action to me ... He has the power to give deferred action to my parents, too."

The voices of the hundreds of protesters in Nashville joined thousands more across the country, and within a few months of the Nashville march, President Obama signaled that he would use his executive authority to take action on immigration. Finally, in November of 2014, the president revealed his much-anticipated executive order. While the ultimate order fell short of activist's demands, it was a major victory for the immigrant rights movement. Unfortunately, the State of Tennessee joined 25 other states and sued the administration to block the program from going into effect. The order stalled in court, ultimately leading to a deadlock in the Supreme Court, before President Donald Trump formally rescinded the order in June 2017.

The "Two Million Too Many" march was part of an important shift in the immigrant rights movement across the country. The immigrant rights movement and the fight to stop deportations in Nashville has continued to grow in the face of mass deportations under the current administration.

Stephanie Teatro is co-director of TIRRC, Jazmin Ramirez is a youth organizer with TIRRC. Jewlz Davis is a graduate of Vanderbilt University's Community Development and Action program.