

TRAIL OF TEARS



A Commission for Ann and Mike White

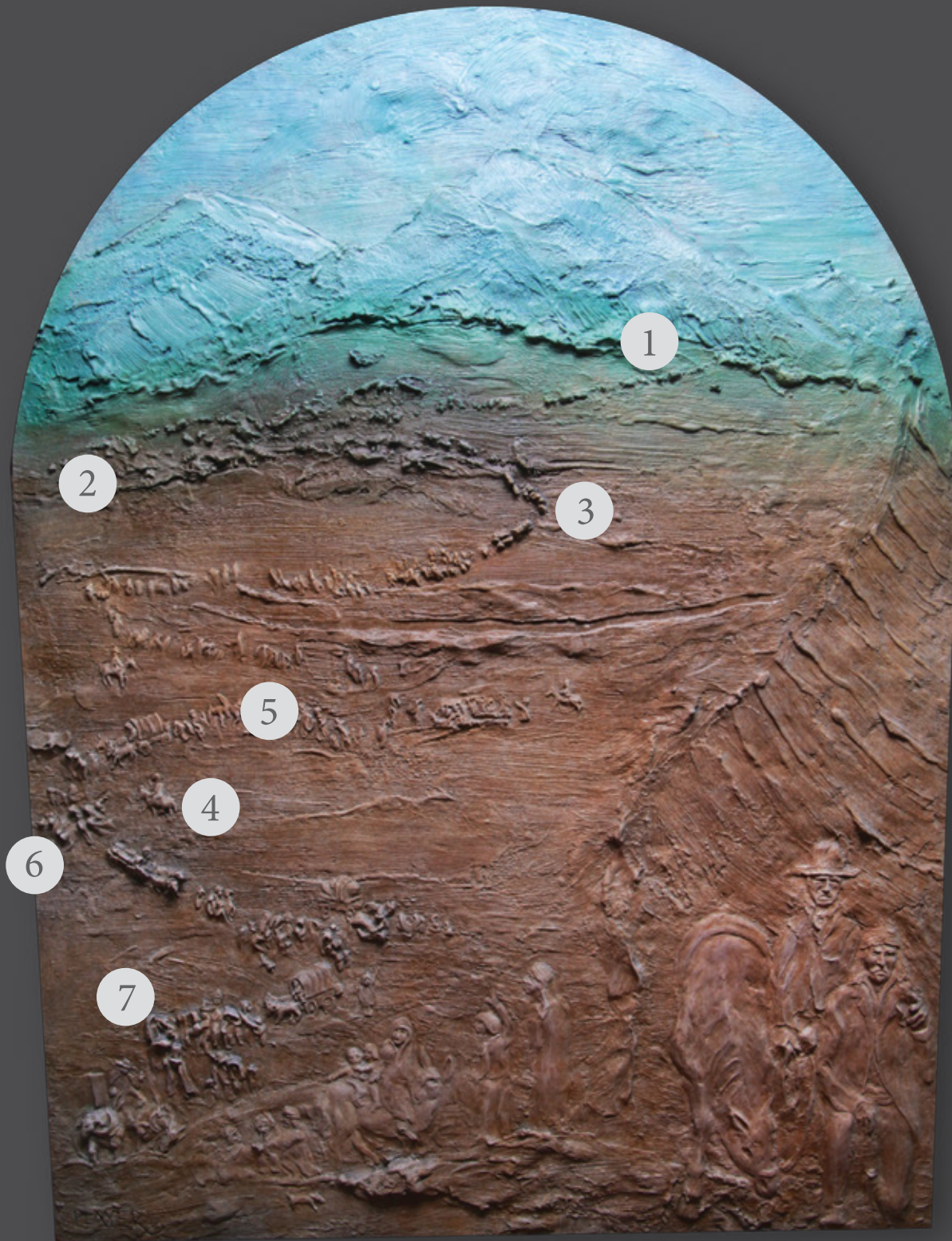


This was the original concept sketch shown to Mike White. Notice the beginning of suggested colors for the patina shown on the right margin.



The name "Trail of Tears" came from the brutal removal of the Cherokee Nation from homes in the mountains of the Blue Ridge and Great Smokies into the poor lands of Oklahoma, around Tulsa. The year was 1838. The President, Andrew Jackson. More than 13,000 Indians, many women and children, made the hard crossing which was nearly 1,000 miles over a period of three and a half months. Groups of 1,000 were sent on different trails. Many died, estimates up to 4,000.

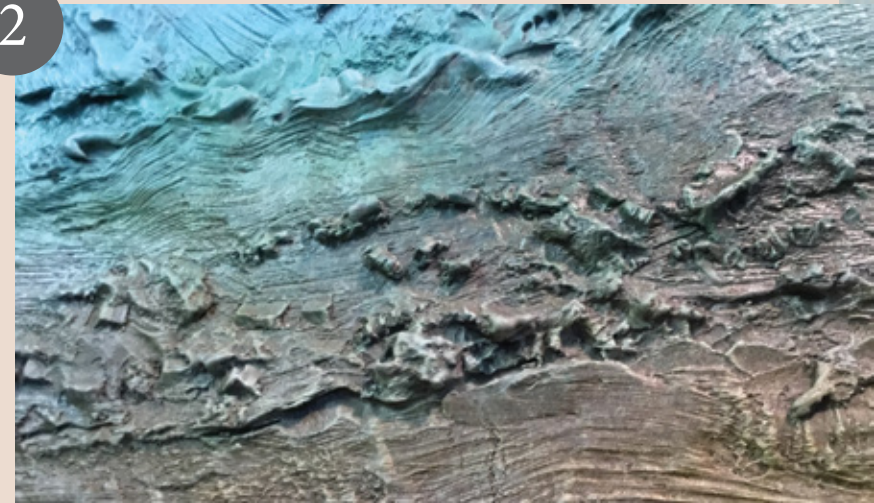
The purpose of this commission is to tell their story in bronze.



1

The Cherokee Nation established substantial farms and dwelling houses. The colors of this bronze reflect the transition from the lush blues and greens of the Great Smokies and Blue Ridge mountains, to the sandy sameness of the reservation in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

2



Scouts would select campsites for the night, usually along streams or rivers. Shown here is such a site, with an array of wagons, tents, and other make-shift shelters.

3



The most common method of travel was on foot. There was an assortment of wagons, some provided by the government at great expense (sound familiar?) and there were mules, horses, oxen, and four dogs (can you find them?)

4



This particular group was accompanied by horse soldiers. It may have been the only one so policed. All groups were controlled by Cherokee elders. This group was patrolled because of the high number of deserters.

6



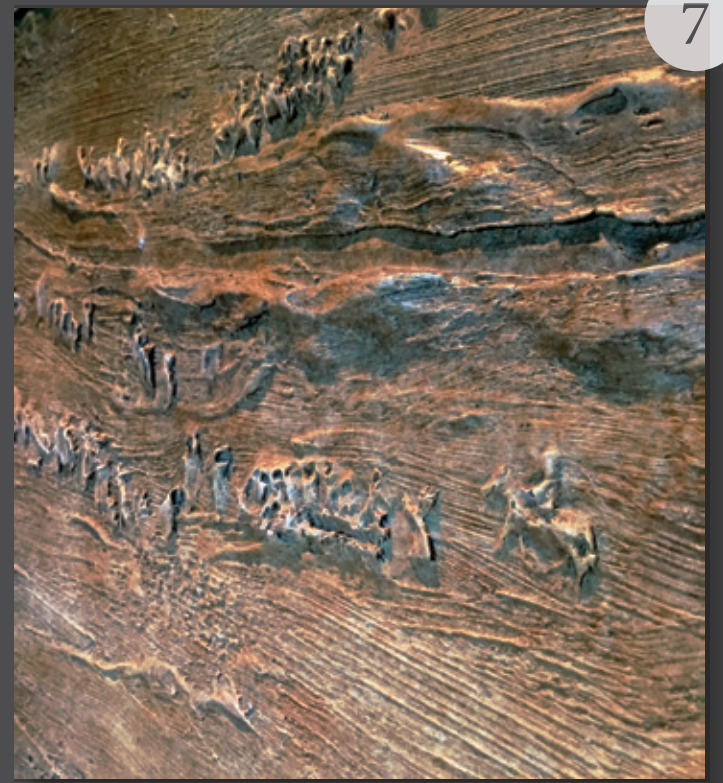
The overland trek was a killer. An older woman has fallen and is being helped by fellow travelers.

5

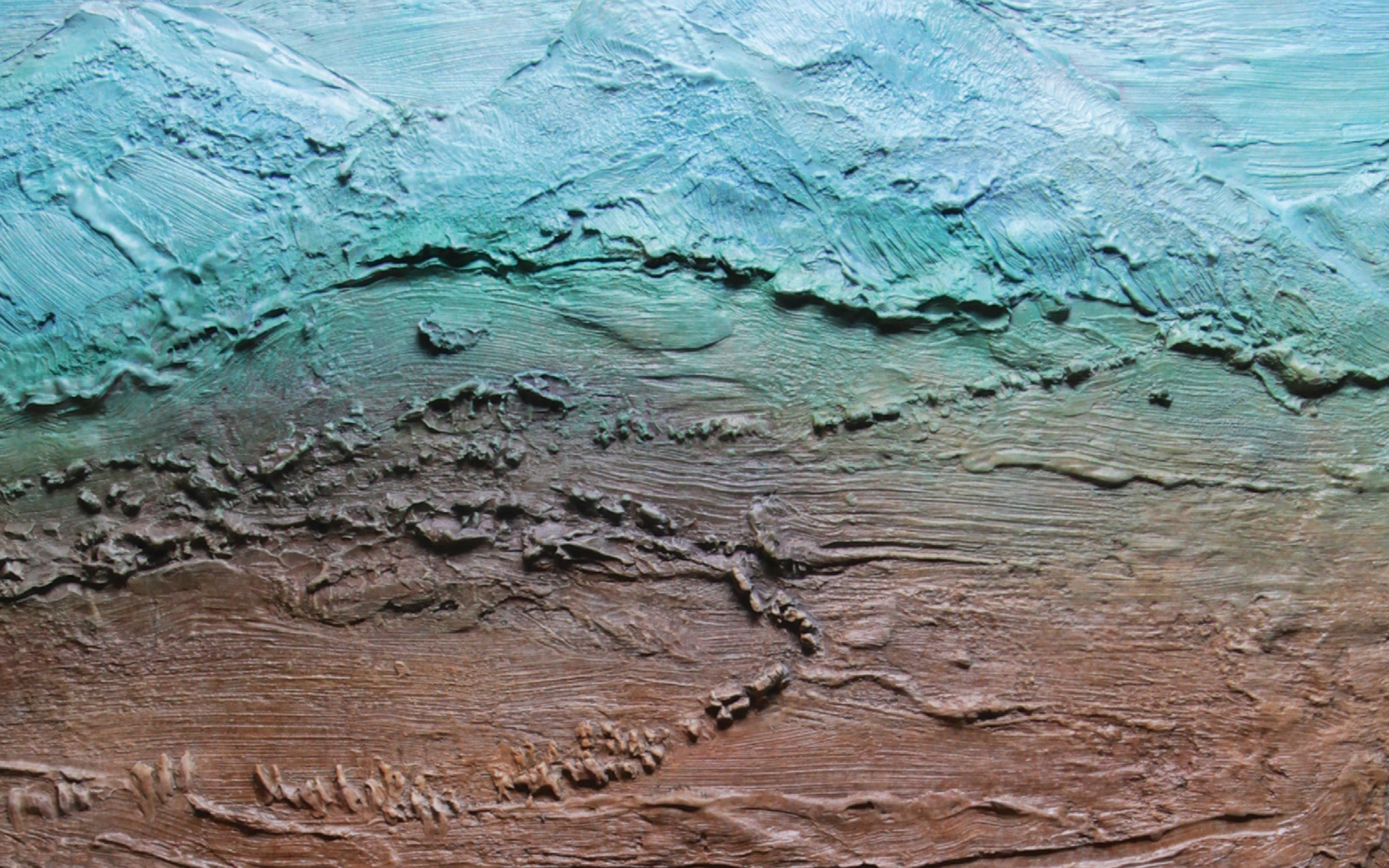


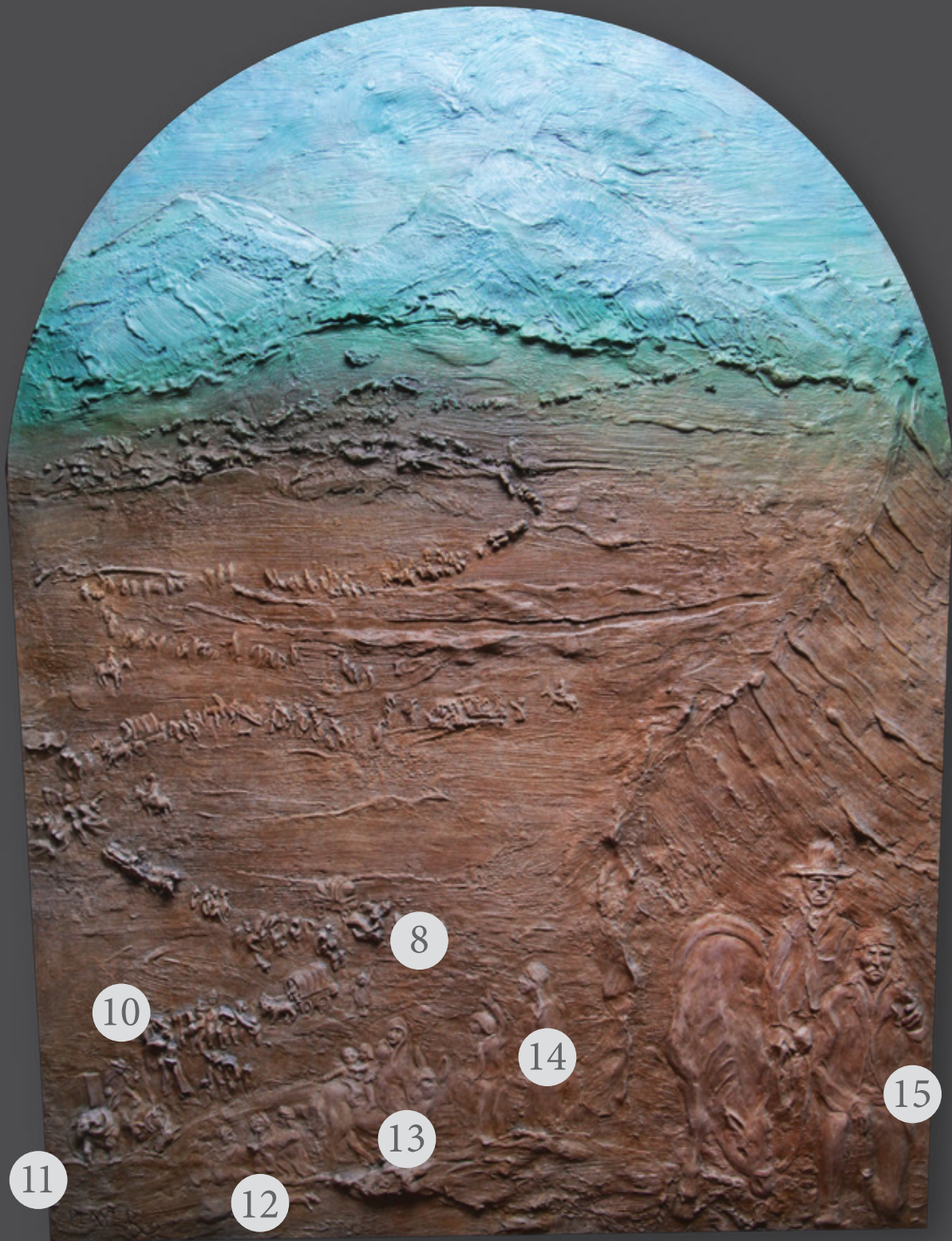
Also shown is an Indian woman hauling family possessions on a makeshift sled.

7



On the plains, there is a funeral. It was painful for the Cherokee to leave their loved ones in a grave in a foreign land. Usually the burial sites were marked by a simple flag. There is a movement underway to mark these burial sites properly.





8

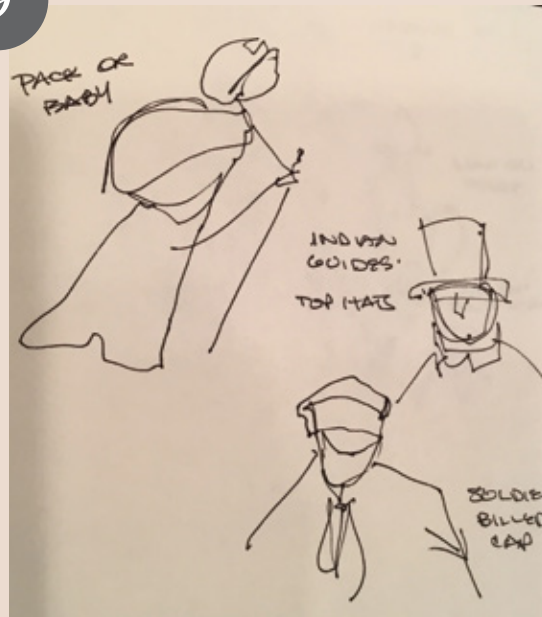
Not immune from death were the animals. Shown here is a downed horse with its master trying in vain to revive it.

Travelers were in all sorts of wear and headgear. I initially sketched the different possibilities of attire. This group certainly illustrates the point.

10



9



11

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11



True story. A family carried its prized upright piano the 1,000 miles to Oklahoma. Seen here, the wagon carrying the piano is ascending a rise thanks to the fervor of a mule skinner and his horses.

14



Mother and son are seen waving to a young girl. Is it a daughter who has become separated?

12



A group of three elders stop for a smoke and a chat. Probably asking, "What are we doing here?"

15



Most groups were led by a Cherokee elder who was the trail boss. Here he is giving instructions to his scout about the journey ahead.

13



Grandma sits astride the burro tending her grandchildren. Of course, there is the ever-present dog.

ABOUT THE SCULPTOR



Since his early years growing up in a small South Carolina town, Tom Player had a passion for art.

He studied with Martin Dawe at CherryLion Studio in Atlanta and in Italy under Robert Bodem Director of Sculpture at the Florence Academy of Art. He has worked with well known sculptors Kathleen Friedenber, Carter Jones, John Sisko, Sandy Scott, Eugene Daub, Janice Mauro, Alicia Ponzio and Sergey Eylanbekov.

Player has exhibited works at the Bascom Art Center in Highlands, N.C, most recently in American Art Today: Figures, and in the Instructors Exhibit there. He has enjoyed a number of one-man shows.

An elected Fellow in the Hambidge Artist Residency Program, he won the Kathryn Thayer Hobson Memorial Award(2013) and the Leila

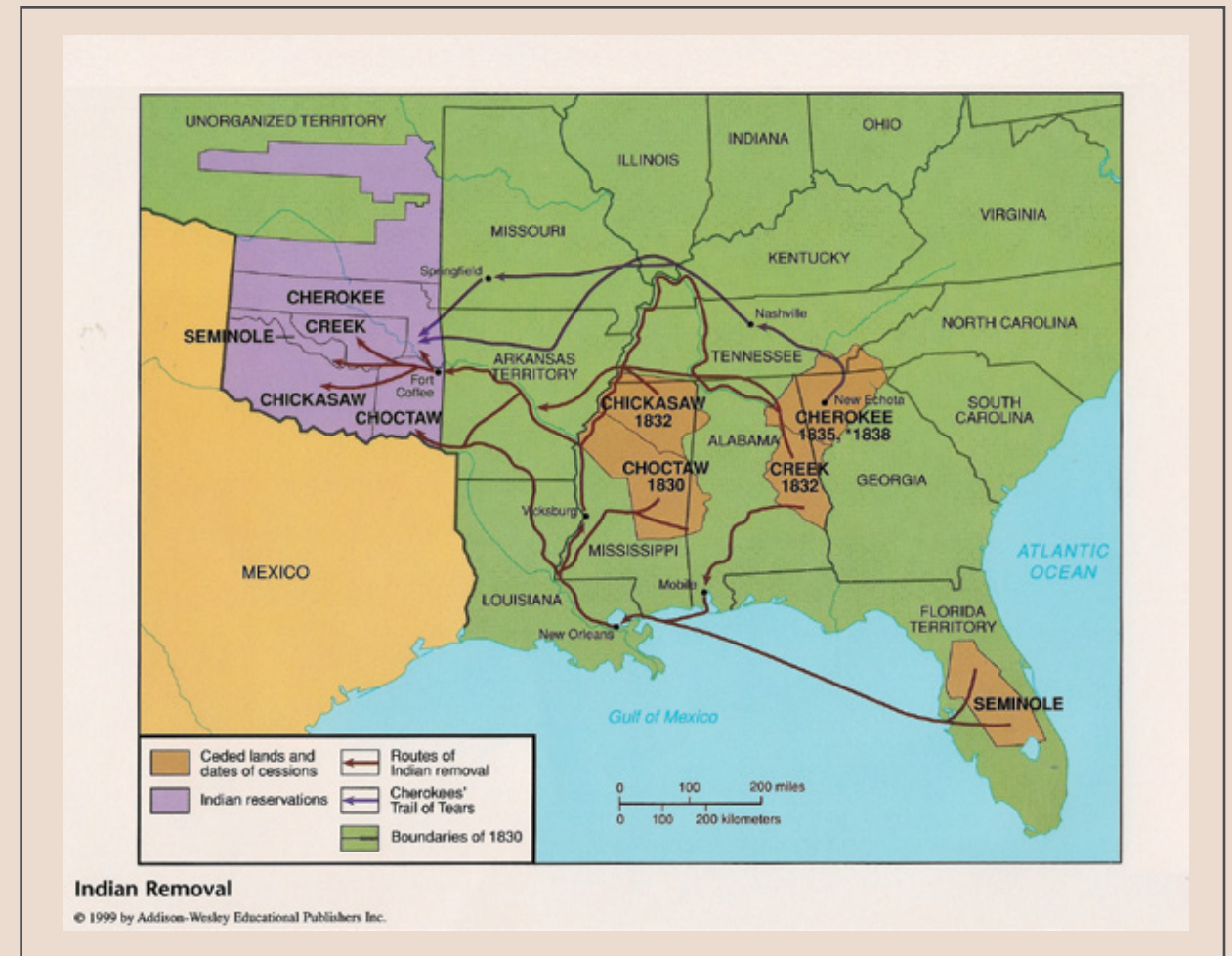
Gardin Sawyer Memorial Award(2015) given by the American Artists Professional League at the Salmagundi Club, is a member of the Portrait Society of America, American Medallion Sculpture Association, and is an associate member of the National Sculpture Society, where his works have been shown.

He has public works displayed in the Armor Museum, Ft. Benning, GA; Furman University, Atlanta Financial Center and, Grace Episcopal Cathedral, Charleston, S.C.

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TRAIL OF TEARS MAP



My appreciation is extended to Dr. Duane H. King, Director, Helmerich Center, Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for his invaluable advice and insight. Many think Dr. King is the foremost authority on the "Trail of Tears."

