

The Trail of Tears

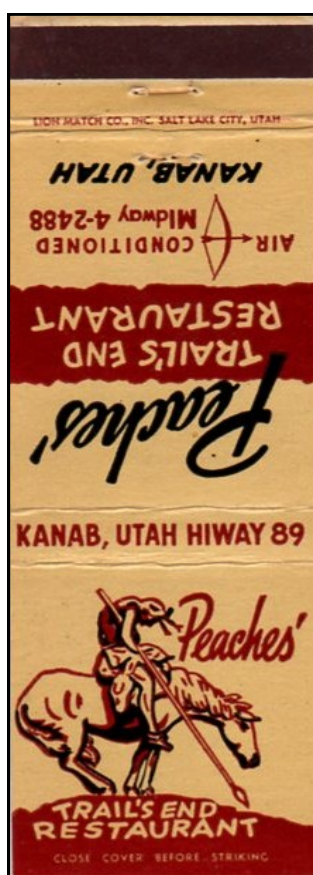
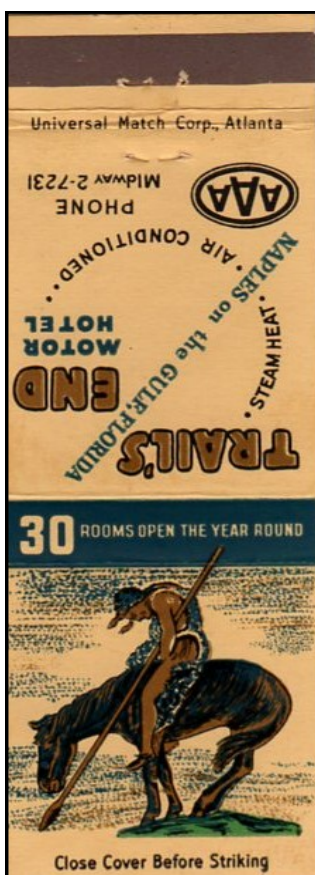


Indian collectors know that their collection of Indian covers and boxes has a lot to offer...variety, availability, great art work on the older covers, etc., but *[you knew this was coming, didn't you?]* there's also so much history involved in this particular category; it's almost as if each Indian on each cover has a story to tell...and in many cases, they do.

June marks the 181st anniversary of the beginning of the Trail of Tears, generally known as the forced removal of members of the Cherokee Nation from the Eastern United States to Oklahoma. But, members of other groups,

including the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole, were also forced to move to Oklahoma around the same time (1831 was the first such move)

The policy of removing Indians from their lands began early in the 19th century and was codified in the Indian Removal Act of 1830. European settlers and westward immigrants increased the pressure on the federal government to open up additional lands...but Indians occupied these lands. Many settlers and politicians saw Indian customs as incompatible with "civilization," and this was used as a justification for their removal.



In Autumn of 1838, about 18,000 Cherokees of Georgia were forcibly rounded up by the U.S. Army. They were forced to travel through Tennessee and Kentucky, across the Ohio and Missouri rivers, and into Indian Territory west of the Mississippi River. This territory eventually made up the land which became known as Oklahoma. Winter snows, summer heat, and drought took their toll. About 4,000 Cherokee died along the way from starvation, exposure, and disease. The Indians called this long march "The Trail of Tears."

Not one of the prettier tales of American history, but one that shouldn't be forgotten.