

The Scottish “Trail of Tears”

Last issue I wrote of John Ross Cherokee Chief and The Cherokee “*Trail of Tears*”. It is not known by many but there is a Scottish “*Trail of Tears*”, it was called the Battle of Dunbar.

On September 1, 1650 two armies faced each other at Dunbar. On the Scottish side they were led by Scottish General David Leslie who led 23,000 brave Scotsman against the English General Oliver Cromwell and his army of 16,000 men.

Everyone knows the outcome of the battle, the English won the day and Cromwell had 10,000 Scottish prisoners. The Scots had 3,000 killed, the English had less killed. The “*Trail of Tears*” is what happened after the battle.

Cromwell left about 5,000 Scots on the field stating that they were no longer a threat owing to their wounds and they would most likely die anyway. The remaining 5,000 were forced marched to England, many died of starvation, illness, brutal treatment or exhaustion. On September 11, 1650 the prisoners reached Durham Cathedral, of the 5,000 only roughly half reached England alive.

Durham Cathedral offered protection from the elements but the captors provided little food or fuel for warmth. By the end of October, cold, lack of food, disease and brutal treatment led to the death of another 1,600 Scots soldiers. These poor souls were buried in a ditch that ran northward from the Cathedral. This ditch was rediscovered by workmen in 1946. More Scottish soldiers died after the Battle of Dunbar than died during it.

The remaining Scottish soldiers were shipped to the English colonies in the New World or to the Caribbean where they were sold on the block as “slaves”. This was truly a “*Trail of Tears*.”

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