



Since the arrival of Columbus and the Europeans, the lifestyles, the cultures, the very existence, of Cherokee people have been under siege.

Today Cherokees retain much of their traditional culture and many of their beliefs, but Cherokee peoples live much as Americans do everywhere; they are represented in all professions and trades. The people have long excelled on the athletic field and the battlefield. Women are a force in government and education as well as in maintaining the cultural and spiritual life of the community and the home. Cherokee men and women have distinguished themselves in the arts and sciences, in the classroom and the courtroom.

One such Cherokee was Mary Golda Ross, the great-great granddaughter of Chief John Ross, who led the Cherokee Nation during the Trail of Tears, the tribe's forced removal from its homelands in the southeastern U.S. She worked as a teacher in Oklahoma before earning a master's degree from Colorado State College of Education. Her love of science eventually led her to the Lockheed Missiles and Space Company, a unit of the company now known as Lockheed Martin. According to Oklahoma Today, she wasn't just the first Native engineer there, she was the only woman on a team that developed important aircraft and spacecraft for the federal government.

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