



The Exile

*"Let the nation in its glory
Bow with Shame before the story
Of the hero it has ruined and the evil it has done."*

Harper's New Monthly 1879



Legend

1877 Conflict

- Non Treaty Nez Perce Route
- United States Army Route

Exile

- By wagon, horseback, flatboat, and foot
- Railroad
- Some Nez Perce return routes to United States

Locations

- City
- Town
- ⊠ Fort
- ▲ Native American Camp
- Reservation



Chief Joseph accompanied his people into exile, first in the unhealthy lowlands of Kansas and later in the windswept prairies of Indian Territory in what is now Oklahoma. The exiled group included 79 men, 178 women, and 174 children.

The group was initially transported to Fort Keogh in the Montana Territory, then on to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where they spent a miserable winter in squalid conditions. In the spring they were moved to Baxter Springs, the Quapaw Agency and finally the Ponca Agency in Oklahoma. During this time of continued death and deprivation, Joseph took every opportunity to publicize their plight to advance their return to the beloved homeland.

Finally in 1885 Joseph's persistence, coupled with a sympathetic press, strong public support and pressure from the Presbyterian Church, convinced the government to allow the remaining 268 survivors to return to the Northwest. Of that group, 118 Nez Perce went to the reservation at Lapwai. Chief Joseph and others who would not renounce their traditional religious beliefs were sent to the Colville reservation near Nespelem, Washington. The tribe was never allowed to reclaim its Wallowa homeland. Chief Joseph, the most famous of the Nez Perce leaders, died and was buried in Nespelem in 1904.

The Nez Perce removal and exile remains one of the darkest chapters in American history. The 1800 mile journey of 800 brave men, women and children wanting to live and believe as they chose stands as one of the most courageous stories in our nation's past.

