

## Alabama John Cherokee

*This is a halyard shanty. The rhythm and lyrical content indicate that slaves in the West Indies or in the Gulf of Mexico states originally sang it. When John Cherokee is referred to as an "Indian man", it means he was from the West Indies. Sailors would have learned the song from freed slaves who joined the ship's crew or from waterfront workers in the Southern states. Whilst it originates from slavery it also echoes the brutal treatment that crew might face at the hands of the bosun and his mates. Roud 4693.*

John Cherokee was an Indian man

*Alabama John Cherokee*

He run away every time he can

*Alabama John Cherokee, way, hey, yah, <hunh>*

*Alabama John Cherokee, way, hey, yah, <hunh>*

*Alabama John Cherokee †*

They put him aboard a Yankee ship

Again he gave the boss the slip

They catch him again and chain him tight

And starve him many a day and night

<Quiet>

Nothing to drink and nothin' to eat

He just fall dead at the boss's feet

<Normal volume>

They buried him by the old gate post

The very same day you can see his ghost