

FEDERAL ASCENDANCY IN INDIAN TERRITORY, 1862-1863

By

BARNEY KING NEAL, JR.

Bachelor of Arts

Oklahoma State University

Stillwater, Oklahoma

1950

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of
the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
May, 1966

OKLAHOMA
STATE UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

JUN 10 1968

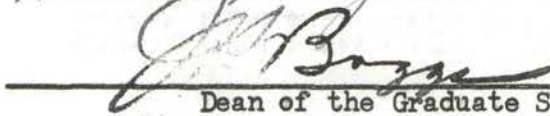
FEDERAL ASCENDANCY IN INDIAN TERRITORY, 1862-1863

Thesis Approved:



Thesis Adviser





Dean of the Graduate School

610476

PREFACE

This thesis is an attempt to present a detailed and critical chronological account of Civil War events in the Indian Territory during the eighteen month period which began on January 1, 1862. This period has never been given adequate research treatment; in fact, the entire history of the Indian Territory during the war years has been covered only briefly and superficially. This is most regrettable for two reasons. First, the significant military operations and events in the territory cannot be understood in their local and national contexts. Second, objective understanding of the important post-war period depends much on detailed research knowledge of the happenings of the war in the Indian country.

The impact of the Civil War was keenly felt by the inhabitants of the Indian Territory, and the commitment was perhaps greater than in the East, for the entire population was involved in the struggle. Except for sporadic guerrilla activity, primary military operations ended in the territory early in comparison to the fighting in the Eastern theater of the war. The Federal forces, after a halting start, were successful in overcoming a major portion of Confederate resistance in the Indian country during the summer of 1863, nearly two years before the Confederate States capitulated.

There were many factors external to the land of the Five Civilized Tribes that influenced the conduct of the war in their area. The political and military leaders of the North and the South, located far from Indian Territory, were responsible for many of the occurrences during the

eighteen months of 1862-1863 covered by this study. The plans and decisions made outside of the territory were as important as those made by commanders on the scene. These significant influences have been incorporated into this thesis.

The author extends appreciation to the Library Staff of Oklahoma State University for their assistance in locating a large number of government documents essential in the writing of this thesis. He also thanks the staff of the Oklahoma Historical Society for their helpfulness in finding pertinent reference materials located in the Indian Archives and the Library.

Dr. Homer L. Knight and Dr. Norbert R. Mahnken made astute and accurate comments in their reading of this work, and their suggestions and critical analysis did much to improve it. Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer deserves much credit for his guidance and direction of this thesis. He was instrumental in establishing the subject, and he provided leads to reference material which added much to the continuity of the narrative. His criticism, exact and sagacious, enabled the author to overcome many writing difficulties and style obstacles which would have otherwise proved to be insurmountable. Without the sound advice, the positive encouragement, and the stimulating critiques which Dr. Fischer gave tirelessly, this thesis would not have become an accomplished fact.

Lastly, the author acknowledges the patience and understanding displayed by his wife, Belva, and his two children, Suzanne and Randall, during the months this thesis was in preparation. Their cheerful devotion provided the impetus needed to counteract the doldrums of composition which seem to plague and distract every novice writer.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. BEFORE FEDERAL ASCENDANCY.	1
II. THE FIRST INVASION	25
III. PRELUDE TO VICTORY	55
IV. THE UNION EMERGES VICTORIOUS	88
V. CONCLUSIONS.	120
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	126

CHAPTER I

BEFORE FEDERAL ASCENDANCY

In the summer of 1862 a Federal military force moved south from Kansas and attempted to re-establish the authority of the United States over a group of semi-autonomous Indian nations. These Five Civilized Tribes--the Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, and Seminole--had unilaterally terminated existing treaties the preceding year with the government in Washington in order to align themselves with the newly formed Confederate States of America. Circumstances played a role in this abrupt termination of Indian allegiance to the Federal government, but the officials of the United States, by their indifference toward the affairs of the tribes, gave considerable impetus to the developments which occurred. The Indian Territory was simply abandoned, and Federal leaders at all levels did nothing toward providing the perplexed Indians with instructions for the future or encouragement that this expedient policy would be altered.

The treatment of the Five Civilized Tribes by white Americans had never been conducted with honor or dignity, and all forms of subterfuge were employed when a negotiator was determined to dispossess a tribe of its ancestral land. This pattern of dishonor had its foundation in the inability of the emigré Anglo-Saxons to understand the Indian, and a habit of Americans to treat red men as something less than human. When the Civil War began, there were many officials of the Federal government who thought the Indians were not worth saving. This attitude was not new, for it had been prevalent before the civilized Southern Indians were

forcibly moved westward thirty years before the war began.

In six Southern states and the Indian Territory, 1830 was a most significant year. The Five Civilized Tribes, after signing disadvantageous resettlement treaties with the United States, started movements, some peacefully and some by force, from their homelands to a new and strange country west of Arkansas. This displacement of nearly 50,000 people required twelve years to complete, and the sorrow, heartache, and abject misery which resulted will remain forever on the conscience of American society.

The Indian Territory was officially established by the United States Congress in 1830 when it passed the Indian Removal Act. This statute, unlike most previous Indian legislation, openly proclaimed the theory of land exchange. Western public land, acquired through the Louisiana Purchase, was to be exchanged for Indian tribal lands located in the Eastern states. The area set aside for this land trade was enormous. It stretched from the Red River to the northern boundary of Nebraska, from the western borders of Missouri and Arkansas to where the land was no longer habitable.¹ The lawmakers, familiar with the "Great American Desert," realized that except for the eastern fringe, this territory of approximately 229,000 square miles was relatively worthless.

A large number of Indian treaties were signed after the Removal Act became law, and all of these contained major clauses concerning land exchange. Previous treaties had been different in that they compressed tribal holdings, but they had never completely eliminated them. The idea

¹Joseph B. Thoburn and Muriel Wright, Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People (4 vols., New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1929), I, p. 126. Hereinafter cited as Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People.

of land trade with automatic liquidation of title was not contemplated on a large scale until after the United States had obtained the Louisiana Purchase.

After the passage of the Removal Act, Federal officials were forced to take positive action in regard to the Indian tribes. Education and assimilation or permanent tribal land reserves in the East were no longer acceptable by the public as goals. Removal to the West was the solution deemed both practical and feasible.² Some Indian leaders favored this approach. By moving away from the white man, customs and traditions would be continued, contact with alcohol and disease would be diminished, and the specter of land confiscation would be reduced.³ Unfortunately, other Indian leaders and most of the rank and file developed a "do-nothing" attitude as a form of passive resistance, and this unrealistic approach proved to be most detrimental when the tribes were finally forced to go West.

The first treaty signed by the United States and a Southern civilized tribe stipulating land exchange was with the Cherokees in 1817, and a similar treaty with the Choctaws was made three years later. Both agreements were made on a purely voluntary basis, and this freedom of choice precluded large scale participation by the members of either tribe. The significance of these treaties was the setting of the land exchange precedent, and the fact that the Doak's Stand Treaty with the Choctaw Nation allocated a large tract of land in the West for settlement which included a substantial part of what was to be the future Indian Territory.⁴

²Edwin C. McReynolds, Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), p. 111. Hereinafter cited as McReynolds, Oklahoma.

³Ibid., p. 112.

⁴Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People, pp. 111, 114.

Besides land exchange, another factor common to most American-Indian treaties was the use of bribery and psychological pressure. In the case of the treaties with the Cherokee and Creek tribes, white negotiators knowingly allowed tribal minorities, who realized the futility of resisting the ever increasing pressure for removal, to sign away land without the approval of tribal majorities. These illegal treaties created animosities and hatreds which caused intratribal vendettas that lasted for generations.⁵ But tempers eventually cooled to the degree that truces could be established within both tribes. True reconciliation was another matter, for the rival treaty factions could neither forgive nor forget, and when differences which spawned the Civil War opened old wounds, both the Cherokee and Creek nations split into factions which fought on opposite sides during the conflict.⁶

After the treaties were signed, the horrors of removal began. The lower one-third of the newly established Indian Territory was set aside for the Five Civilized Tribes. The leading instigator behind the final eviction of the Southern tribes was the ^{7th!}sixth President, General Andrew Jackson. He correctly reasoned that the practical and short term remedy for the Indian problem was removal; the long term solution of assimilation was not acceptable to his white countrymen.⁷

The Choctaws signed another compulsory removal treaty in 1830, and 13,500 of these Indians undertook the arduous journey the following year.

⁵McReynolds, Oklahoma, pp. 153-155.

⁶Grant Foreman, A History of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), p. 29, hereinafter cited as Foreman, A History of Oklahoma; Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People, p. 261.

⁷U.S., Congress, Annals of Congress, 8th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1852), pp. 33-34, 440; McReynolds, Oklahoma, pp. 72, 87-89, 133; Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, p. 12; Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People, pp. 133, 145.

Hardship, severe weather, and disease combined during two separate 1831 treks to reduce the tribal population by over one thousand. The Chickasaw Nation numbered slightly less than 10,000 in 1831, the year they signed their removal treaty. This compact exchanged tribal lands in Mississippi for the western portion of the Choctaw land grant, but it was six years before the tribe finally moved westward. The Chickasaws refused to move until the Federal government dropped an ill-advised plan for the amalgamation of the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes. By 1837 conditions for the journey were much improved, and there were fewer Chickasaw casualties caused by removal than other tribes had experienced.⁸

The two tribes which suffered the highest number of deaths during removal were the Creeks and the Cherokees. The deplorable conditions endured by these tribes were intensified by the heavy hand of military supervision, necessary because of the hesitancy of the Indians to leave their homelands. An attempt by the Creeks to resist a premature takeover of their land in Alabama resulted in a farcical "Creek War." Broken in spirit before their journey started, the Creeks were easy prey for the adversities of removal and the hardships that abounded in their hostile new homeland. The once proud nation of 23,000 people was reduced to less than half that number in a few short years.⁹

A minority group of Cherokee leaders signed the Treaty of New Echota in 1835. They agreed to accept a grant of five million dollars for their

⁸McReynolds, Oklahoma, p. 163; Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People, pp. 135, 166, 170.

⁹McReynolds, Oklahoma, pp. 139-140, 155-156; Charles Richard Francis, "Confederate Ascendancy in Indian Territory 1860-1861" (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1963), p. 3, hereinafter cited as Francis, "Confederate Ascendancy in Indian Territory 1860-1861"; Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, p. 23; Angie Debo, The Road to Disappearance (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), pp. 101, 103. Hereinafter cited as Debo, The Road to Disappearance.

Eastern lands and to join an earlier group of the tribe which had already settled in the new Indian Territory. The majority of the tribe opposed the treaty, and the discovery of the betrayal brought forth cries of anger and revenge. The Principal Chief of the tribe, John Ross, called for resistance to moving to the West, and this stubbornness resulted in forced removal, controlled by the army. The results of the affair were unbelievable. Of the 17,000 Indians who started, 4,000 perished en route. It is small wonder that the Cherokees referred to this tragedy as the "Trail of Tears."¹⁰

The Seminoles were the last of the Five Civilized Tribes to make the fateful journey, and they proved to be the most difficult to handle. The tribe fought with grim determination against the army which had been ordered to supervise their movement. By demonstrating a lack of understanding of pacification and the heavy use of duplicity, various military leaders convinced the Seminoles that death was more desirable than surrender. The perpetual avarice of white Americans toward the Indians was again obvious.¹¹

By 1842 removal of the Five Civilized Tribes was theoretically complete.¹² As with all pioneers, the displaced Indians adjusted to their

¹⁰Edward Everett Dale and Gaston Litton, eds., Cherokee Cavaliers (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939), pp. xvii-xviii, hereinafter cited as Dale and Litton, eds., Cherokee Cavaliers; Morris L. Wardell, A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, 1838-1907 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1938), p. 8, hereinafter cited as Wardell, A Political History of the Cherokee Nation; Grant Foreman, Indian Removal (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), p. 312n; McReynolds, Oklahoma, p. 156.

¹¹Henry Goulburn, an English envoy at the peace talks at Ghent in 1815, said: "I had till I came here no idea of the fixed determination which prevails in the breast of every American to extirpate the Indians and appropriate their Territory; but I am now sure that there is nothing which the people of America would so reluctantly abandon as what they are please to call their natural right to do so." Charles M. Gates, "The West in American Diplomacy, 1812-1815," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXVI (March, 1940), p. 506.

¹²McReynolds, Oklahoma, p. 166.

new environment. The Choctaws established thriving communities and wealthy farms within a few years. The Chickasaws also showed marked improvements, especially after the opening of Fort Washita in 1842, a move which controlled the marauding Plains Indians.

The Cherokees experienced initial difficulties in their new land. The tribal factions which separated over the removal treaty were very hostile to each other, and the new country was also different. It had low hills in contrast to the mountains of North Georgia and Tennessee; it had scrub oak and pine, and not the handsome hard wood forests of the lower Appalachian Mountain chain. The sluggish rivers and creeks of the Indian Territory almost ceased to flow in the summer, not at all like the spring-fed streams so common in the old Cherokee country. But the land was fertile, and as time healed the bitterness, the low log houses multiplied along the main waterways. Cattle and cotton became the Cherokee staple crops, and soon these Indians were on the road to recovery.¹³

The adjustment of the Creek and Seminole tribes took more time. The Creeks had to overcome the losses of removal, plus the shattering experiences of the "Creek War." These Indians showed a disinclination toward town life after their arrival in the Indian Territory. They adopted a type of individual isolation which prevented the revival of the trading economy characteristic of Creek communities in Alabama.¹⁴

The Seminole tribe also had great obstacles to conquer. Their fight with United States Army units in Florida gave them a late start in the new land. Long before the reluctant Seminoles arrived in the territory, the better portions of their land were settled by Creeks. The Seminoles,

¹³Wardell, A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, p. 85.

¹⁴McReynolds, Oklahoma, p. 177.

displaying an unusual meekness, temporarily settled within the Cherokee Nation.¹⁵ Here they did little except steal Cherokee stock and live off a meager government dole. They had never been an agricultural people, and they were extremely slow to adopt these pursuits.

With the passing of time, farms prospered, intratribal hostility waned, and the Five Civilized Tribes in the Indian Territory showed signs of returning to a normal way of life. By 1850 the hopes and ambitions of the Indians centered on their families, homes and schools.¹⁶ This state of affairs was not destined to last. The people of the United States, manifesting mounting inflexibility in both the Northern and Southern sections of the country, continued vigorous debates on the controversial subjects of states' rights and slavery.

Information about the growing sectionalism in the United States reached the Indian Territory at a slow but steady pace. The Southern Indian Superintendent and the tribal Indian agents, though Federal government employees, were all Southern sympathizers, and they used their influence to bind the territory to the South. Missionaries living among the Indians, also respected and followed, were mostly Northern abolitionists who counseled their charges about the evils of slavery and secession.¹⁷

By the spring of 1861 the Southern point of view prevailed in the territory, although there were some important dissenters. This Southern orientation was not unreasonable, for the Indians were originally from the

¹⁵Edwin C. McReynolds, The Seminoles (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), p. 252. Hereinafter cited as McReynolds, The Seminoles.

¹⁶Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, pp. 32, 34, 36, 37-38.

¹⁷Dale and Litton, eds., Cherokee Cavaliers, pp. 56-57; Francis, "Confederate Ascendancy in the Indian Territory 1860-1861," pp. 13-14.

South. A substantial number of them were slave holders, particularly in the Choctaw and Cherokee nations, and in 1860 there were 1,154 slave owners and 7,369 slaves in the Indian Territory.¹⁸ Cotton, the king of Southern agriculture, was grown in abundance along the Red, Illinois and Arkansas rivers. Gravitation toward the South was especially evident among the wealthy Indians who exercised a disproportionate share of influence in the tribal councils.¹⁹ Dissenters against the Southern cause were not necessarily pro-Northern in outlook; they simply tried to remain aloof and independent from the struggle that was growing in intensity.

Abraham Lincoln, whose political course of action had been purposefully vague during the 1860 campaign, was elected to the presidency of the United States in November. One month later South Carolina voted to dissolve "the Union now subsisting between South Carolina and the other States." These events caused serious repercussions even in the remote Indian Territory. The inhabitants, willing or not, were forced to take a stand with one side or the other.

During the period from 1820 to 1860, the Indian Territory had seen the arrival of the Southern tribes, the passing of the "gold seekers" to California, the movement of the transitory Texas settlers, and the usual assortment of adventurers, thieves, gunmen and others typical of newly settled lands. After official establishment of the territory in 1830, the land was closed and intruders were expected to simply pass through, but

¹⁸U.S., Congress, House, Preliminary Report of the Eighth Census 1860, 37th Cong., 2d Sess., (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1862), Executive Document Number 116, pp. 10-11, 137.

¹⁹Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, p. 101.

occasionally they remained.²⁰

A major responsibility assumed by the United States government in numerous Indian treaties was to station soldiers at strategic forts within the Indian Territory. The military was charged with keeping the peace, with preventing raids on the "civilized" red men by the nomadic Plains tribes, and with removing all unauthorized whites. The first two tasks were handled with skill and ability. The last proved to be a more difficult assignment, and the soldiers were never completely successful in accomplishing this mission.

In April, 1861, the United States Army troops at forts Washita, Arbuckle and Cobb in the Indian Territory found themselves in a most unpleasant predicament. Texas, to the south, had seceded from the Union two months earlier. Arkansas, to the east, was threatening secession. All supplies and war material for the Federal posts were shipped through one or the other of these states. The responsibility for maintaining the safety of the men and the government property in the forts rested with a newly assigned commanding officer, Colonel William H. Emory.²¹

Colonel Emory had been initially assigned in February, 1861, to command the troops at Fort Cobb. In March, while he was on leave in Washington, D. C., these instructions were modified. He was ordered to concentrate all the Indian Territory forces at Fort Washita, located on

²⁰Debo, The Road to Disappearance, p. 140; Charles J. Kappler, ed., Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties (5 vols., Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904-1941), II, p. 531.

²¹Townsend to Emory, March 18, 1861, War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (70 vols., 128 books in U.S. Serial Set, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), i, I, p. 656. Hereinafter cited as Official Records; series cited in small case Roman numeral; volume cited in large case Roman numeral; part of each volume cited as "Pt."

the strategic Texas Road, and to hold this position against possible Confederate penetration from the south. After Colonel Emory had departed from the capital for his duty assignment, necessity forced still another change in his orders. These final instructions were to withdraw all men and supplies from the territory to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.²²

The new commander commenced the departure from the Indian Territory on May 3, 1861. There was contact with Texas troops following the Federal command, but no casualties resulted even though a Confederate detachment was captured. These troops were questioned and soon released. This generous action on the part of Colonel Emory was probably the reason his soldiers were not seriously threatened as they retreated slowly north.²³

From a military point of view, the withdrawal action of Federal forces from the Indian Territory was a complete success, for no animals or equipment were lost. Out of 750 officers and men, only two failed to arrive safely at Fort Leavenworth, and these two men deserted, according to Colonel Emory's final report.²⁴

The Federal retreat had a profound effect on the Indian tribes. The sudden departure of the soldiers from the territory left the majority of the inhabitants troubled and confused. The United States was treaty bound to protect and defend their land from unlawful entry. The Indians were unable to understand this change of policy, and even more important, they began to have serious doubts as to the sincerity and strength of the

²²Townsend to Emory, April 17, 1861, *ibid*, p. 667.

²³Francis, "Confederate Ascendancy in the Indian Territory 1860-1861," p. 25.

²⁴Emory to Townsend, May 19, 1861, Official Records, i, I, p. 649.

government in Washington.²⁵

The Confederate attack on Fort Sumter occurred on April 12, 1861. Three weeks later, as Federal troops withdrew from the territory, Confederate President Jefferson Davis appointed Albert Pike commissioner to the Indian tribes. This Arkansas newspaper editor's mission was to sign friendship and alliance treaties with the Five Civilized Tribes and with the tribes of the Plains.²⁶

Commissioner Pike entered into his duties with much enthusiasm. This corpulent New Englander was extremely fond of his adopted Southland. He also liked the Indian inhabitants of the territory, although he viewed them rather paternalistically. His large size, his oratorical style, and his domineering personality made him eminently suited for treaty making with the various tribes.²⁷

The Indians, fearful of the future, were psychologically ready to receive the Confederate Commissioner. Pike was a shrewd and intelligent person, and readily saw he had arrived in the territory at a most opportune time. He understood conditions within the territory, and he was aware of the significance of the geographical location of the Indian Nations. Familiar with the economic, political, and military potential of the tribes, he began his mission by opening negotiations with the

²⁵U.S., Congress, House, Report of the Secretary of Interior 1865, 39th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1866), Executive Document Number 1, p. 506; Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, p. 102; Robert Lipscomb Duncan, Reluctant General (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1961), p. 171. Hereinafter cited as Duncan, Reluctant General.

²⁶James D. Richardson, comp., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Confederacy 1861-1865 (2 vols., Nashville: United States Publishing Co., 1905), I, p. 178.

²⁷Wardell, A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, p. 128; Duncan, Reluctant General, p. 178.

Cherokee Nation and its principal chief, John Ross.²⁸

Chief Ross was also a clever and astute politician. Very conscious of his power, and cynically distrustful of all white men, he had taken an early stand against intervention on either side.²⁹ He was firmly committed to a position of neutrality as being the most advantageous for the Cherokee tribe. As a wealthy landholder, neutrality was the most practical course of action for John Ross, and Pike's persuasive power could not change the dogmatic chief.³⁰

Consequently, Pike's first effort at a Cherokee alliance with the Confederacy ended in failure. Disappointed, he turned to tribes more amenable to his proposals. The Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles were holding an intertribal council at North Fork Town in the Creek Nation. This was the initial meeting of the United Nations of the Indian Territory, an organization composed of pro-Southern, mixed blood leaders from the four tribes. After less than two weeks of deliberation, these chiefs signed treaties for their tribes with the Confederate Commissioner.³¹

The negotiations with the Choctaws and Chickasaws were accomplished with ease. The Creek treaty, however, produced a serious split within the tribe. Like their Cherokee neighbors, these Indians were divided in their attitude toward the war. The McIntosh faction was anxious to align

²⁸McReynolds, The Seminoles, p. 290; Duncan, Reluctant General, p. 171; Francis, "Confederacy Ascendancy in the Indian Territory 1860-1861," pp. 36-37.

²⁹Ross to McCulloch, June 17, 1861, Official Records, i, III, p. 596; Wardell, A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, pp. 125, 127.

³⁰Dale and Litton, eds., Cherokee Cavaliers, p. 99.

³¹Angie Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), p. 82, hereinafter cited as Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic; Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, p. 103.

with the Confederacy. The opposition was centered around the old anti-treaty group, and the principal chief of the Upper Creeks, Otkarharsars Harjo, called Sands. The renowned Creek statesman, Opothleyahola, an outspoken leader of the anti-treaty faction at the time of removal, remained strangely silent during this period. He did not assume dominant leadership of the Federal Creeks until after the Creek-Confederate treaty was signed.³²

Relying on the neutrality of Chief Ross and the Cherokee tribe, Sands and Opothleyahola called a council of the Plains Indians to seek allies for their tribe. They left the Creek Nation as Commissioner Pike was conducting talks with Chief Ross, and arrived at Antelope Hills during the latter part of June.³³ Opothleyahola probably attended this western meeting, since his presence in the Creek Nation would have bolstered resistance to the signing of the Confederate treaty.

During their absence Commissioner Pike opened negotiations with the pro-Southern faction of the Creek tribe, and his generous offers of alliance and protection were accepted. The principal chief of the Lower Creeks and nominal head of the Creek Nation, Moty Canard, signed the treaty along with many of the pro-Southern leaders. A bribe was offered and accepted before Canard's signature was obtained.³⁴ When Sands and Opothleyahola returned, they were incensed over the Confederate treaty. They attempted to renounce the alliance, but to no avail. Ominous threats

³²Debo, The Road to Disappearance, pp. 144-147; Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, p. 105.

³³Debo, The Road to Disappearance, p. 144.

³⁴Ibid., p. 145.

by the signers further increased the tension that existed between the two factions of the tribe.³⁵

Southern sympathizers within the Seminole tribe were a minority, headed by Commissioner Pike's personal friend, Chief John Jumper. These Indians needed little prompting from the Confederate negotiator, yet they could not speak for the entire tribe. Pike signed a secret alliance with Chief Jumper which satisfied Confederate requirements for military units available for duty. Later, the entire tribe signed a friendship pact which amounted to a defense agreement for Seminole territory.³⁶

Commissioner Pike traveled to the western edge of the Indian Territory in August, 1861, to cajole the Plains Indians into the Confederate sphere of influence. At a trading post on the Washita River he sat in council with most of the leaders of the Plains tribes. Dressed in fringed buckskins and a large, plumed hat, the Confederate representative captivated his audience. The treaty which resulted, a type of non-aggression pact involving the Five Civilized Tribes, was phrased for primitive, uneducated Indians, but the intent was clear, and understood by all parties concerned.³⁷

The neutrality policy of Chief Ross and the Cherokee tribe deteriorated completely during the six-week period the Confederate Commissioner was absent negotiating with the Plains Indians. The Cherokee Nation, surrounded by Confederate states and tribes allied with the Southerners, faced an impossible situation. The North had suffered two major defeats,

³⁵McReynolds, Oklahoma, p. 205; Debo, The Road to Disappearance, pp. 146-147.

³⁶Seminole Treaties with the Confederate States of America, August 1, 1861, Official Records, iv, I, pp. 513, 525-526.

³⁷Francis, "Confederate Ascendancy in the Indian Territory 1860-1861," p. 39.

at Bull Run in Virginia and Wilson's Creek in Missouri. There were no Federal troops in the Indian Territory, and the Federal Indian agents had renounced their previous ties in favor of the Confederacy. Apparently the Confederate States were gaining power, and disunion was an accomplished fact. Now was the time for the Cherokee tribe to come to terms with the Confederacy since their interests were primarily with the South. So Ross sent Commissioner Pike a formal letter requesting additional conferences for the purpose of making a treaty.³⁸

When the Cherokee Council met in August, 1861, the principal chief made three positive suggestions: join the Confederacy, support slavery openly by treaty, and actively assist the South. The council agreed with Ross' recommendations and gave him a vote of confidence. He met with Commissioner Pike in October, 1861, and a treaty of alliance and friendship was signed.³⁹ Like all other Pike agreements, the treaty was generous, fair, and unworkable, for the Confederate government could not keep the promises made by its Indian Commissioner.⁴⁰

In October, 1861, Pike left the Indian Territory to present his handiwork to President Davis in the Confederate capital.⁴¹ While he was away events occurred in the territory which partially nullified the advantages gained by the Confederacy from his treaties. These events drove factions of the Creek and Cherokee tribes into rival camps, and the

³⁸Wardell, A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, p. 131.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 132-133.

⁴⁰Dale and Litton, eds., Cherokee Cavaliers, pp. 101-102; Francis, "Confederate Ascendancy in the Indian Territory 1860-1861," pp. 47-48; Annie Heloise Abel, The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1915), p. 17, hereinafter cited as Abel, The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist; Wardell, A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, p. 144.

⁴¹Dale and Litton, eds., Cherokee Cavaliers, p. 100.

tribal disunity which followed proved to be a serious handicap to the South and a tragedy to the Indians.

Sands, Opothleyahola and the Federal Creeks remained unhappy and apprehensive after the signing of the Confederate treaty in July, 1861. Sands was elected principal chief of the Union portion of the tribe, and the Confederate treaty was repudiated.⁴² The new chief was sent as an emissary to Kansas to ask for Federal aid and guidance. These hostile acts greatly alarmed Confederate Indian leaders, for the Federal Creek camp vastly increased in size due to a large influx of Federal sympathizers from neighboring tribes. With Sands in Kansas, the Creeks and their friends were leaderless, so Opothleyahola assumed authority, a task for which he was admirably suited.⁴³

Colonel Douglas H. Cooper, former Choctaw agent, and now commanding officer of the First Regiment of Choctaw and Chickasaw Mounted Rifles, made an appeal to Opothleyahola to settle his differences with the pro-Southern faction of the Creek tribe. In October Chief Ross also contacted the Creek leader about reconciliation. The Cherokee chief appealed to the old warrior's sense of tribal and intertribal loyalty in an effort to bring this defecting part of the tribe into the Confederacy.⁴⁴ None of these efforts proved to be successful.

Opothleyahola was determined to resist pressure and remain firm in upholding the Creek treaty with the United States. Due to the size of the force within the Creek camp, Colonel Cooper decided to force

⁴²Debo, The Road to Disappearance, p. 147.

⁴³Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, p. 105; Debo, The Road to Disappearance, p. 150.

⁴⁴Joseph B. Thoburn, "The Cherokee Question," Chronicles of Oklahoma, II (June, 1924), pp. 170-171.

Opothleyahola and his followers into Confederate ranks or drive them from the Indian Territory. Operations to implement this plan began in mid-November, 1861, and the campaign was on against Opothleyahola's 3,500 men, women and children, together with their baggage, supplies and cattle.⁴⁵

The Confederate forces did not make contact with the Federal Indians until November 19, four days after the search had started. This delay was due to overconfidence on the part of the pursuing Southerners and the skillful use of reconnaissance parties on the part of the Creek leader. The first encounter occurred late in the afternoon, and the skirmish was short, but brisk, with neither side gaining the advantage. This engagement at Round Mountain was the first Civil War combat action of any consequence in the Indian Territory.⁴⁶

Intelligence reports of an impending invasion from Missouri and the lack of supplies forced Colonel Cooper to discontinue the attack after Round Mountain. The Confederate forces returned to their base of operations, and allowed Opothleyahola and his band to proceed unmolested with their withdrawal. When the reports from Missouri proved to be spurious, Cooper decided to continue the pursuit. He departed from his camp on November 29 and marched to Tulsey Town, on the site of present-day Tulsa. He was joined there by additional forces from Texas and by units from Colonel John Drew's First Cherokee Mounted Rifle Regiment.⁴⁷

Opothleyahola's new position was discovered on December 8 and was

⁴⁵Muriel H. Wright, "Civil War Report on the Battle of Round Mountain," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXIX (Winter, 1961), p. 352.

⁴⁶Francis, "Confederate Ascendancy in the Indian Territory 1860-1861," pp. 58-60.

⁴⁷Cooper to Benjamin, January 20, 1862, Official Records, i, VIII, p. 7.

attacked immediately. The outcome of this action, which occurred at Chusto-Talsah, or Caving Banks, on Bird Creek, followed the pattern of the previous engagement since neither side could claim a victory.⁴⁸ The Confederate forces withdrew into a camp south of the battlefield while the Union Indians, under cover of darkness, left their defensive position and retreated toward the northwest.

The Confederate command was thrown into turmoil after this action by large scale defection from the Cherokee regiment. This mass desertion was caused by the reluctance of the full-blood Cherokees to fight against full-blood Creeks, and by the growing fear of the military prowess of the men of Opothleyahola. Colonel Cooper did not continue the attack the next day, but elected to consolidate and regroup his forces. During the lull he was notified of a change in the overall command of Confederate forces in Arkansas and the Indian Territory. Colonel James McIntosh from Texas had been appointed the new commander, and he had decided to take personal control of the chase.⁴⁹

The last engagement fought between Confederate forces and Opothleyahola's Union Indians occurred on December 28 at Chustenahlah. This time the Confederates carried the field, and the Federal Indians were routed and scattered. The defeated Creeks were followed and harrassed continually until they crossed into Kansas.⁵⁰ These Indians endured terrible hardships during this last phase of the retreat. Their suffering in Kansas was even worse, since most of their possessions had been abandoned in flight. The Federal government was ill-prepared to receive them and

⁴⁸Abel, The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist, p. 256.

⁴⁹Cooper to Benjamin, January 20, 1862, Official Records, i, VIII, p. 11.

⁵⁰Cooper to Benjamin, January 20, 1862, ibid., p. 13.

had inadequate facilities and insufficient supplies available. As a consequence, large numbers died from exposure, malnutrition, and disease.⁵¹

January, 1862, marked the high point of Confederate ascendancy in the Indian Territory. The Indians loyal to the Federal cause had been driven into Kansas; treaties binding all of the Indian tribes to the South had been signed; and troop units for the defense of the territory had been established and were functional. Commissioner Pike had been appointed a brigadier general and independent commander of all forces in the territory.⁵²

General Pike took pride in his assignment. The welfare of the Indians and their country was his sole responsibility, and he had convinced the authorities in Richmond of the value of the Indian Territory firmly committed to the Confederate cause. The Indian units would be properly equipped, and they would be able to repel invasions on the western flank of the Confederacy with ease. Pike had even gained full approval for the assignment of white Arkansas and Texas troops to his command, which he considered necessary for the morale of his Indian soldiers. He believed Indians would not fight well alone.⁵³

Cantonment Davis, later called Fort Davis, was built under General Pike's direction when he returned to the Indian Territory. Located on the south side of the Arkansas River below the Three Forks and opposite

⁵¹Debo, The Road to Disappearance, p. 151; Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, pp. 107-108.

⁵²General Order, Adjutant and Inspector General Department, November 22, 1861, Official Records, i, VIII, p. 690; Stephen B. Oates, Confederate Cavalry West of the River (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), p. 33.

⁵³Pike to Benjamin, November 27, 1861, Official Records, i, VIII, pp. 697-698.

Fort Gibson, Fort Davis was named for the Confederate President.⁵⁴ This was an attempt by Pike to impress the less appreciative members of the white regiments of his influence and importance in the Confederate capital, and to cover up his absence from the fighting the previous month. Due to cold weather and the lack of forage, many of the Indians at Fort Davis were sent home on furlough with instructions to return to active duty when called. The white units were not furloughed, since they were the backbone of General Pike's plan for stabilizing and controlling the Indian Territory.

A major point in all of the Confederate Indian treaties had been the promise that no Indian troops would be used to fight the war outside of the Indian Territory. General Pike had no desire to leave his command area, and he did not think it proper to require his untrained soldiers to leave their homeland unprotected. This sentiment was generally shared by the Indian soldiers.⁵⁵

The relative tranquillity of the Indian command was broken on March 3, 1862, by a terse message to General Pike from the commanding general of Confederate forces in the trans-Mississippi area, Major General Earl Van Dorn. The Indian Commander was ordered to move his forces, both white and Indian, with minimum equipment and maximum speed to the Arkansas border and join other units of General Van Dorn's army.⁵⁶ In spite of General Pike's vociferous complaints about broken treaties, he complied and by so doing involved himself and his Indian followers in the costly

⁵⁴ Debo, The Road to Disappearance, p. 153.

⁵⁵ Pike to Secretary of War, May 4, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, p. 819.

⁵⁶ Abel, The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist, p. 283.

Confederate defeat at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, on March 6-8, 1862.⁵⁷

Both Confederate field commanders were killed in the battle, and General Pike found himself the ranking officer of a major portion of the army, although he was totally ignorant of the overall plans and strategy. Consequently, his leadership was negligible. In addition to this, some of his Indians were accused of killing and scalping Northern soldiers. Both incidents brought stern condemnation from Pike's superiors, and the stigma of the defeat and the alleged atrocities followed the Indian Commander for the remainder of his military career, even though he was innocent on both accounts.⁵⁸

General Pike spent very little time at Fort Davis after the battle of Pea Ridge. He gathered what forces he could from his disorganized command and announced his intention of building another fortification further south, nearer Texas, his base of supplies. He did this much to the consternation of his superiors. The Creek and Cherokee tribal leaders were dismayed over his actions which had left them without adequate protection against invasion from the north. The Cherokees, in particular, were unhappy over his decisions.⁵⁹

The new post, Fort McCulloch, named after one of the Confederate generals killed at Pea Ridge, was a formidable citadel. Completed in the spring of 1862, it commanded the crossing of the Texas and California roads, but had little military value as a defensive work.⁶⁰ It was

⁵⁷James H. Malone, The Chickasaw Nation (Louisville, Kentucky: John P. Morton Co., 1922), p. 410.

⁵⁸Pike to Maury, March 14, 1862, Maury to Pike, March 21, 1862, Official Records, i, VIII, pp. 286-292, 796; Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, p. 109.

⁵⁹Ross to Davis, May 10, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 824-825.

⁶⁰Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, p. 110.

located in present-day Bryan County about twenty miles north of the Red River and was remote from all important Northern objectives in the Indian Territory. As a supply base it was adequate, but its utilization as a collecting and distributing point for equipment and war material was also limited. The Indian Territory was last on the Confederate priority list, and it never received even minimum supply requirements.

This carefully planned and executed bastion was General Pike's reply to the accusations made after Pea Ridge. Here he could command alone, and fight his battles behind walls. Here also the uncertainties of war were much smaller, and he could write and brood about the unfairness of critics and biased superiors, and the injustices inflicted upon him and his Indian soldiers. Fort McCulloch was the final stage of active duty for the former Indian Commissioner. It was here that he resigned his military commission and returned to Arkansas and to the less dangerous and less frustrating life of a civilian.⁶¹

The initial engagements in the Indian Territory in 1861 were won by the forces of the Confederacy. These conquests in turn were nullified by the Federal victory at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, in March, 1862. Confederate prestige was damaged by this loss, and by the use of Indian units outside of the territory. The Federal forces in Kansas and Missouri were gathering strength in the spring of 1862, and the military commanders of the North could see the many advantages in occupying and holding the Indian Territory. From this location Arkansas and Texas could be attacked, and offensive operations were planned for either eventuality. It was obvious that the many refugee Indians, temporarily living in Kansas at governmental expense, wanted to return to their homes. It was the

⁶¹Pike to Hindman, July 15, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, p. 858.

responsibility of the North to see that these people were permitted to return, and this could only be accomplished as a result of direct military action. It was also the responsibility of the Federal government to see that the returned Indians were adequately protected.

For almost half a century, the Five Civilized Tribes had been victims of circumstances neither of their choosing or liking. Even in the Indian Territory, where they had hoped to find seclusion from contaminating white influences, they could not successfully escape the consequences of association with the United States. Both the North and the South were guilty of using the red man for their gain and profit. It mattered little to governmental officials in either section that husbands would be killed, that families would be separated, and that children would starve because the various tribes succumbed to Confederate persuasiveness, and then would reverse their position under the pressure of Federal military might. War itself was the all-encompassing endeavor, and all else appeared lost in the magnitude of the conflict. When the Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes took on the culture of the white man of the South, each tribe participated to some degree in slavery, and thus was caught in the sectional strife. The tribes also had to endure the terror and misfortune of civil war within their own ranks in addition to the Civil War being waged with grim determination by the North and South.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST INVASION

The opening year of the Civil War had a profound effect on the hapless red men who lived in the Indian Territory. The Five Civilized Tribes became pawns in a military struggle which had their land, but not themselves, as the ultimate goal. The North and South realized the strategic importance of the land west of Arkansas, and Union and Confederate military leaders made plans for its subjugation and control. The inhabitants of the territory were given only cursory attention, and the military operations were carried out in an extremely careless manner by both sides. Consequently, the country was desolated, and remained that way for the duration of the conflict.

The close geographical relationship of the Indian Territory to Missouri and Kansas made the lands of the Five Civilized Tribes sensitive to activities which occurred in those border states. If the orientation of Missouri had been completely Southern, the Confederate allegiance of the Indian country, exposed to Texas and Arkansas on the south and east, would have been a foregone conclusion. Kansas, even though a Federal stronghold, would have been isolated and lost to the Union cause. But Missouri, like the Indian Territory, was beset with violent differences over secession and slavery. Strong and determined minorities in both areas would not submit to the will of the majority, and these hardened attitudes prevented rational discussion of the critical problems. Missouri went to war with itself, and the Indian Territory followed suit.

The lines were distinctly drawn, and since compromise was unthinkable, armed combat became the only alternative available.

A man who had tremendous influence on events in the Indian Territory during the first year of the war was a United States Senator from Kansas, James H. Lane. He was a key figure in Kansas and national politics and was a self-centered opportunist who never allowed principle to interfere with success. He was also an abolitionist, but this recent interest in liberating Negroes was a means to an end, since he had been a slavery Democrat in Indiana at the beginning of his meteoric political career. His exploits as the leader of a military organization of thieves and ruffians called Lane's Brigade were known throughout the country, and he was hated and feared along the Kansas-Missouri border where his brigade had raided for plunder and general mischief.¹

In the fall of 1861 Senator Lane proposed a daring expedition to President Lincoln. Forming in Kansas, and descending through the Indian Territory, it would sever Texas from the Confederacy and at the same time liberate thousands of Southern slaves.² The idea caught the fancy of the President, but it was strenuously resisted by Federal military leaders since Lane was to be appointed the expedition commander. After much discussion, the expedition received a mortal blow in January, 1862, when Major General David Hunter, commander of the Kansas Department, was given permission by Major General George B. McClellan, General-in-Chief of the Army, to act as invasion force leader. Senator Lane, as a

¹Richard S. Brownlee, Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), pp. 37-38; Albert Castel, A Frontier State at War: Kansas, 1861-1865 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958), pp. 54-55. Hereinafter cited as Castel, A Frontier State at War.

²Castel, A Frontier State at War, pp. 78-79.

brigadier general and Hunter's subordinate, had lost his chance to gain more military notoriety.³

This sudden change caught the Kansas Senator completely by surprise. He was in Leavenworth, Kansas, when he heard the news, and he wasted no time in attempting to get the order countermanded. He wired John Covode, a member of the Kansas Congressional delegation, for assistance in Washington.⁴ Lane then used his political influence with Federal Indian agents to secure the aid of two Indian leaders, Opothleyahola and Aluktustenuke, headmen of the refugee Creeks and Seminoles who had been forced out of the Indian Territory the preceeding December. The Indians were in Leavenworth trying to obtain additional supplies for their destitute people. The day following Hunter's announcement of his leadership of the expedition, the Indian leaders wrote a joint letter to the President, advising him of the many advantages Lane would have as expedition commander. The message, dictated by the semiliterate red men, and attested to by the Creek agent, George A. Cutler, said in closing:

General Lane is our friend. His heart is big for the Indian. He will do more for us than any one else. The hearts of our people will be sad if he does not come. They will follow him wherever [sic] he directs.⁵

The President considered the letter a political maneuver, and sent it to General McClellan without comment.⁶

Although unsuccessful in his efforts to gain independent control of the Texas expedition, Senator Lane's determined opposition prevented

³Thomas to Hunter, January 24, 1862, Official Records, i, VIII, p. 526.

⁴Lane to Covode, January 27, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 529.

⁵Opothleyahola to Lincoln, January 28, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 534.

⁶*Ibid.*

General Hunter from retaining command of the invasion force. Lane's persistent objections were a major factor in the eventual transfer of Hunter out of the department. Yet Senator Lane's future as a military leader did not improve substantially, for Hunter was replaced by Brigadier General James W. Denver, a former territorial governor of Kansas and bitter enemy of Lane and his friends.⁷

At the same time that General Denver was designated the ranking military commander in Kansas, the department was merged with the Department of Missouri. This new organization was named the Department of the Mississippi, included the Indian Territory, and was commanded by Major General Henry W. Halleck, whose headquarters were located in Saint Louis, Missouri.⁸ General Halleck, a regular army officer and West Point graduate, was well aware of the activities of the Lane Brigade, and considered its leader to be nothing more than a bandit. Halleck did not know Denver personally, but since the recent appointee was opposed by Senator Lane, he made every effort to retain Denver as the commander of the Kansas District.⁹ Lane considered Denver an even greater threat than Hunter to his political and military future in Kansas, and finally used a direct appeal to the President to get the general transferred.¹⁰

⁷Special Orders, War Department, March 13, 1862, General Orders, Department of Mississippi, March 19, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 612, 832; Castel, A Frontier State at War, p. 81.

⁸Lincoln to Halleck, March 11, 1862, General Order, Department of Mississippi, March 13, 1862, Official Records, i, VIII, pp. 605, 611.

⁹Halleck to McClellan, December 19, 1861, Halleck to Stanton, March 28, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 449, 647-648; Stanton to Halleck, March 26, 1862, Halleck to Stanton, March 26, 1862, Special Order, Department of Mississippi, March 28, 1862, *ibid.*, LIII, pp. 516, 516, 517.

¹⁰Lincoln to Halleck, March 21 and April 4, 1862, Halleck to Lincoln, April 4, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 516, 519, 519.

Securing a suitable replacement for General Denver required time, so ten days passed before he was superseded by Brigadier General S. D. Sturgis. Not cognizant that his removal had been demanded by the Kansas politician, Denver continued planning for the re-organization of a majority of the Kansas regiments, and for a new and much more limited southern expedition. The new endeavor had as its sole objective the reconquest of the Indian Territory.¹¹

On March 19 General Halleck received a formal communication from the War Department concerning this Indian Expedition. With a nucleus of two white regiments, it was to invade and recapture the Confederate occupied Indian country. The expedition had the additional missions of returning the refugee Union Indians to their abandoned homes and protecting them by remaining in the territory permanently. The order, which plainly stated its originator was President Lincoln, further directed Halleck to arm five thousand Indians and supply them for the campaign along with the two white regiments. The obvious intent was to organize the refugee Indians into units which could be inducted into the army.¹²

General Denver, as the Kansas District commander, was responsible for the new expedition. In early April he informed his department head that the Indian Expedition would require substantial amounts of supplies and munitions. General Halleck gave his consent for this additional logistical burden, but only to the extent that the troops involved would be those not needed for more important tasks. The department commander revealed a serious prejudice against Indians when he inquired of Denver how many of them could be armed safely, and when he stated emphatically

¹¹Denver to Halleck, April 2 and 10, 1862, *ibid.*, VIII, pp. 653-655, 679-680.

¹²Thomas to Halleck, March 19, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 624-625.

that the Indians could only fight against other Indians or in defense of their homes.¹³

General Halleck confirmed the Kansas command changes to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton on April 7. General Sturgis was the new commander of the Kansas District, and General Denver was shifted to the command of the Indian Expedition. These changes came rapidly, in fact, so rapidly that Halleck was able to write a letter of instructions to Denver one day and simply repeat the same letter to Sturgis the following day. The department commander stressed that as expedition commander Denver should counter the influence of Confederate agents and representatives, and attack all military units operating within or near the Indian Territory. General Sturgis, the district commander, was cautioned to advise his subordinate to assume a wide area of operations, and not be limited by state lines.¹⁴

The new commander in Kansas had a very short tour of duty following his acceptance of the command on April 10. Fifteen days later, acting under instructions from General Halleck, General Sturgis discontinued the enlistment of Indian soldiers for the pending expedition into the Indian Territory. The following week, due to interceding Kansas politicians, the district was again designated a department and was completely separated from the Department of the Mississippi. At the same time, a new general was appointed department commander, and both Generals Sturgis and

¹³Denver to Halleck, April 2, 1862, Halleck to Denver, April 5, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 655, 664-665.

¹⁴Halleck to Denver, April 5, 1862, Halleck to Sturgis, April 6, 1862, Halleck to Stanton, April 7, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 664-665, 668, 672.

Denver were transferred out of Kansas.¹⁵

The new commander of the new Kansas Department was Brigadier General James G. Blunt, a protégé of Senator Lane, a former commander of cavalry in Lane's Brigade, and a vigorous abolitionist. His appointment came as a complete surprise to authorities in Saint Louis, since he was only a Kansas medical doctor with limited military experience. His greatest attribute was his friendship with Senator Lane. This was not insignificant since it alone was sufficient to get Blunt appointed a brigadier general and commander of the redesignated Department of Kansas.¹⁶

When General Halleck was informed of the President's wishes concerning the Indian Expedition, the message ended with the remark that prompt action was necessary.¹⁷ But speed was ignored for nearly two months. This was due to the deliberate pace of the military commanders, and their insistence on being prepared for every eventuality. It was also due to their disdain for Indians in general and a specific unwillingness to accept red men as soldiers in the United States Army.

The inactivity of the Indian Expedition changed drastically when General Blunt assumed command. This domineering Kansan would not allow the expedition to flounder in military thoroughness. He had orders to put an expedition into the Indian Territory, and this he would do immediately. The Indians would be organized and outfitted, and the

¹⁵Special Order, Department of Mississippi, April 6, 1862, *ibid.*, LIII, p. 520; General Order, District of Kansas, April 10, 1862, *ibid.*, VIII, p. 683; General Order, District of Kansas, April 25 and May 5, 1862, General Order, War Department, May 2, 1862, *ibid.*, XIII, pp. 365, 370, 368-369.

¹⁶Castel, A Frontier State at War, pp. 82-83; General Order, Department of Kansas, May 5, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, p. 370.

¹⁷Thomas to Halleck, March 19, 1862, *ibid.*, VIII, p. 625.

Presidential objective would be realized. The new department commander, for reasons of ambition and dishonest personal gain, would compel its fulfillment.¹⁸

A general order for the resumption of enlistment of Indians into regiments was issued on May 5, the same day General Blunt became the Department of Kansas commander. The previous curtailment had been in effect less than a month, and this delay in recruiting was easily counteracted by a broader interpretation of the original order to include all Indians instead of only refugees from the Five Civilized Tribes.¹⁹

In addition to his reinstatement of War Department Indian policy, Blunt instituted two additional orders which give a graphic picture of the personality and temperament of the general who would be responsible for most Federal military operations in the Indian Territory. These orders show clearly his relentless nature and his dogmatic approach to solving problems. Blunt ordered the practice of returning runaway slaves to Missouri to stop. Prior to this directive, escaped Negroes had been recaptured in Kansas by public officials and returned to their masters. With the new order in effect, attempting to return a slave to Missouri would automatically cause the offending person to be arrested. If the arresting officer thought the civil authorities would be unwilling to punish for this crime, the apprehended person could be tried by a military commission.²⁰

The other order clearly indicated the new general's intense hatred

¹⁸General Order, Department of Kansas, May 5, 1862, *ibid.*, XIII, p. 370; Castel, A Frontier State at War, pp. 83-84.

¹⁹Thomas to Halleck, April 4, 1862, Official Records, i, VIII, pp. 659-660; General Order, Department of Kansas, May 5, 1862, *ibid.*, XIII, p. 370.

²⁰General Order, Department of Kansas, May 7, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 372.

of Southerners in general and his unequivocal aversion to the hit-and-run tactics of small, independent Confederate guerrilla units operating in the border states. Published six weeks after General Blunt became Kansas commander, this second order emphatically stated that any person caught "bushwacking" would be tried immediately by the unit attacked, and then either shot or hung. No mercy or leniency would be shown to any individual using guerrilla methods of fighting.²¹

Organizing the Indians into fighting units was the most critical problem which faced the expedition formed to re-establish Federal control over the Indian Territory. The refugee Indians were the impetus for the entire plan, and their enlistment into regiments, known as the Indian Home Guards, was absolutely essential. The first regiment was composed of Creeks and Seminoles who had come out of the territory with Opothleyahola the previous winter. The second regiment was a more composite unit, and due to its intertribal composition, it took longer to recruit and train. The third regiment was made up exclusively of Cherokees who enlisted after the Indian Expedition had moved into the territory.²²

The initial commander of the Indian Expedition was Colonel Charles Doubleday of the Second Ohio Cavalry Regiment. He was appointed by General Hunter as an acting brigadier general and commanding officer of all Federal units in the Fort Scott, Kansas, area. This order was not changed during the short tenure of Generals Denver and Sturgis, but he remained in his position for only a brief period after General Blunt took

²¹General Order, Department of Kansas, June 26, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 372.

²²Annie Heloise Abel, The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1919), p. 114, hereinafter cited as Abel, The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War; Wiley Britton, "Some Reminiscences of the Cherokee People," Chronicles of Oklahoma, V (June, 1927), p. 180.

control of the Kansas department.²³

The Department of Interior was responsible for the internal supervisory structure of the tribes in the Indian Territory. This consisted of a superintendent, and under him agents for the various tribes. At the beginning of the war the entire Southern Superintendency defected to the Confederacy, and this left a vacuum which was filled through political appointments. Some of the new agents were unable to adequately perform their duties, since the Indian tribes concerned had joined the Confederate States, and no longer desired associations with representatives of the Federal government.²⁴

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William P. Dole, was responsible for all facets of relations between the government and the numerous Indian tribes. A Lincoln appointee from Indiana and acquaintance of Senator Lane, Dole was aware of the animosity between the military commanders and the Indians. He naturally sided with any individual who professed to understand the problems of the displaced red men.²⁵

In a letter written in May to General Blunt, Commissioner Dole outlined what he considered to be the nature of the Indian Expedition. He pointed out the irregular nature of the Indian regiments and the need for white troops to accompany the Indians on the invasion. He spoke also of the autonomous position of the Kansas departmental commander which automatically insured that Blunt would appoint the expedition leader. Dole emphasized that the Kansas commander was also responsible for supplying

²³Special Order, Department of Kansas, February 15, 1862, Official Records, i, VIII, p. 557.

²⁴U.S., Congress, Senate, Report of the Secretary of Interior 1861, 37th Cong., 2d Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1861), Executive Document Number 1, pp. 446-447, 631, 650-652, 654-655.

²⁵Castel, A Frontier State at War, p. 27.

the invasion force. These factors were readily accepted by Blunt, especially the final task, since it presupposed the expenditure of large amounts of Federal funds.²⁶

Colonel Doubleday wasted no time in advising General Blunt of his plans regarding the reconquest of the Indian country, although he lacked a clear understanding of the role of the expedition. He assembled his force of white soldiers and started south toward the enemy without the Indian auxiliaries. The Ohio colonel envisioned the conquering of the Indian Territory as a formality, an operation which could be accomplished with an absence of difficulties. His approach to the problems of command was simple. He expected maximum support from higher headquarters, which would anticipate and supply all requirements for the expedition. His request for quartermasters for a contemplated depot at Fort Gibson, secret service agents for intelligence work, and one or two engineers show his naiveté.²⁷

General Blunt had no intention of leaving Doubleday in command of the Indian Expedition, and during the first week of June, he appointed Colonel William Weer, former commanding officer of an infantry regiment in the Lane Brigade, as the new commander. Colonel Weer, another friend of the Kansas Senator, had a reputation of being a hard-drinking Kansas politician, but his excesses were not a serious problem.²⁸ He was a

²⁶Abel, The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War, pp. 109-110n.

²⁷Doubleday to Moonlight, May 25, 1862, Doubleday to Blunt, June 1, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 397, 408.

²⁸A newspaper correspondent who accompanied the Lane Brigade on its raiding expedition into Missouri in the fall of 1861 reported that Colonel Weer opposed the burning of the town of Osceola, but was overruled by his fellow officers. Castel, A Frontier State at War, p. 54.

prolific writer and soon flooded the Leavenworth headquarters with letters outlining the problems he faced in his new assignment. But Weer understood the importance of the mission of the Indian Expedition, and he was well aware of the serious problems which faced it. He realized that he was in a precarious position as commander, and that he would need specific instructions on questions of governmental policy which would confront him as he moved south. The methods to be used in handling Confederate Indians and the problem of policy on wanton destruction of private property appear early in his letters to the Kansas Department adjutant general, Captain Thomas Moonlight.²⁹

The greatest single problem which faced Colonel Weer after he became the Indian Expedition commander was the rapid training of the Indian regiments and the issuance of equipment to them. He had sufficient experience with military operations to know the necessity of converting the new soldiers from individual to group fighters. This could only be done with adequate training, but without the proper equipment, training was futile. Colonel Weer constantly implored his superior to provide equipment with which to outfit his novice soldiers. Unfortunately, these daily pleadings went for the most part unanswered, and when supplies did arrive, they were either inferior or in insufficient quantity.³⁰

One of the most exasperating difficulties which Weer had to cope with was the tendency of the Indian soldiers to remain Indian civilians in thought and action. They sought the advice of their chiefs rather

²⁹Weer to Moonlight, June 5, 6, 7 and 13, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 418, 419-420, 422, 430-431.

³⁰Weer to Moonlight, June 5, 6, and 13 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 418, 419-420, 430-431; Weer to Doubleday, June 6, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 418-419.

than their officers; they continued to rely on superstition to the detriment of their training; and they were slow in all of their actions. To compound this, the special Indian agents assigned to accompany the expedition sided with their charges, and the expedition commander had little confidence in them. In general, Colonel Weer was not enthusiastic about his Indian soldiers, and felt he would be censured for their actions no matter what course he pursued.³¹

Equally irritating to the Kansas politician were the white regiments of the expedition. Some of these organizations, composite units made up from the defunct Lane Brigade, were slow in arriving at the base of operations at Fort Scott. Other units, present in the area, spent most of their time arguing about and plotting against their commanding colonels. The white officers assigned to the Indian regiments stayed away from their posts and further complicated the training of the Indian recruits. The invasion force, composed of units from Kansas, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Indiana, lacked cohesion, and despite Weer's efforts, did not amalgamate into a coordinated and smooth functioning organization.³²

Supplies for the expedition continued to arrive at two separate points, Fort Scott and Humbolt, Kansas, and Weer's requests to make the former the sole supply depot were ignored. The lack of a mustering officer, vital for inducting the Indians into the army, provided a major obstacle to the commander's plans. When this official arrived weeks later, he was not permanently assigned to the expedition. Colonel Weer finally decided he would have to solve his problems without assistance

³¹Wardell, A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, pp. 154-155; Weer to Moonlight, June 6, 13 and 16, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 419-420, 430-431, 434.

³²Weer to Moonlight, June 6, 13, 16, 21 and 22, 1862, ibid., pp. 419-420, 430-431, 434, 441-442, 443-444.

from higher headquarters. Acting on his own initiative, he marched his Indian regiments to Humbolt in mid-June, outfitted them as best he could, and then proceeded to move this portion of the command south to join the main body of the expedition. Due to its size and the need for security, the invasion force did not travel more than ten miles per day. But it was moving, and the news of this traveled into the Indian Territory at a much more rapid rate.³³

The expedition was heralded by excited Confederate Cherokees from Colonel Stand Watie's regiment who were victims of a surprise attack at Cowskin Prairie on the evening of June 7. A detachment from the advanced portion of the Indian Expedition can be considered the victors in this minor skirmish, though neither side reported casualties. The Federal soldiers, commanded personally by Colonel Doubleday, were as frightened and confused as their opponents when the action began shortly after dark. Doubleday ordered his artillery to fire into the Southern camp, and it was these noisy explosions, not his 1500 man force, that caused the sudden Confederate withdrawal. The Southern Indians moved frantically to a more secure location in the lower part of the Cherokee Nation, and probably exaggerated the strength and capability of the attacking Federals. Colonel Doubleday made no attempt to pursue the retreating Confederates, but contented himself with herding 500 captured cows and horses back to his base camp.³⁴

The elements under Colonel Weer, which included some white regimental detachments and the two partially filled Indian regiments, joined

³³Weer to Moonlight, June 5, 13, 21 and 22, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 418, 430-431, 441, 443-444.

³⁴Doubleday to Weer, June 8, 1862, Weer to Moonlight, June 7 and 13, 1862, Elunt to Schofield, June 13, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 102, 422, 431, 427-428.

the main body at Cowskin Prairie during the last days of June. Here Weer placed an Indian regiment in each of his two brigades. This pairing of Indian and white units was done in accordance with instructions from the War Department. This allowed the brigade commanders to use integrated formations, since it was believed the Indian soldiers would fight better with support from white comrades-in-arms. The two brigade commanders were Colonel Frederick Salomon of the First Brigade and Colonel William R. Judson of the Second Brigade.³⁵

Prior to actual entry into the Indian Territory, Weer sent detailed instructions to his brigade commanders covering the conduct of Federal troops. He emphasized the important opportunity which the expedition soldiers had in winning back the disaffected Indians. It was Weer's desire that no vengeance or vindictiveness be tolerated, and that the right of private property be scrupulously observed. The mission of the expedition was to restore normal relations with the Indian tribes, and the expedition commander wanted every effort made to accomplish this end. The clear implication of Weer was to treat the Indians who had turned to the Confederacy with understanding and forgiveness.³⁶

Throughout June, Colonel Weer continued to request instructions from General Blunt on a variety of subjects. But the commanding general of the Kansas Department remained strangely silent. He offered no help to the expedition commander and allowed his subordinate to grope in the conduct of operations. The first official correspondence between the two men was a directive, written on July 3, which answered none of the

³⁵Thomas to Halleck, April 4, 1862, *ibid.*, VIII, pp. 659-660; Phillips to Salomon, June 27, 1862, Phillips to Judson, June 28, 1862, *ibid.*, XIII, pp. 452, 456.

³⁶Phillips to Salomon, June 27, 1862, Phillips to Judson, June 28, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 452, 456.

important questions asked by Weer, but specifically informed the expedition leader that he was not to invade either Arkansas or Texas. Weer was told to set up a base of supplies in the Indian Territory and await further orders. The implication was one of mild rebuke, and showed Blunt to be slightly jealous of Weer for fear his subordinate would gain prestige at his expense.³⁷

A major weakness of Federal commanders operating in the Indian Territory, Kansas, and Missouri was to overestimate the strength of their Confederate opponents. Unwilling or unable to properly use their cavalry regiments to gain accurate information about the enemy, these commanders were forced to rely on rumors and hearsay as to Confederate troop dispositions and probable courses of action. This dependence on doubtful sources of intelligence usually resulted in miscalculations, hesitancy, and the loss of initiative.

The specter of a huge Confederate force moving north to either annihilate the Indian Expedition or attack in strength in Missouri appeared in early June in reports coming from Brigadier General E. B. Brown's command in southwest Missouri. Ill-defined rumors had Confederate Brigadier General James S. Rains consolidating the commands of Colonels Watie, J.T. Coffee, and General Pike for a thrust into Missouri. This exaggerated information was forwarded to the Missouri District headquarters in Saint Louis and to the Kansas Department headquarters at Fort Leavenworth.³⁸

General Blunt, whose excitable nature was ready to see the worst in

³⁷Blunt to Weer, July 3, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 461.

³⁸Brown to Blunt, June 4, 1862, Schofield to Blunt, June 7, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 414, 421-422.

every situation, assumed this Confederate force would invade Kansas and immediately demanded reinforcements from the War Department. But he made no effort to forward the contents of these reports to the Indian Expedition until mid-July.³⁹ During this long intervening period, the sole source of information for the expedition regarding the gathering Confederate force was the southwest Missouri commander, General Brown. He communicated with Colonel Salomon directly, via courier, and asked for assistance in repelling the impending Confederate attack. Colonel Salomon, displaying a timidity characteristic of all frightened commanders, sent only a small detachment for reinforcement. He next moved his entire brigade toward the enemy, then stopped, and weakly feinted with light reconnaissance units. These were easily repulsed by Confederate outposts.⁴⁰

Colonel Weer, when informed of the danger to his flank, dispatched additional reinforcements toward Missouri, but continued the forward movement of the expedition. He was aware of the gathering Confederate units, but he did not believe their size constituted a major threat to his organization. He was confident he would completely clear the Indian Territory of Confederate forces in a matter of weeks if sufficient supplies were provided for the expedition. He was also pleased with the performance of the Indian regiments of the command, for they appeared willing to fight on all occasions. Their one liability was the intense desire to seek revenge on their Confederate enemies.⁴¹

³⁹Blunt to Stanton, June 10, 1862, Moonlight to Weer, July 14, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 425, 472.

⁴⁰Salomon to Weer, June 30, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 458.

⁴¹Weer to Moonlight, July 2, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 459-461.

The first engagement of the Indian Expedition involving more than light contact between scouting elements occurred near Locust Grove on July 3. Colonel Weer, as was typical of most Civil War commanders, elected to personally lead the units involved. In the skirmish the Federal soldiers overwhelmed Confederate detachments from Colonel Watie's Second Cherokee Mounted Rifle Regiment and a Missouri unit commanded by Colonel J.J. Clarkson. The defeat was complete and Colonel Clarkson was captured along with his supply train of sixty wagons, most of them loaded with ammunition. Weer's force numbered about 250 men, but only portions of two units, the First Federal Indian Regiment and the Ninth Kansas Cavalry Regiment, were actually engaged in the fighting. The Confederate force, numerically similar, was surprised by the sudden Federal onslaught, and then relentlessly pursued by the attacking units for the better part of a day.⁴²

The few Southern survivors of the action, panic stricken and demoralized, precipitated an even greater misfortune for the Confederate cause by their retreat. These white and Indian soldiers rushing through the streets of the Cherokee capital at Tahlequah convinced a significant portion of the tribe that their earlier repudiation of allegiance to the United States was a grave mistake. Consequently, Drew's regiment of Confederate Cherokees deserted en masse, and those who did not enlist in the descending Federal expedition disavowed their loyalty to the South and returned to their homes. The influx of disaffected Cherokees was so great that the Second Federal Indian Regiment was brought up to authorized strength, and a new unit, the Third Federal Indian Regiment, was

⁴²Weer to Moonlight, July 4 and 6, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 137, 137-138; McReynolds, The Seminoles, p. 305.

organized.⁴³

The victories at Cowskin Prairie and Locust Grove were exhilarating and gratifying experiences for the members of the expedition, particularly for the refugee Indian soldiers. But rumors of new Confederate troop concentrations massing for a counterattack prevented the full enjoyment of the newly won gains. Warped and faulty news once again unnerved and confused Federal leaders. This spurious intelligence had more effect on the subordinate commanders of the expedition than it did on Colonel Weer, and it was accepted as completely authentic in headquarters situated some distance from the combat zone.⁴⁴

Colonel Weer believed a Confederate force was gathering near Fort McCulloch, in southern Indian Territory, which would augment another at Fort Smith, Arkansas, but he minimized their importance. He was still confident as to the final outcome of the expedition. It was obvious that a malfunctioning supply system, and not the Confederates, was his major problem. Supplies were of paramount importance, since the units of the invasion force were entirely dependent on the Kansas depot for food and ammunition, and the recent Cherokee additions to the command had compounded this difficulty.⁴⁵

Activity on a large scale declined after the action at Locust Grove. Weer consolidated his position by establishing a camp on Grand River, ten miles north of the Confederate-occupied Fort Gibson on the Arkansas River. From this centrally located point in the Cherokee Nation he sent out

⁴³Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, p. 111; Weer to Moonlight, July 6, 1862, Official Records, 1, XIII, p. 138.

⁴⁴Weer to Moonlight, July 6, 1862, Moonlight to Weer, July 14, 1862, Blunt to Stanton, July 20, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 138, 472, 482-483.

⁴⁵Weer to Moonlight, July 2 and 4, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 138, 460.

several reconnoitering parties to determine the strength of his opponent. One of these patrols captured Fort Gibson without a fight, but an absence of forage forced the detachment to return to the base camp. The Federal forces were successful in maintaining control of the area, and only token Confederate resistance remained north of the Arkansas River.⁴⁶

In the spring of 1862 it became obvious that Cherokee Chief John Ross regretted his precipitous action in aligning his tribe with the Confederacy. In an effort to improve the situation, he sought to bring about changes in Confederate troop dispositions within the Indian country. These efforts were culminated in late June with a direct appeal to the Trans-Mississippi District commander, Major General Thomas C. Hindman, shortly before the Federal invasion force penetrated deep into the Indian Territory. Chief Ross asked for positive help and reminded the Confederate general of the stipulations of the alliance treaty calling for Confederate protection of the Indian nation. But help did not materialize in spite of Hindman's reassuring reply.⁴⁷

Advised by Cherokee refugees of a receptive climate within the tribal government, Colonel Weer initiated action for negotiations with the tribe shortly after his expedition began its forward movement. This was followed by a request for talks with Chief Ross made after the Indian Expedition had moved into the Cherokee Nation. The formal overture was declined by the principal chief. This second communication, made by Colonel Weer after the Locust Grove victory, was conciliatory in language, and a purposeful effort to dissuade Ross and the Cherokee Nation from

⁴⁶Weer to Moonlight, July 16, 1862, Campbell to Weer, July 14, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 160-161, 161.

⁴⁷Abel, The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War, pp. 160-161; Wardell, A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, p. 153; Ross to Hindman, June 25, 1862, Official Records, 1, XIII, pp. 950-951.

their attachment to the Southern States. This attempt, though unproductive in arranging a meeting between the head of the Indian nation and the expedition commander, indicated the spirit of forgiveness which Federal authorities offered as inducement if the tribe would repudiate the Confederate alliance.⁴⁸

Simultaneously with the capture of Fort Gibson and the clearing of Confederate forces north of the Arkansas River, Weer dispatched a reconnaissance party to the Tahlequah region to ascertain the possibility for a confrontation with Cherokee tribal authorities. The small force, led by Captain Harris S. Greeno of the Sixth Kansas Cavalry Regiment and composed of elements of this unit, was a reassuring gesture to many of the wavering Cherokee Indians. It met no resistance in the capital, and information gathered there gave hope to Captain Greeno that his primary mission to effect a restoration of friendly relations with a majority of the tribe could be accomplished.⁴⁹

The following day, July 15, the patrol leader moved his force south toward Park Hill, the location of Chief Ross' elegant home, Rose Cottage. The arrival of the small cavalry detachment was an extremely tense moment, since it had been reported that a 300-man force of Confederate Cherokee soldiers was camped in the area. Any apprehension concerning the intentions of these men was quickly dispelled when the Federal troops rode in, for these followers of Chief Ross warmly welcomed the Kansas soldiers. Captain Greeno found the principal officers of Colonel Drew's First Cherokee Mounted Rifle Regiment with the chief, and together they faced a

⁴⁸Phillips to Ross, June 26, 1862, Weer to Ross, July 7, 1862, Ross to Weer, July 8, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 450, 464, 486-487.

⁴⁹Weer to Moonlight, July 16, 1862, Greeno to Weer, July 15 and 17, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 160-161, 473, 161-162.

difficult dilemma.⁵⁰

The night before Colonel Cooper, the ranking officer of Confederate forces at Fort Davis, had demanded the Cherokee tribe abide by its treaty obligations and call up all able-bodied men to repel the invading Federal force. Reluctant to carry out this command and yet afraid of reprisals from Confederate sympathizers, Chief Ross was much relieved when Captain Greeno solved the problem by arresting him together with the military officers present at the Rose Cottage conference.⁵¹ This prevented the issuance of resistance instructions, since arrested officials, even when paroled, lacked the requisite authority to issue lawful orders. Ross was looking for a means to undo the provisions of the Confederate treaty and save his reputation as a gentleman who would not go back on his word. The timely arrival of Greeno, a representative of the Federal government, not only destroyed the unwanted treaty, but also provided the Cherokee chief with an excellent opportunity for changing sides. Three weeks later Ross and his family moved voluntarily and with a Federal escort to Fort Scott, Kansas, and eventually east to Washington and Philadelphia. When they left they took the Cherokee national treasury and archives with them.⁵²

Over 2,000 Cherokees joined the various Federal Indian regiments during the summer of 1862, and the Ross and Ridge treaty factions, which

⁵⁰Weer to Moonlight, July 16, 1862, Greeno to Weer, July 15 and 17, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 161, 473, 162.

⁵¹U.S., Department of Interior, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1862 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1863), pp. 158-159, hereinafter cited as U.S., Department of Interior, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1862; Greeno to Weer, July 15 and 17, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 473, 162.

⁵²Salomon to Elunt, August 9, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 551-552.

split the tribe asunder at the time of removal, came into existence again with appalling repercussions. This pattern of Cherokees against Cherokees was extremely detrimental to the tribe and to the Confederacy, but the Federal government gained considerable advantage from the intra-tribal rivalry.

The commanding general of Confederate forces in the Indian Territory was General Pike, the same man who had negotiated the 1861 alliance treaties between the Five Civilized Tribes and the Confederate States. During and prior to the Federal invasion of the Indian country, Pike had been involved in heated debates with his superiors in Arkansas concerning conditions in the territory. His stubborn refusal to accept responsibility for concentrating and controlling Confederate troops allowed the invading Federal command to defeat the Southern units one by one.⁵³

Colonel Cooper, the forward Confederate field commander, attempted to organize resistance to the Indian Expedition at Fort Davis, but was unable to consolidate sufficient strength to offer more than token opposition. He became aware of the latest split within the Cherokee tribe and realized this was a grave setback to Confederate hopes. He tried to determine which Cherokees were firmly committed to the Southern cause and to offer them encouragement for the future. His efforts were a total failure, since they were initiated after Federal forces had established a sizable foothold in the Indian country.⁵⁴

⁵³Duncan, Reluctant General, pp. 232-233; W.E. Woodruff, With the Light Guns in '61-'65 (Little Rock: Central Printing Co., 1903), pp. 67-68; Carroll to Pike, July 27, 1862, Pike to Randolph, July 1, 1862, Pike to Secretary of War, July 20, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 951, 850-851, 856-860.

⁵⁴Cooper to Drew, July 18, 1862, Civil War, Cherokee File, Grant Foreman Papers, Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The rapid dissolution of Confederate resistance after Locust Grove and the realignment of the Cherokee Nation with the Federal government did not cause capitulation of the remaining tribes of the Indian Territory, nor did it allow the soldiers of the Indian Expedition to relax. The drought in the Indian country was severe in the summer of 1862, and forage was practically non-existent. The supply trains from Fort Scott were delayed due to coordination failures and the lack of strong escorts. These conditions put the men and animals of the invasion force on short rations and, coupled with rumors of massing Confederates, eroded the morale of the command to a dangerous ebb.⁵⁵

General Blunt became apprehensive about the safety of the Indian Expedition during the middle of July. This concern was not due to fear of losing the northern portion of the Indian country to a Confederate offensive, but because the invasion force represented the bulk of Federal forces available to defend the Department of Kansas. He was charged with this responsibility not only by his position as military commander, but also by his political ties with Senator Lane. Any attack on Kansas would have serious consequences for the Senator and his protégé, since both were acquiring profits from Army contracts with the merchants and speculators at Fort Leavenworth and consequently desired to maintain their respective positions.⁵⁶

General Blunt warned Colonel Weer in mid-July of the danger of being cut off from his base of supplies, and the following week Blunt dispatched a strong appeal to Secretary of War Stanton for reinforcements.⁵⁷ Whether

⁵⁵Weer to Moonlight, July 12 and 16, 1862, Salomon to Blunt, July 20, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 487-488, 161, 485.

⁵⁶Castel, A Frontier State at War, pp. 83-84.

⁵⁷Moonlight to Weer, July 14, 1862, Blunt to Stanton, July 20, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 472, 482-483.

the Kansas commander was convinced his department was in immediate danger of invasion, or whether he was attempting to increase the total number of units he directly controlled, cannot be ascertained. Both possibilities existed, and probably Blunt was motivated equally by them. The appeal to Washington produced no results, but the ominous tone of his warning to the Indian Expedition indicated the fear that was also prevalent in the invasion force. This dread of the unknown would soon erupt into drastic action which would completely undermine the positive effect of the expedition in the Indian Territory.

On July 18 Colonel Weer was arrested and charged with gross dereliction of duty by Colonel Salomon, the expedition executive officer and second in command. Salomon immediately assumed command and issued orders which showed he was willing to risk a court-martial for mutiny in order to extricate himself and his men from a position he considered untenable. The new commander had panicked following receipt of unconfirmed rumors, and arrested Weer to avoid a Confederate jeopardy which in reality did not exist.⁵⁸

Colonel Salomon, in a pronouncement to unit commanders, gave a long list of reasons for his actions. The expedition was 160 miles inside enemy territory and without communication to the rear. Long and unnecessary marches under adverse weather conditions had seriously weakened the soldiers of the command. Supplies were almost exhausted, and there was no prospect of obtaining critically needed food from Kansas. Colonel Weer would not alter his plans, and he had refused to listen to reason. Salomon commented pointedly that "Reliable information has been received that large bodies of the enemy were moving to our rear, and yet we lay

⁵⁸Salomon to All Commanders, July 18, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 475-476.

here idle." Under these circumstances, the new commander felt he had no other choice but to arrest Weer and save the expedition from disaster.⁵⁹

The actual arrest of Colonel Weer and the rapid issuance of orders for a withdrawal movement occurred during the evening of July 18 and the early morning hours of the following day. The white regiments and attached artillery batteries, apparently acquainted with the dissatisfaction and apprehension of Colonel Salomon, were prepared for the events that happened. They commenced retracing their route toward Fort Scott at 2:00 a.m. on July 19. Significantly, the commanders of the Kansas regiments made no effort to challenge the fall of fellow Kansan Colonel Weer. Significantly also, a high degree of secrecy was used to prevent the events from becoming known to the Federal Indian regiments which were scheduled to remain behind in the Indian Territory. This suggests a feeling of guilt on the part of the new expedition commander for the withdrawal order.⁶⁰

Colonel Salomon did not inform General Blunt of his actions until two days after the expedition had begun its backward movement. The new commander of the fading invasion force gave a long and detailed account of how Weer, with brutal and improper methods, had jeopardized the safety of the expedition by his utter disregard of standard military procedures and by his callous and uncouth attitude toward his subordinates. Colonel Salomon rationalized to the point that his mutinous action was the only thing which had prevented the total destruction of the Federal force.⁶¹

The news of the sudden withdrawal of the expedition from the Indian Territory was not received enthusiastically by the Indian agents who had

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰General Order, Indian Expedition, July 18, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 476.

⁶¹Salomon to Blunt, July 20, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 484-485.

accompanied the invasion force from Kansas. These two men, E.H. Carruth and H.W. Martin, were horrified by the actions of Colonel Salomon, and were even more horrified at the prospects of leaving the newly won Cherokee allies to the mercy of their Confederate brothers. Both agents were also concerned about the effect this incident would have on other Indian tribes who were watching for signs of strength from the Federal government. A strange paradox of the expedition was that Carruth and Martin indirectly championed Colonel Weer in their reports, even though the former commander's actions and messages indicated he did not like them and felt they were incapable of carrying out their duties.⁶²

The Indian regiments of the expedition were left with only sketchy details of the Weer-Salomon events of July 18-19. Rumors circulated that Colonel Weer had become mentally incompetent, and that this had caused the rapid withdrawal. The commanders of the Indian units did not receive copies of the withdrawal order until three days after the white units had started their movement toward Kansas. The three Indian organizations, including the newly formed Third Federal Indian Regiment, were left without artillery or sufficient rations to serve as a Corps of Observation.⁶³

Colonel R.W. Furnas, commander of the First Indian Regiment, formed

⁶²Weer to Moonlight, July 12, 1862, Carruth to Blunt, July 19, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 487, 478; Wardell, A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, pp. 154-155.

⁶³Abel, The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War, pp. 143-144; "Indian-Pioneer History," CXII, p. 282, Grant Foreman Collection, Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. This collection of 112 bound volumes of typewritten interviews is the product of a Works Progress Administration project during the years 1937-1938. The interviews were with early settlers, pioneers, and Indians of Oklahoma, and cover a vast range of subjects before and after statehood. Due to the advanced age of most of the people interviewed, this information must be critically evaluated.

the three Indian units into a brigade, and as ranking officer, assumed command. He called a council of war, and the commanders of the various Indian organizations agreed to remain in the territory and protect the country as best they could from Confederate reprisals. The first camp selected as a base of operations for the new brigade was on the Verdigris River. A serious lowering of the morale of the Indian soldiers, coupled with numerous desertions, forced this camp to be almost immediately abandoned for another closer to the Kansas border. The new base on Horse Creek put the brigade closer to Colonel Salomon and his command who had finally halted their retreat. At the second location, called Camp Wattles, the Indian regiments regrouped, received additional supplies, and were augmented with artillery. From here Colonel Furnas sent out far-ranging patrols to keep Confederate forces under surveillance and to protect the Cherokees friendly to the Federal cause.⁶⁴

The Indian Expedition was now split into two main groups, with the white regiments under Colonel Salomon located at Hudson's Crossing on Grand River, and the Indian Brigade of Colonel Furnas situated forty-five miles directly south of the camp of the white units. The two forces were in communication through a series of outposts, which gave added protection to the expedition against surprise attacks. This new arrangement was not advantageous to the Indian regiments trying to hold and protect the northern portions of the Indian Territory. But it was better than completely forsaking the Cherokees and other Indians who had eagerly greeted the invading forces only one month before.⁶⁵

⁶⁴General Order, First Indian Brigade, July 19, 1862, Furnas to Blunt, July 25, 1862, Salomon to Blunt, July 29, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 481, 511-512, 522; U.S., Department of Interior, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year of 1862, pp. 160-161; Abel, The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War, p. 145.

⁶⁵Salomon to Blunt, July 29, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, p. 521; Abel, The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War, pp. 145-146.

General Blunt was shocked when he received the news of the arrest of Colonel Weer and the head-long retreat of the Indian Expedition. His apprehensive nature was agitated even more by the possibility that the Indian regiments might be lost to enemy action or that Kansas was once again vulnerable to invasion from the south. He made strenuous efforts to halt the movement of the retreating expedition, but he did not, as could have been expected, attempt to salvage the reputation of his subordinate, Colonel Weer. On the contrary, Blunt's instructions to Colonel Salomon were mild in tone and stressed the necessity for saving as much as possible of the gains made during the initial weeks of the invasion.⁶⁶

The Cherokee Nation and the white and Indian soldiers of the invasion force were discouraged by still another retreat. The specter of massing Confederate units reappeared along the Missouri-Arkansas border on August 7, and these reports, when relayed to Colonel Salomon, caused instantaneous reaction. With a speed similar to that shown three weeks before, he moved the bulk of his command by rapid marching to Fort Scott. The Indian Brigade, alone and isolated approximately eighty miles from the supply depot, was forced to follow Colonel Salomon's white units into Kansas.⁶⁷

The unhappy withdrawal of the Indian Expedition to Kansas was in part the result of improper handling of supplies and the lack of critical evaluation of intelligence as to enemy capabilities and intentions. General Blunt became painfully aware of this after learning of Colonel Salomon's second withdrawal. The department commander decided that the

⁶⁶Blunt to Salomon, August 3, 1862, Official Records, 1, XIII, pp. 531-532.

⁶⁷Salomon to Blunt, August 9, 1862, ibid., pp. 551-552.

only way to prevent such reoccurrences would be to take personal charge of the forces and not attempt to direct them from Fort Leavenworth. He knew that wars were won with offensive operations, and not with defensive actions and withdrawals. He knew also that the key to military success was aggressive, forceful leadership. This quality Blunt had in great abundance.

The Federal invasion effort to re-establish control over the Indian Territory ended in withdrawal, but the gains made by the expedition were important in several respects. The Federal government had proven its ability to organize and supply an offensive operation, and the experience gained would improve similar future endeavors. The attitude of forgiveness drove a permanent wedge between the Indian tribes and the Confederacy which the Southerners could never overcome. Lastly, the Indian Expedition demonstrated conclusively that even a halting attempt by the Federal military forces was of greater magnitude than the best the Confederates had to offer. The final outcome of the war at this point should have been obvious to the tribes of the Indian Territory, even to those persons who staunchly supported the South.

CHAPTER III

PRELUDE TO VICTORY

The inglorious retreat of the Indian Expedition in July, 1862, seriously negated the advantages gained by the Federal forces in re-establishing friendly relations with the Southern Indian tribes. The Cherokee Nation was an exception to this, but even though the expedition insured Cherokee allegiance, the tribe still had a substantial Confederate minority led by Colonel Watie. The other four tribes remained Southern supporters although many of them complained about the privations they faced. All tribes would have to endure the misery of intermittent guerilla warfare for almost another year before Federal forces would launch another full-scale offensive. The Federal withdrawal gave hope to most Southern Indians that the weak Confederate forces might be able to maintain their precarious position in the territory.

When Colonel Salomon ordered the rapid evacuation of the white regiments of his usurped command toward Kansas, the official directive omitted the Federal Indian regiments from the retrograde movement. Instead, these quasi-military units, partially trained and with less than minimum requirements of provisions and equipment, were for all intents and purposes abandoned as a Corps of Observation. Theoretically, they were to watch Confederate activity and provide security for the loyal members of the Cherokee Nation. Realistically, the Indian units were left as a rear guard to insure the safe withdrawal of the white majority of the ill-fated expedition.

The Confederate forces under Watie and Cooper did not initiate

operations against the expedition as Colonel Salomon expected, nor did they attack the troops of the newly formed Federal Indian Brigade. This lack of aggressiveness was a common failing of Confederate forces in the Indian Territory and permitted the Federal Indians to recover from the shock of losing their white comrades-in-arms. There was only one minor skirmish involving the adversaries in the late summer of 1862. This was an engagement between elements of the First Federal Indian Regiment, commanded by Major William A. Phillips, and a detachment from Colonel Watie's regiment of Confederate Cherokees.

The action took place on July 27 at a crossroads seven miles from Fort Gibson called Bayou Menard, although dispatches erroneously reported the location as Bayou Bernard. Major Phillips, conducting an extended reconnaissance patrol, had divided his command into three groups to scour the vicinity of Tahlequah and Park Hill for Confederate activity. All three detachments had instructions to rendezvous at Bayou Menard. The Confederate unit, unaware of the three separated Federal elements, blundered into the center group. After an initial exchange of gunfire, they attempted to overpower their opponents with an imprudent charge, and their aggressive action trapped them between Phillip's converging forces. The Southern unit was badly mauled, and their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Taylor, was killed. The remnants of the Confederate patrol withdrew in great confusion toward Fort Gibson. Thirty-two dead Cherokees were found at the scene of the action, and prisoners captured after the skirmish said that more than a hundred men were either killed or wounded. The Federal force lost only one man, and Major Phillips was well pleased with the performance of his Creek and Seminole soldiers.¹

¹McReynolds, The Seminoles, p. 306; Phillips to Furnas, July 27 and August 6, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 181-182, 183-184.

The high commands of both the Federal and Confederate forces in the Indian Territory were not in close proximity with the troops actually engaged in the fighting, and both commands were hampered with internal struggles of generals who sought increasing power at the expense of their rivals. Those wearing the stars of responsibility were highly sensitive of their personal prerogatives, and made constant efforts to enlarge their particular area of authority. They were motivated by combinations of ambition, jealousy, fear, and hate; their actions, whether initiated in Saint Louis, Fort Leavenworth, Fort McCulloch or Little Rock, had tremendous impact on the common soldiers engaged in deadly combat in the dry, hot Indian country.

The nominal commander of Confederate forces in the Indian Territory during and after the invasion by the Federal Indian Expedition was General Pike. He was ordered in late May, 1862, and again in early June by the newly appointed commander of the Trans-Mississippi District, Major General Thomas C. Hindman, to move his brigade to Fort Gibson, 200 miles closer to the attackers. But Pike elected to remain within the security of Fort McCulloch and not to rush north to assist in the containment of the Federal expedition commanded by Colonel Weer.²

The deterioration of relations between the two Confederate generals began several weeks prior to the actual invasion when Hindman insisted Pike transfer the bulk of his white regiments and one-third of his artillery back to Arkansas. Bitterly opposed to leaving the Indian Territory destitute of white soldiers, the Confederate general grudgingly complied with the wishes of his new superior, but not before reminding

²General Report, Major General T.C. Hindman, June 19, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

him of the consequences involved in removing a significant portion of the combat units from the Indian country. Pike also made a pointed issue of the detrimental effect this loss of support would have on the Indian inhabitants of his command.³

When the Federal invasion began in late June, as the former Indian commissioner had gloomily predicted, Hindman immediately ordered Pike to the scene of the fighting. By this time Pike was only commanding Indians and, to make matters worse, his soldiers were ragged, poorly armed, and had not been paid in months. Most of the equipment General Pike had painstakingly secured for his command had been commandeered by the district commander, and these actions had infuriated Pike to the point that insubordination was his recourse.⁴ First he procrastinated, but finally he resigned from the Confederate army. Pike was most unhappy and frustrated over the treatment given him by his superiors, and was deeply disturbed because no one in Little Rock or Richmond apparently cared about their Indian allies on the western fringe of the Confederacy.⁵

After he tendered his resignation, Pike allowed his temper and sharp tongue to overrule his common sense. He wrote numerous letters about the unfair treatment accorded him and his Indians, and when these efforts did not produce the desired results, he went so far as to address a public letter to the Five Civilized Tribes concerning his reasons for returning to civilian life. This vituperative piece of correspondence was printed

³Hindman to Pike, May 31, 1862, Pike to Hindman, June 8, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 943, 936-943.

⁴Carroll to Pike, June 27, 1862, Pike to Randolph, July 1, 1862, General Order, Department of Indian Territory, July 17, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 951-952, 850-851, 970-971.

⁵General Report, Major General T.C. Hindman, June 19, 1863, Pike to Secretary of War, July 15, 1862, Pike to Hindman, July 21, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 40-41, 857-858, 973.

and given wide circulation. In it General Pike subtly informed the Indians that the Confederacy loved them, that he loved them, but that the evil commanders in Arkansas hated them, and that it was those men who had caused the misfortune that was occurring in the Indian Territory.⁶

This final act brought the relations between Hindman and Pike to the breaking point. Hindman took immediate steps to have his subordinate not only relieved from command, but also court-martialed. The haughty Indian commander was arrested, and only the belated acceptance of his resignation by authorities in Richmond permitted him to escape the humiliation of a trial which would have found him guilty.⁷

The paradox to the tragic story of General Pike was the complete independence of the Indian forces, a fact which Hindman did not discover until after actions had been initiated which could not be changed. Although cognizant of the independent nature of his command, Pike was confused by army regulations and the ambiguous character of army orders to the degree that he acquiesced to orders from General Hindman which he could have summarily disregarded.⁸ The damaging effect these sordid happenings had on the morale of the Confederate Indians can be easily measured by the negligible efforts the shortage-plagued command made in attempting to turn back the Federal Indian Expedition.

⁶Pike to Drew, July 14, 1862, Civil War, Cherokee File, Grant Foreman Papers, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Pike to Secretary of War, July 20, 1862, Pike to Hindman, July 31, 1862, Pike to Davis, July 31, 1862, Pike to the Five Civilized Tribes, July 31, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 859, 973-974, 860-869, 869-871.

⁷Randolph to Holmes, October 27, 1862, Newton to Roane, November 3 and 4, 1862, Holmes to Secretary of War, November 15, 1862, Pike to Davis, November 19, 1862, General Report, Major General T.C. Hindman, June 19, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 906, 980-981, 918, 921-922, 41.

⁸Special Orders, Adjutant and Inspector General Office, November 22, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 978.

The commanding generals of Federal forces were also engaged in wrangles over who would control activities in the Indian Territory. These struggles had begun in Kansas at the beginning of the war between General Halleck and General Hunter and a host of politicians led by Senator, and sometimes Brigadier General, Lane. After General Blunt, Lane's protégé, assumed command of the Kansas Department in May, the internal maneuvering abated, but only temporarily. It emerged again in September when Halleck was promoted to General-in-Chief, and Major General Samuel R. Curtis became the Missouri Department commander.

General Blunt took personal command of all Kansas Department troops in August after the Indian Expedition had returned to its base at Fort Scott. At this forward supply depot, the Kansas general convened a court-martial to investigate the circumstances surrounding Colonel Weer's arrest. Since most of the officers concerned were deeply involved, establishing blame for the invasion fiasco was impossible. Rather than cause further complications, General Blunt solved the dilemma by restoring Colonel Weer to his rank and dismissing all charges.⁹

In September, 1862, Confederate forces in Arkansas under the leadership of General Hindman again became a menace to the Federal commands in Missouri and Kansas, and concerted efforts had to be made to destroy them. General Blunt, fearful of a Confederate invasion of Kansas, was especially anxious that the enemy troops be contained and kept outside of his department. His move to Fort Scott to take command of his forces is substantial proof of this anxiety.

⁹J.C. Hopkins, "James G. Blunt and the Civil War" (unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1952), pp. 24-25, hereinafter cited as Hopkins, "James G. Blunt and the Civil War"; General Order, Department of Kansas, August 8, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, p. 549.

The Kansas department commander organized his forces into three integrated white and Indian brigades commanded by Colonel W.F. Cloud, Colonel Weer, and General Salomon. The Army of Kansas was given concentrated training to instill discipline, and with sufficient supplies and equipment was soon brought back into a state of general efficiency. When intelligence reports proved Missouri, not Kansas, was the Confederate objective, Blunt ordered two of his brigades into that state. They were to coordinate their efforts with Federal forces under Brigadier General John M. Schofield, the commander of the Southwest District of Missouri. Colonel Cloud's brigade was retained in the Fort Scott area where it was to maintain contact with the bulk of the army and, if no threat developed toward Kansas, it was to carry out patrolling operations in the Indian Territory.¹⁰

The independent status of Kansas and General Blunt was abruptly terminated on September 19 with a presidential order which recombined Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, and the Indian Territory into a new Department of Missouri under the command of General Curtis.¹¹ No reason was given for this change, but it can be presumed that the disintegration of the Indian Expedition and the elevation of General Halleck as head of all Federal military operations were primary factors behind this attempt to end the influence of Senator Lane on military affairs in the West.

General Curtis, a slow and cautious individual, owed his new position to his status as a Missouri political figure rather than his military background as a West Point graduate. After assuming command of his enlarged department, he wrote Blunt directly about the dissolution of the

¹⁰General Order, Department of Kansas, August 24, 1862, Special Order, Department of Kansas, September 13, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 595, 630.

¹¹General Order, War Department, September 19, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 653.

Kansas command. Simultaneously, Curtis informed General Schofield of his comprehensive plans, and included a copy of his notification letter to Blunt as information, a normal procedure of military coordination. Schofield immediately wrote Blunt of his loss of authority, and due to the slowness of Civil War letter mail, Blunt received this message before he received the one from Curtis. The Kansas general was told very subtly that Schofield would soon be his superior.¹²

General Blunt's reply to the Schofield dispatch was deprecative, for he had no desire to accept a role subordinate to an aspiring and capable commander. He quickly informed Schofield of his lack of official notification of the department merger and, while he was ready to cooperate against a common enemy, he had no intention of carrying out orders of another brigadier general. Blunt further announced the impending movement of his command group to Missouri where he and Schofield, as coequals, could carry out the destruction of advancing Confederate forces.¹³

General Curtis' official confirmation of the establishment of the new Missouri Department was received by Blunt shortly after he sent his caustic reply to Schofield. The Kansas general showed unusual submissiveness in his cordial reply to General Curtis. He extolled the soldierly qualities of the Cherokee Indians who had joined Federal forces in July, and informed his superior he was ready to move into Missouri with an 8,000 man force. But this loss of authority was a severe blow to Blunt's ego, and one which he would attempt to change as soon as possible.¹⁴

¹²Jay Monaghan, Civil War on the Western Border 1854-1865 (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1955), p. 229; Curtis to Schofield, September 27, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 673-674.

¹³Blunt to Schofield, September 30, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 691-692.

¹⁴Blunt to Curtis, October 1, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 696-697.

There was little fighting in the Indian Territory for three months after the skirmish at Bayou Menard in late July, 1862. Both sides were too exhausted and too preoccupied to do otherwise. In an effort to facilitate tighter control over his forces, General Curtis combined the commands of General Blunt and General Schofield into the Army of the Frontier on October 12. This further inhibited Blunt's independence, for Schofield was named army commander over Blunt by virtue of his earlier date of rank.¹⁵

On October 22, 1862, a decisive engagement occurred at Fort Wayne, a former army post in the Cherokee Nation, located approximately fifty miles north of Tahlequah and just inside the territory border from Arkansas. The combatants in this action were soldiers of the First Division, Federal Army of the Frontier, and the Confederate Indian Brigade. General Blunt was the commander of Union forces, and Brigadier General Cooper, recently promoted to his one star rank by the Confederate Congress, was nominal head of the Southern organization.¹⁶ Two days prior to this encounter, General Schofield received intelligence reports that Brigadier General James S. Rains, a Missourian and commander of a Confederate force in western Arkansas and the Indian Territory, had divided his command. The bulk of it remained with Rains in Arkansas, and a smaller force, under Cooper, had moved to the vicinity of Maysville, Arkansas. Both Confederate generals had orders to initiate offensive operations against the rapidly increasing Federal forces in Missouri and Kansas.¹⁷

¹⁵General Order, Department of Missouri, October 12, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 730.

¹⁶Blunt to Schofield, October 22, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 325.

¹⁷General Order, Army of the Frontier, October 20, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 754-755; Wiley Britton, The Civil War on the Border (2 vols., New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1890-1904), I, p. 375. Hereinafter cited as Britton, The Civil War on the Border.

The Federal plan of attack was for Schofield to strike the main Confederate army under Rains while Blunt with two brigades of his division was to seek out Cooper's Indian command. The Third Brigade of Blunt's division was not directly involved in the action, since it had been designated as security for the supply trains. The movement of the left wing of the Army of the Frontier began on October 20 and, after a fourteen hour march, Blunt and his command stopped at Bentonville, Arkansas, where he rested his troops. The following day the supply train with its escort closed in on the main body.¹⁸

At Bentonville Blunt obtained from scouting parties specific information that the Confederate forces were encamped at Fort Wayne across the border from Maysville, and thirty miles west of his location. On the afternoon of October 21 the Kansas general informed his subordinate commanders of his plan of attack. It called for an all-night march and a shattering daybreak assault on the Confederate position. The Federal column would be led by the Second Kansas Cavalry Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel O.A. Bassett. The remainder of Colonel Cloud's brigade and the brigade of Colonel Weer would follow. The supply train was to remain in the Bentonville area.¹⁹

The route through the northern Arkansas countryside was rough, with the hilly terrain offering considerable hinderance to movement. The tired Federal soldiers had great difficulty in keeping a proper interval between units. The darkness acted as an additional impediment to the men

¹⁸Schofield to Curtis, October 21, 1862, Blunt to Schofield, October 28, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 755-756, 325; Britton, The Civil War on the Border, I, p. 367.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 368; Blunt to Schofield, October 28, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, p. 326.

of the marching infantry regiments, but not to the mounted cavalry units. At 2:00 a.m. on October 22 Colonel Cloud was forced to halt his brigade in order to close up the straggling column which had lengthened to several miles. General Blunt, who was in the center of his command, waited over an hour for the rear elements to catch up, then impatiently moved forward on a personal reconnaissance. At the same time he ordered the stopped brigade to continue its forward movement.²⁰

Accompanied by an officer and two men from the lead regiment, Blunt moved far out in front of his troops and had much success in ascertaining the exact location of the Confederate camp. This information was obtained from a Southern woman, who mistook the Kansas general for a member of General Cooper's command, and a Negro slave, who agreed to guide the Federal forces in exchange for his freedom. General Blunt, excited at the prospects of achieving a complete surprise over the Confederates at daylight, quickly returned to the leading elements of the advancing column. There he dispatched two companies to the town of Maysville to prevent Southern pickets from alerting the main Confederate camp.²¹

At this point General Blunt, much to his chagrin, discovered that the bulk of his forces was still seven miles to the rear. The order to move forward had not been properly relayed, and the cavalry regiment had remained in position waiting for the arrival of the slower moving infantry. Dawn was less than one hour away. The Federal commander, displaying aggressiveness typical of a successful military leader, elected to commit the three cavalry companies available in order to hold

²⁰ Britton, The Civil War on the Border, I, p. 369; Blunt to Schofield, October 28, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, p. 326.

²¹ Ibid.,; Britton, The Civil War on the Border, I, p. 370.

Confederate troops until the remainder of the command could rush forward. He ordered Colonel Cloud to the rear to bring up the main body as rapidly as possible.²²

The small Federal detachment, riding fast, moved across a large open field known as Beattie's Prairie and drove in the Confederate outposts. The Kansas cavalymen then attacked the main Southern position where the soldiers were just awaking. The Confederate encampment of approximately 2,000 men was in a thick woods, and the extent of it had not been pinpointed by the Federal commander. But relying on the suddenness of the assault and the confusion which followed, General Blunt kept the situation under control by having his men fire into the general area of suspected enemy concentration.²³

The balance of the Second Kansas Cavalry Regiment, augmented by two mountain howitzers, arrived at the scene of the action shortly after the fighting began. They were dismounted and committed by their regimental commander, but due to their position on the extreme flank of the Confederate line, they did not achieve a telling effect. The unit was therefore halted, remounted, and moved to a more central location where they could use their fire power to advantage against the hard-pressed Confederates.²⁴

During the period when the Federal cavalry regiment was being moved, the confused Confederates attempted a complicated maneuver to outflank

²²Blunt to Schofield, October 28, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, p. 327; Britton, The Civil War on the Border, I, p. 371.

²³Bassett to Hill, October 24, 1862, Blunt to Schofield, October 28, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 329-331, 327; Britton, The Civil War on the Border, I, p. 373.

²⁴Blunt to Schofield, October 28, 1862, Bassett to Hill, October 24, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 327, 330.

both ends of the exposed Federal line. As the troops of General Cooper began their advance, units from Colonel Weer's brigade, the Sixth Kansas Cavalry Regiment, and the Third Federal Indian Regiment arrived. Together they stopped the half-hearted Confederate counterattack. At the same time, five companies of the repositioned Second Kansas Cavalry rushed the center of the Southern position where a lone artillery battery was located. The assault was a complete success. The four-gun emplacement was captured, and the wavering Confederate soldiers, seeing their main support being hauled away by jubilant Federal troops, bolted and fled in pandemonium from the field.²⁵

The retreating Confederate soldiers, primarily Indians, were repeatedly attacked by the fresher units of the Federal command. The tired condition of the Federal horses was the only reason the pursuit did not become a complete annihilation. The Confederates were able eventually to outrun their antagonists, but they did not stop their disorganized flight until they reached Fort Gibson, seventy miles south and west from the initial engagement.²⁶

General Blunt was most complimentary about the skill and ability of his troops, although he reported that the victory would have been even greater had the Federal column been closed when the Confederate camp was first sighted. The total casualties of the Federals were five killed and five wounded. Approximately fifty Confederate dead were buried at the site of the action, and Blunt announced that Confederate prisoners reported their losses in killed and wounded at more than 150.²⁷

²⁵Blunt to Schofield, October 28, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 327; Britton, The Civil War on the Border, I, p. 374.

²⁶Blunt to Schofield, October 28, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, p. 327.

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 327-328.

General Blunt and General Schofield were both elated over the success of Federal arms at the Fort Wayne engagement and equally optimistic about the future. Blunt predicted the Confederates would be unable to recoup their losses and gave a glowing report of a contemplated advance to Fort Smith, Arkansas, which he would seize and hold with minimum effort. The Kansas general assured his superiors he could secure most of the Indian Territory and allow additional refugee Indians, unhappily existing in Kansas, to return to their homes. General Schofield agreed with the estimates of his subordinate and felt the Federal Indian regiments alone could pacify and defend the Indian country.²⁸

The aftermath of the Confederate defeat at Fort Wayne found General Cooper most apologetic over the lack of fight displayed by his soldiers. As is the case with most vanquished commanders, he had many excuses for the poor showing of the Confederate Indian Brigade. He blamed General Rains for removing all the white infantry regiments from the command prior to the Federal attack. Cooper insisted that the order to invade Kansas placed his forces in a position where they could not adequately provide for defense. He said the slow concentration of Indian soldiers precluded an available force ready to meet all contingencies, and that poor equipment and improper rations were responsible for his troops being physically unfit to withstand the Federal assault.²⁹

Apparently none of the individual Confederate commanders made any effort toward giving direction and control to the hapless Southern forces at Fort Wayne. Cooper stated illness of an undefined nature had forced

²⁸Schofield to Curtis, October 24, 1862, Blunt to Schofield, October 24, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 759-760, 760.

²⁹Cooper to Newton, October 25, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

him to relinquish command at the time of the engagement, but he was vague about the officer who actually had charge of the troops in the combat area. Lieutenant Colonel M.W. Buster, commanding a Texas cavalry battalion, was listed by Cooper as the officer in charge, but Cooper was present in the encampment. In a postscript to the official report, General Cooper said that Colonel Watie was also exercising command while he was sick, and the Cherokee colonel, by his own admission, was present and involved in the engagement.³⁰

Two months after the action at Fort Wayne General Cooper completely excused himself and his men for the defeat. He viewed the skirmish at that date as a Confederate victory, since the loss of the artillery was compensated for by what he reported as heavy casualties sustained by the attacking Federal forces. Cooper was lavish in his praise for Colonel Watie and his regiment for their successful rear-guard activities and for the Choctaw and Chickasaw regiment's tenacious fighting. Uniquely, a member of the Choctaw unit saw the actions of his regiment in a much different light. He reported in pidgin English that most of the regiment fled from the fight ignoring the commands of their officers, and that "Choctaw he no stop til way off, pass big prairie." This clearly indicates that members of this unit were leaders in the retreat from the engagement.³¹

Both sides were highly inaccurate in the calculation of casualties, and the figures of killed and wounded were exaggerated to prove the

³⁰Cooper to Newton, October 25, 1862, Watie to Cooper, October 25, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 332, 336-337.

³¹Cooper to Hindman, December 15, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 332-335; "Indian-Pioneer History," XLII, p. 89, Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society.

validity of the reports. The Confederate command had suffered severely, since Cooper only paused at the Fort Gibson-Fort Davis area, and then continued the withdrawal south to Scullyville, located deep in the Choctaw Nation.

The commander of Confederate forces in the Trans-Mississippi Department, Major General Thadeus H. Holmes, presented additional facts about Fort Wayne in his November report to the Confederate War Department. According to him, Cooper was totally responsible for the actions of the Confederate soldiers during and after the engagement. The Indian commander was accused of not controlling his men because he was incapacitated from the effects of alcohol. Cooper and Rains were charged by Holmes as being incompetent due to their intemperate drinking habits.³²

General Curtis, the commander of the Missouri Department, was pleased with the success of Blunt's command, and he was also optimistic over the early liberation of the Indian Territory. But his cautious nature and his fear of a consolidated Confederate army attacking his divided forces along the Missouri-Arkansas-Indian Territory border severely curtailed the plans and ambitions of his subordinates, Schofield and Blunt. The timidity of Curtis shackled the Army of the Frontier into inactivity and gave the hapless Confederate command in the Indian Territory an opportunity to recover partially from their previous losses.³³

The Army of the Frontier spent the winter of 1862 in Arkansas trying to maintain contact with the dwindling Confederate command of General Holmes. The First Division was positioned in the northwest corner of the

³²Holmes to Secretary of War, November 15, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, p. 918.

³³Curtis to Halleck, October 24, 1862, Curtis to Schofield, October 25, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 324-325, 793.

state, and General Blunt, disgusted with his wary department commander, sent far-reaching patrols throughout most of the Cherokee country. The majority of these reconnaissance efforts were made by Colonel Phillips and his newly organized Third Federal Indian Regiment. Phillips was responsible for the organization of the new Indian unit, and had been promoted to his new rank as a reward for his services.³⁴

The Indian Territory north of the Arkansas River was a barren land because of the extensive military operations and the torrid weather which had occurred there the preceding summer. It was impossible for any sizable Confederate force to maintain itself on the country, and the Federal regiments which moved in temporarily could stay only as long as sufficient supplies were transported to them. The Third Federal Indian Regiment, filled with former Confederate Cherokees, had a vested interest in remaining in their homeland, and their commander, Colonel Phillips, used all plausible excuses compatible with military necessity to defer to their wishes.

There were some positive advantages to be gained by the presence of the Federal unit in the Indian country. The extensive salt works on the Illinois River were worked by the Indian ~~s~~oldiers and provided this valuable commodity for the entire First Division and for the inhabitants of the area. Fort Gibson, which dominated a large part of the Cherokee Nation, was occupied intermittently by the Federals. This prevented the post from falling into the hands of the Confederates who occupied Fort Davis on the opposite side of the Arkansas River.³⁵

³⁴Schofield to Blunt, October 25, 1862, Blunt to Schofield, November 9, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 763-764, 785.

³⁵Blunt to Schofield, November 9, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 785.

There was minimum activity by Federal forces in the Indian Territory during November and most of December, 1862. An important battle occurred at Prairie Grove, Arkansas, on December 7, however, which caused Confederate hopes in Arkansas and the Indian Territory to drop even lower. The Army of the Frontier, commanded by General Blunt in the absence of General Schofield, defeated the First Corps of the Confederate Army of the West, commanded by General Hindman. Once again the aggressiveness of the Kansas general and luck combined to produce a significant Federal victory.³⁶

Three weeks after Prairie Grove, General Blunt returned Colonel Phillips to the Indian country, but this time the Third Federal Indian Regiment was properly reinforced with elements from the Sixth Kansas Cavalry Regiment and one section of an artillery battery. This strong Federal force did not stay on the north side of the Arkansas as before, but boldly crossed the water barrier on December 27 and attacked Confederate forces located at Fort Davis. The defenders, commanded by General Cooper, were easily dislodged and driven eastward toward Fort Smith. After a short pursuit, the Federal soldiers returned to the abandoned Confederate post and burned it to the ground. The ten acre station, with its extensive barracks and warehouses built in the fall of 1861, was totally destroyed.³⁷

In November of 1862 the Department of Missouri was subdivided into

³⁶Schofield to Curtis, January 1, 1863, *ibid.*, i, XXII, Pt. 2, p. 6.

³⁷Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, p. 114; Curtis to Halleck, January 2, 1863, Phillips to Curtis, January 19, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 7, 61; "Indian-Pioneer History," IV, pp. 363-364, Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society; Marion Stuart Brooks, "The History of the Indian Territory During the Civil War" (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1917), p. 173. Hereinafter cited as Brooks, "The History of the Indian Territory During the Civil War."

districts to simplify administrative procedures in the large and cumbersome Federal command. The various generals of the Army of the Frontier were given additional supervisory duties over these areas. General Blunt was appointed commander of the Kansas District, and General Schofield was named commander of a smaller district in southwest Missouri.³⁸

General Schofield reorganized the brigades of Blunt's First Division in January, 1863, and created an entirely new Third Brigade. Under the command of Colonel Phillips, it was called the Indian Brigade. The new unit had some white soldiers, including a battery of artillery and one battalion of the Sixth Kansas Cavalry Regiment, but its main fighting strength was the three Federal Indian regiments. The new brigade was given the mission of establishing itself along the Arkansas-Indian Territory border to provide protection for the Union inhabitants living there. Colonel Phillips was also appointed commander of the Western Arkansas and Indian Territory districts.³⁹

Colonel Phillips had a personal interview with General Schofield two days after the Indian Brigade was created. Schofield outlined the instructions Phillips was to follow in policing and patrolling his newly-assigned districts. In addition to the major tasks of providing protection and coping with Confederate guerrilla bands, the new brigade commander was to furnish food for the Indians living in the country. He was also to make a concerted effort to win back the allegiance of tribes which had joined the Confederacy. Colonel Phillips was allowed wide

³⁸General Order, Department of Missouri, November 2, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, p. 777.

³⁹Schofield to Curtis, January 6, 1863, Schofield to Weer, January 8, 1863, General Order, Department of Missouri, January 13, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 22, 26-27, 40; Wiley Britton, "Some Reminiscences of the Cherokee People," Chronicles of Oklahoma, V (June, 1927), p. 182.

latitude in accomplishing these specific duties, and General Schofield apparently placed a great deal of confidence in the ability of this subordinate.⁴⁰

Phillips had anticipated Schofield's instructions to encourage the defection of Confederate Indians. During the December raid which destroyed Fort Davis, Phillips had indirectly contacted Creek Colonel D.N. McIntosh, who according to informants, was anxious to sever his relationship with the Southern states. Colonel Phillips and the disaffected chief did not talk personally, but it was clear McIntosh was more than ready to change sides. In fact, the eagerness intimated forced Phillips to caution the Indian colonel to be patient until Federal forces were strong enough to provide protection against Confederate reprisals.⁴¹

During the same foray across the Arkansas River, Phillips obtained indications of dissatisfaction among the Choctaws. He believed that even though this Indian nation had a majority who strongly supported the Confederate cause, there was a significant minority who were ready to return to their treaty obligations with the United States. This was probably an erroneous opinion on the part of Phillips, for research has not substantiated the information he received. The horrors of war had not been forced on this tribe in 1862. The Choctaw regiments had been primarily stationed in their own country, and they had not been exposed to the rigors of a prolonged campaign, which was always a key factor in

⁴⁰Schofield to Phillips, January 11, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, p. 33.

⁴¹Phillips to Curtis, January 19, 1863, Schofield to Curtis, January 6, 1863, ibid., pp. 61, 22; Brooks, "The History of the Indian Territory During the Civil War," pp. 173-174; Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People, p. 342.

making Indian soldiers dissatisfied with their lot. The clandestine negotiations with the Creeks and the Choctaws were abruptly terminated when General Blunt recalled Phillip's command back to Arkansas, and nothing came of them.⁴²

The Cherokee Council convened for long-delayed tribal business at Cowskin Prairie on February 4, 1863. This new location, rather than the capital of Tahlequah, was a precautionary measure. The Indian Brigade was encamped across the border in Arkansas and could provide protection against any Confederate attempt to disrupt the meeting. All Southern members of the legislative body had been purged the preceeding August after Chief Ross had changed his allegiance. The close proximity of the Indian Brigade was convenient for a second reason, since a large majority of the members of the council were soldiers in the Second and Third Indian Regiments and were needed to have a quorum.⁴³

The assembly met for several weeks and deliberated on questions which were axiomatic to the Civil War. Before it disbanded it gave Ross, the absent chief, a vote of confidence, repealed the 1861 Confederate treaty, reaffirmed Cherokee ties with the United States, and freed all Negro slaves living in the Cherokee Nation. It also reminded the Federal government, through Colonel Phillips, of its obligation to insure the rapid return of refugee Cherokees living in Kansas.⁴⁴

⁴²Phillips to Curtis, January 19, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 61-62; Debo, The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic, pp. 82-83.

⁴³Phillips to Curtis, January 29 and February 4, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 85, 96-97.

⁴⁴Phillips to Curtis, February 15, 1863, ibid., p. 112; J.B. Davis, "Slavery in Cherokee Nation," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XI, (December, 1933), p. 1070; Grace Steele Woodward, The Cherokees (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 284.

Colonel Phillips had spent nine months of active service with two Indian regiments when he assumed command of the Indian Brigade, and thus he was well aware of the capabilities and limitations of Indian military organizations. He was determined to use this experience to improve the fighting ability of his new brigade. Phillips was most anxious that additional white officers be assigned to Indian companies along with white orderly sergeants who would handle the administrative details so vital for any smooth-functioning military organization.⁴⁵

The brigade commander knew the value of training and drilling as a tool for instilling discipline in troops. He had instituted a policy in the Third Indian Regiment which required the unit to have a dress parade every day except when they were on actual field duty. He continued this in the larger organization. Phillips was fully conscious of the deleterious effect alcohol had on his charges, so he took stringent measures to prevent its importation into his command. To prevent misunderstanding of army rules and regulations by the uneducated Indians, Colonel Phillips had a long series of general and special orders published. These directives covered all phases of day-to-day activities in the brigade and spelled out in simple language what was expected of all personnel. In the spring of 1863 the efforts of Colonel Phillips to rebuild the Indian regiments from the shambles left by the abortive invasion of the previous summer paid rich dividends. After four months of intensive training, punctuated with actual combat operations, the Indian Brigade became an efficient and thoroughly coordinated organization.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Phillips to Curtis, January 19, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 56-58.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 58-61.

The high command of Federal forces engaged in activities in the Indian Territory changed drastically during the spring of 1863. General Curtis, the Missouri Department commander, was overly condescending on policy matters with General Blunt, the former commander of the Kansas Department. Blunt was now a division commander in the Army of the Frontier. General Schofield, the commander of the Army of the Frontier, was continually ruffled over the undisguised partiality displayed by Curtis toward Schofield's subordinate. Schofield, a vain but capable individual, disliked Blunt because of professional jealousy, and the mounting distaste which Schofield developed for Curtis was motivated by the same reason.⁴⁷

The dislike Schofield had for Blunt was mutual, for both men were intensely ambitious. The military career which Schofield had started at West Point had given him the opportunity to obtain the single star of a brigadier general several months before political connections could gain comparable rank for Blunt. Circumstances soon changed the situation, for the engagements at Fort Wayne and Prairie Grove provided the impetus for Blunt's promotion to the coveted two stars of a major general. Schofield became intangled in a political struggle in the United States Senate where the maneuvers of Senator Lane denied him the confirmation of his second star notwithstanding a presidential nomination. While Blunt was honored and praised for his exploits, Schofield, his ego crushed by unfavorable Senate action, quarreled and became openly antagonistic with General Curtis.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Schofield to Curtis, January 1 and 3, 1863, Curtis to Schofield, January 2, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 6, 12-13, 7-8.

⁴⁸John M. Schofield, Forty-Six Years in the Army (New York: The Century Co., 1897), p. 64, hereinafter cited as Schofield, Forty-Six Years in the Army; James G. Blunt, "General Blunt's Account of His Civil War Experiences," Kansas Historical Quarterly, I (May, 1932), pp. 224, 240.

General Halleck, the General-in-Chief of the Army, had never been pleased with the efforts of the Missouri Department commander. The doubts he had concerning the competence and efficiency of Curtis were strengthened by subtle comments and suggestions made by Schofield which indicated the department commander was not performing his duties in a satisfactory manner. Curtis suspected the source of Halleck's uncomplimentary and harrassing instructions, but he did not want to accuse Halleck of unethical conduct. Instead of an open confrontation, Curtis counter-attacked Schofield for his covert actions with orders which prevented the Army of the Frontier from carrying out even limited offensive operations. The inactivity became unbearable, and on February 3 Schofield appealed to the General-in-Chief for a transfer. After a two month delay the request was approved, but not before Curtis had replaced Schofield as army commander with an available two-star general.⁴⁹

After the transfer of General Schofield, Colonel Phillips, in command of the almost isolated and almost forgotten Indian Brigade, was placed in the unenviable position of reporting to two general officers who had diametrically opposite views as to how he should conduct the affairs of his command. As a district commander, Phillips reported directly to General Curtis, the department commander. As a brigade commander, whose unit received its supplies from Fort Scott, he also reported to General Blunt.⁵⁰

Blunt had previous experience with the various Indian regiments, and as the commander of the now defunct Kansas Department, he had been

⁴⁹Schofield to Halleck, January 31 and February 3, 1863, General Orders, Department of Missouri, March 30, 1863, Orders, War Department, April 7, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 88, 94-95, 185, 204.

⁵⁰Blunt to Phillips, February 23, 1863, Phillips to Blunt, March 3, 1863, Phillips to Curtis, March 9 and 10, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 121-122, 139-140, 149-150, 151-152.

initially responsible for Indian recruitment. It was only natural that Phillips would seek the assistance of the Kansas general. Blunt had been most complimentary of Indian soldiers, and he was obviously sympathetic with the problems of the tribes, especially their desire to return to their homes in the Indian Territory.⁵¹

General Curtis, although not totally unsympathetic, exhibited a general unconcern toward the Indians. He knew little about the difficulties which the Indian soldiers and their families had endured as a result of the war. As a former Missouri politician, Curtis was motivated primarily by his desire to maintain his position as a department commander. If the Indian Brigade and the destitute families they protected had to be sacrificed for the sake of Missouri, this was regrettable, but such were the fortunes of war.⁵²

The Indian Brigade commander announced his intentions of changing his base of supplies early in March by establishing Fort Gibson as a commissary depot. Phillips planned to fortify the post and occupy it with his entire command. He believed there was sufficient grass in the Arkansas River valley to sustain his horses, and at Fort Gibson he could prevent the Confederates from moving back into the partially subdued Creek and Cherokee Nations. Phillips' request for the clearance of these plans was vetoed by General Curtis, but when he made a similar appeal to General Blunt he received an affirmative reply. Later in March the Indian Brigade commander was informed he should deal directly with the Kansas district commander, since the command structure had been altered and General Blunt

⁵¹Blunt to Phillips, March 9, 1863, Phillips to Blunt, March 19 and 21, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 147-148, 162, 168-169.

⁵²Curtis to Phillips, February 17, March 7 and 12, 1863, Phillips to Curtis, February 17, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 113-114, 147, 153, 114-115.

was responsible for the Indian Brigade.⁵³

The Curtis-Schofield feud planted seeds of distrust in the mind of General Halleck, and this, coupled with other reasons, finally resulted in the removal of Curtis as Missouri Department commander. Curtis had become deeply involved in Missouri state politics, and Governor Hamilton R. Gamble had appealed to President Lincoln for his dismissal. In addition, Curtis had kept large numbers of unneeded troops in Missouri in the face of urgent orders from the War Department to reinforce Major General U.S. Grant, who was campaigning near Vicksburg, Mississippi. Ironically, Curtis was replaced by his arch enemy General Schofield, who had been promoted to major general with the same date of rank as General Blunt.⁵⁴

The Confederate command structure responsible for the Indian Territory was also plagued by petty jealousies and unwarranted grievances after the summer of 1862. Commanders at all levels had to cope with the perpetual difficulty of incompetent leadership compounded by a critical shortage of trained and capable officers. In July, 1862, General Holmes was placed in command of the Trans-Mississippi District, which was redesignated a department and included the states of Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri and the Indian Territory. General Hindman was retained with his former command intact, called the First Corps, Army of the West. Holmes, aware of the bitter dispute between Hindman and

⁵³Phillips to Curtis, March 2 and 20, 1863, General Order, Department of Missouri, March 30, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 137-138, 165-166, 185.

⁵⁴Halleck to Curtis, February 10 and 17, March 16, 1863, Curtis to Halleck, February 11, May 6 and 13, 1863, Curtis to Howland, February 22, 1863, Halleck to Sumner, March 17, 1863, Halleck to Schofield, May 13 and 22, 1863, Lincoln to Schofield, May 27, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 104, 113, 156-157, 107-108, 270, 278, 120-121, 158-159, 277, 290-292, 293; Schofield, Forty-Six Years in the Army, p. 66.

Pike, attempted to settle the affair by accepting Pike's resignation in September, subject to approval by higher authority. He then appointed Brigadier General John S. Roane, a former governor of Arkansas, as commander of the Indian Territory. General Holmes made the terse but critical comment that "Roane is useless as a commander, and I have sent him to take care of the Indians." Prejudice against red men was not confined to north of the Kansas border.⁵⁵

After the debilitating defeat at Fort Wayne, additional Confederate command changes involving the Indian Territory became mandatory. Brigadier General William S. Steele, a West Point graduate, was named the commander of the scattered Indian command, replacing Roane who resigned. General Hindman, censored by the Confederate Congress for his stern measures against the civilian population of Arkansas, broke with General Holmes and angrily transferred out of the crumbling department in January, 1863. On February 9, Lieutenant General E. Kirby Smith, whose reputation as a successful general officer provided the basis for his assignment, was appointed supreme commander of all Confederate forces west of the Mississippi River. He was unable, however, to stem the tide of reversals. The lack of men, money, and equipment in Arkansas and the Indian Territory were obstacles which this capable commander could not overcome.⁵⁶

The charges of incompetence against General Cooper, made after the

⁵⁵Special Order, Adjutant and Inspector General Department, July 16, 1862, General Order, Trans-Mississippi Department, August 20, 1862, Special Order, Trans-Mississippi Department, September 28, 1862, Holmes to Cooper, October 26, 1862, Official Records, i, XIII, pp. 855, 877, 883, 898-899.

⁵⁶Anderson to Hindman, January 13, 1863, Cooper to Holmes, January 14, 1863, Special Order, Adjutant and Inspector General Department, January 30, 1863, Cooper to Smith, February 9, 1863, Hindman to Anderson, February 7, 1863, Holmes to Hindman, February 7, 1863, Hindman to Holmes, February 8, 1863, *ibid.*, XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 771, 771-772, 780, 786-787, 784, 784, 785-786.

Fort Wayne defeat, were never brought to trial. He continued limited activities under the close supervision of General Steele. This new commander of Confederate forces in the Indian Territory was hamstrung by shortages of every description. He was also troubled with personnel difficulties, for numerous Southern Indians, disgusted because earlier promises had not been kept, left their units and returned to their homes. Steele accomplished very little in the spring of 1863 toward bringing his disorganized and under-manned regiments into suitable condition for field operations in the territory.⁵⁷

The boundaries of the Federal District of Kansas were changed on March 30 to include the Indian Territory. General Blunt immediately ordered Colonel Phillips to move his brigade southwest from Arkansas and establish a firm foothold in the Indian country by permanently occupying Fort Gibson. The commander of the Indian Brigade needed little encouragement to carry out this order, since he had been begging to make the move for several weeks.⁵⁸

The Indian Brigade moved into the Indian Territory in early April, much to the satisfaction of the Indian inhabitants. These mistreated people were formally told that the brigade would remain permanently in the Indian country to provide them with protection and assistance. Fort Gibson was occupied in force, and work was begun to build extensive

⁵⁷Anderson to unknown general, December 29, 1862, *ibid.*, Pt. 1, p. 905; Cooper to Hindman, January 8, 1863, Steele to Cooper, January 18, 1863, Steele to Anderson, January 27, 1863, Crosby to Cooper, January 27, 1863, Steele to Anderson, March 5, 1863, *ibid.*, Pt. 2, pp. 770, 775, 776-777, 777-779, 794.

⁵⁸General Order, Department of Missouri, March 30, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 185; Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People, p. 344; Grant Foreman, "The Centennial of Fort Gibson," Chronicles of Oklahoma, II (June, 1924), p. 126; "Indian-Pioneer History," XLIII, p. 401, Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society.

fortifications around the central compound. Cherokee refugees from Kansas, elated over the final liberation of their lands, returned to the territory in droves. But a sudden attack by a Confederate force on Federal troops at Fayetteville, Arkansas, threatened to cancel the gains made by Phillips and his Indian Brigade. General Curtis, timid and fretting in Saint Louis while commanding the Missouri Department, ordered the immediate evacuation of the Indian Brigade to counter the Confederate activity.⁵⁹

Colonel Phillips, determined to maintain his position, appealed to General Blunt to intercede with the department commander in behalf of the brigade and their families. After many messages passed between Blunt and Curtis, the Kansas general finally informed his superior of the serious consequences a withdrawal would cause. If the department commander was determined to make this change, he would have to assume full responsibility for the impairment of the war effort which would automatically follow. While Curtis continued to indulge in slow, painful cogitation, the problem was solved by the War Department order which replaced him with Schofield. The new department commander was much more sympathetic to the situation in the Indian Territory, and allowed Colonel Phillips to maintain his brigade in its forward position at Fort Gibson.⁶⁰

The Indian Brigade was extremely active during April and May in the vicinity of Fort Blunt, the new name Phillips had given Fort Gibson. The

⁵⁹Phillips to Blunt, April 2, 8, 9 and 12, 1863, Curtis to Phillips, April 20, 1863, Curtis to Blunt, April 23, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 190-191, 205, 207-208, 211-212, 230, 244.

⁶⁰Phillips to Blunt, April 24 and 27, 1863, Phillips to Curtis, April 27, 1863, Blunt to Curtis, April 29, 1863, Blunt to Phillips, April 30, 1863, Schofield to Blunt, May 30, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 247-248, 256, 258, 260-261, 262, 296.

brigade had been denied permission to move permanently across the Arkansas River due to a reported Confederate build-up southeast of Fort Blunt, but this prohibition exempted patrol actions and raids. Phillips took advantage of these instructions to stage a large scale raid on Webber's Falls.⁶¹

The mission of the Federal operation was to prevent the assembling of the Confederate Cherokee Council which had scheduled a meeting for April 25 in this small Creek Nation community. The February deliberations of its Federal Cherokee counterpart apparently triggered this belated Southern legislative activity. The council, composed primarily of soldiers from Colonel Watie's Cherokee regiment, must have had important business to transact, for Confederate General Steele moved additional troops to Webber's Falls to give its members added protection.⁶²

Phillips was determined to show the strength of the Federal government by preventing the meeting of the Cherokee lawmakers. With a strong force of 600 Indian and white soldiers, the Union commander made an all-night, thirty mile forced march from Fort Gibson on April 24, and struck the Confederate encampment at dawn. Like the engagement at Fort Wayne, the Southerners were surprised and fled from the action after a very weak defensive effort. This panic was complete, for many of the Confederate Indians rode out of their camp in night clothes. Casualties were relatively light considering the number of soldiers actually participating in the skirmish. The Confederates had fifteen killed, including two officers,

⁶¹Blunt to Phillips, April 11, 1863, Phillips to Blunt, May 9, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 210, 276; Phillips to Curtis, April 26, 1863, *ibid.*, Pt. 1, pp. 314-315.

⁶²Phillips to Curtis, April 26, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 315; Abel, The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War, p. 271; Foreman, A History of Oklahoma, p. 117.

and many wounded. Colonel Phillips reported two killed and ten wounded. The Federal force pursued the frightened Confederates for only a short distance, then returned and destroyed the Southern camp. Conflicting reports indicated the council meeting was either canceled or postponed until later in the year.⁶³

On May 20 Missouri Colonel J.T. Coffee, commanding a mixed force of Confederate Arkansas, Missouri, and Indian units, made a raid across the Arkansas River. The ultimate objective of the foray is not definitely known, but due to the size of the force it is unlikely that they intended to assault the extensive works at Fort Blunt. An attack on an approaching Federal supply train also seems improbable, for the trains were heavily guarded and the Southerners were too close to Fort Blunt to risk a stationary ambush. The probable purpose of the Confederate patrol was to capture the stock which were grazing about five miles from the Federal post.⁶⁴

The raiders managed to get across the river without detection and were successful initially in overpowering the guards around the Federal herd. Phillips reacted rapidly to the Confederate attack, and dispatched a force to intercept the Confederates as they were moving the captured animals toward the ford at Webber's Falls. Coffee's men established a defensive position to withstand the Federal counterattack, and in the

⁶³Phillips to Curtis, undated, Phillips to Blunt, May 9, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 315, 316; Wiley Britton, Memoirs of the Rebellion on the Border, 1863 (Chicago: Cushing, Thomas and Co., 1882), pp. 226-227, hereinafter cited as Britton, Memoirs of the Rebellion on the Border, 1863; Wiley Britton, The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War (Kansas City: Franklin Hudson Publishing Co., 1922), p. 222, hereinafter cited as Britton, The Union Indian Brigade; Abel, The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War, p. 271.

⁶⁴Phillips to Blunt, May 22, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, p. 337; Abel, The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War, pp. 271-272; Foreman, "The Centennial of Fort Gibson," Chronicles of Oklahoma, II, p. 126.

process lost some of the captured horses. The Southerners were able to halt the onrushing Federals, and even succeeded in driving them back toward Fort Blunt. Phillips threw additional men into the fight, and these reinforcements, led personally by the brigade commander, slowly forced the Confederates to recross the river.⁶⁵

Federal casualties were about twenty-five killed or missing. The Southern force lost an equal number of men. The Union commander insisted that he had won a signal victory, but this claim is highly questionable if the mission of the raid was to capture Federal horses. The Confederates were able to take approximately three hundred horses and mules belonging to the Sixth Kansas Cavalry Regiment back across the Arkansas. Since Colonel Phillips was critically short of cavalry at this time, this loss, not mentioned in his official dispatch, made his reconnaissance and security tasks even more difficult.⁶⁶

General Schofield and General Blunt renewed their quarrel with vigor in June when the Missouri Department commander split the District of Kansas into two parts. Blunt was removed from his headquarters at Fort Leavenworth and was relegated to a small and insignificant command. Called the District of the Frontier, it was composed of the lower half of Kansas, a few counties in western Arkansas, and the Indian Territory. This change was bitterly resented by Blunt and his champion, Senator Lane. The lucrative army contracts would now be granted to the Leavenworth merchants by another general, who would be either honest, or if otherwise inclined, would require remuneration for himself. There would be nothing

⁶⁵Phillips to Blunt, May 22, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 337-338; Britton, The Union Indian Brigade, pp. 230-232.

⁶⁶Blunt to Phillips, May 30, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 297-298; Britton, Memoirs of the Rebellion on the Border, 1863, pp. 257-258.

for the large group of Kansas politicians under the control and patronage of Senator Lane.⁶⁷

This loss of responsibility and prestige caused General Blunt to be all the more anxious to gain another smashing victory in the field. He began immediate plans to personally take charge of the troops in his command, which included the Indian Brigade, and to attempt to recover the power he had lost. At the same time, his superior and rival General Schofield, initiated actions to delve into the activities of the Kansas general in an effort to bring about his downfall.

The slow but steady increase of Federal strength in the upper portions of the Indian Territory in the spring of 1863 could not be checked by the feeble efforts of the Confederate Indian command. The internal struggles in the Federal hierarchy had delayed but never stopped the buildup which ultimately resulted in the permanent occupation of Fort Blunt by the Federal Indian Brigade. The hopes of Confederate General Steele for a full-scale Southern offensive failed to materialize due to serious supply and personnel shortages. The probability of another Federal invasion, this time south of the Arkansas River, became more and more a distinct possibility. Demonstrations of Federal power at Webber's Falls and around Fort Blunt caused grave misgivings among the Indian nations still professing allegiance to the Southern cause. Yet nothing could be done to stop the inevitable. The Confederate Indians could only wait.

⁶⁷Schofield to Halleck, June 1, 1863, General Order, Department of Missouri, June 9, 1863, Schofield to Blunt, June 10, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 302, 315; Castel, A Frontier State at War, pp. 154-155.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNION EMERGES VICTORIOUS

The Federal victories at Webber's Falls and Fort Blunt in the late spring of 1863 had been serious blows to Confederate ambitions for the recapture of the northern portion of the Indian Territory. The invincibility of Federal arms had thoroughly discouraged the Confederate Indians, and their lack of supplies and equipment had made them all the more reluctant to intensify their efforts to drive the Federal invaders out of the Cherokee and Creek Nations.

The Federal Indian Brigade, which had occupied Fort Blunt in April, was firmly entrenched behind massive fortifications and contained sufficient troops to defend the position against either a frontal assault or a prolonged seige. Refugees from the various tribes had returned in large numbers from Kansas and Texas, and were beginning to resettle on their farms and plant crops. The situation was outwardly most favorable for the conquest of the Confederate-controlled territory south of the Arkansas River.

There were serious difficulties facing Colonel Phillips as he sought to stabilize the Indian country, although the extent of these perplexities were unknown to his Confederate enemies. These problems were of sufficient magnitude to cause him great anxiety, yet his superiors did not take the necessary steps to correct the more glaring deficiencies. Their unwillingness to act caused frightful hardships for the Federal soldiers defending the Indian Territory, and this lack of support by higher military

authorities forced the civil population of the country to exist under even more miserable conditions.

Not a small part of the lethargy was due to the continuing struggle for power between General Schofield and General Blunt. Their fight had been resumed shortly after Schofield replaced Curtis as commander of the Missouri Department and continued without abatement for several months. Neither of these officers was willing to allow the war effort to take precedent over their attempts to put the other in an unfavorable light. Schofield, as the department commander and friend of the General-in-Chief, had a decided advantage over his opponent, and he used his position whenever he had the opportunity.

In mid-June, 1863, General Schofield initiated a formal investigation of the supply procedures of General Blunt's Kansas District in an attempt to prove fraud against the government. This direct attack on the Kansas general followed the reshuffling of the boundaries of the district one week earlier, which had removed Blunt from his headquarters at Fort Leavenworth. The formal request to the War Department carried a stigma of dishonesty that was severely damaging to Blunt's reputation whether or not actual proof was discovered.¹

At the same time that the investigation was started, Blunt became embroiled in a jurisdictional dispute with a quartermaster officer at Fort Leavenworth. This affair, which gave substance to the charges of the department commander, was slowly forwarded through official channels until it reached the War Department. General Halleck backed up Schofield's contention that supply and quartermaster transactions were independent of

¹Schofield to Townsend, June 15, 1863 (erroneously dated July 15), Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, p. 319.

control of the district commanders. He refuted Blunt's claim to the contrary and said that supply officers could not be ordered to carry out instructions which were in opposition to the over-all logistical plans for a department or district.²

General Blunt, unaware of the pending investigation of army contracts at Fort Leavenworth, discovered the existence of the damning inquiry in late July after he had begun the summer campaign in the Indian Territory. He completely disregarded normal army procedures of communication in his counter-attack, and he challenged his accuser by direct correspondence with Secretary of War Stanton. His vituperative letter was filled with counter-accusations against Schofield. According to Blunt, Schofield was responsible for numerous failures which not only caused him grave injustice but also seriously damaged the successful conduct of the war in the West.³

Schofield was not the only villain involved in the plot which Blunt said was aimed at his downfall. The Governor of Kansas, Thomas Carney, and the Superintendent of the Southern Indian Tribes, Colonel Coffin, were also attacked and called robbers for their actions which had defrauded the refugee Indians. Several commissary officers at Fort Leavenworth were charged with abuse of their powers and general misappropriation of government funds and property. The incensed general concluded his remarks with a veiled threat that he would not push his efforts to right these wrongs at present because of the pressing problems of command. But as soon as the war was brought to a successful conclusion these "base

²Easton to Allen, June 18, 1863, *ibid.*, 326-327; Castel, A Frontier State at War, pp. 154-155.

³Blunt to Stanton, July 26, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 398-399.

calumniators shall be called to an account."⁴

The pressing problems of command of the District of the Frontier, as Blunt's new area of responsibility was called, continued to disturb him after he had presented his case to the Secretary of War. The weather in the Indian Territory was unbearably hot. The command was relatively alone in a barren country, and the all-important supply system was not functioning smoothly. Confederate bands constantly threatened the road between Fort Blunt and Fort Scott, and a significant percentage of his available manpower was occupied with escort duty for the supply trains. As an added difficulty, Blunt was afflicted with a fever-producing disease, probably malaria, which partially incapacitated him during the months of July and August.⁵

On July 31 the Kansas general, smarting under what he considered unjustifiable attacks, blasted another of his arch foes. This was Governor Carney of Kansas, whom he blistered in a letter to President Lincoln. Similar in content to the one addressed to the Secretary of War, Blunt demanded that the President bring his assailants to bay. The indignant district commander portrayed himself as a general acting alone, commanding a force much smaller than his rank required, and fighting for justice against all the forces of evil. He mentioned his precarious position and gave the distinct impression that he would fight the Confederates, though heavily outnumbered, and either achieve a Federal victory or die defending the flank of the Union in the Indian Territory.⁶

⁴Ibid., p. 399.

⁵Strength Report, June 30, 1863, Curtis to March, July 22, 1863, Blunt to Schofield, July 30, 1863, Blunt to Curtis, August 19, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 342, 392, 411, 463.

⁶Blunt to Lincoln, July 31, 1863, *ibid.*, i, LIII, pp. 565-567.

President Lincoln's reply to the acrimonious charges of Blunt is an outstanding example of a moderate and understanding Chief Executive attempting to give the divergent factions of the Federal government direction and stability. He acknowledged that Governor Carney had given him some papers concerning Blunt's activities, but he had been unimpressed with them. He added that since he had planned no action he would not bother to look at them again. With the patience of a parent mildly reproaching a wayward child, President Lincoln cautioned the fiery general that he was too free with accusations concerning his persecutors and that this was not the proper attitude for a person vested with great responsibility. In essence, Lincoln told General Blunt to do the best he could with the forces he had available and not to worry about vague complaints and charges from other people.⁷

After the initiation of the investigation of alleged supply irregularities in Blunt's district, General Schofield did little further to antagonize his opponent. Apparently he felt this was unnecessary since Blunt's sharp responses would cause sufficient agitation to keep all civil and military officials properly appraised. This aloofness was typical of the Missouri Department commander, for as a military officer who firmly advocated a bearing of decorum and reserve, he did not want to indulge in undignified and name-calling activities which most politicians seemed to enjoy.

General Schofield was cognizant of the attitude of officials in Washington concerning the war in the West. He knew the border conflict between scattered bands of white and Indian soldiers was relatively insignificant to the nation's political and military planners. His role as

⁷Lincoln to Blunt, August 18, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 567.

a department commander was to fight a holding action, and by keeping a maximum number of Confederate troops occupied with a minimum number of Federals, he would substantially advance the cause of his country. He followed this policy with complete rigidity, and his efforts brought the praises of his friend and superior, General Halleck.⁸

General Blunt took an entirely different approach. One reason for his attitude was his ambition. Schofield could afford to be less aggressive, for he had attained a position of importance, but Blunt, although of equal rank, had been banished to an outpost which offered little opportunity for glory and advancement. This was galling, since only a few months before Blunt had been acclaimed as the hero of Prairie Grove and was given the distinction of becoming the first major general from Kansas.⁹

Another reason for General Blunt's insistence on initiating offensive operations in the Indian Territory was his zealous desire to preserve the Union and punish the Confederates. His belief in the abolition of slavery was also a motivating factor in his intense dislike for the South. The only way to eliminate this malignant practice, he believed, was by reducing the slaveholder to obedience by the sword.¹⁰ Closely related to all of these reasons was the condition of his mind. Although not insane, his mental processes took a much more erratic course than

⁸ Halleck to Schofield, July 7, 1863, *ibid.*, i, XXII, Pt. 2, p. 355; Castel, A Frontier State at War, pp. 96-97.

⁹ Blunt, "General Blunt's Account of His Civil War Experiences," Kansas Historical Quarterly, I, p. 221n; Castel, A Frontier State At War, pp. 100-101.

¹⁰ Hopkins, "James G. Blunt and the Civil War," p. 128; Castel, A Frontier State at War, pp. 82-83.

could have been expected had he been completely normal.¹¹

Since mid-May Colonel Phillips and his Indian Brigade had maintained their position at Fort Blunt against what appeared to be a steady build-up of Confederate forces across the Arkansas River. Like most of the Federal commanders who had fought in the Indian country, the threat of Confederate attack, though serious, was not the major cause of alarm. Supplies and the tenuous link of wagons that traveled intermittently from Fort Scott to Fort Blunt provided the main source of concern. Phillips was also saddled with the additional burden of feeding a large number of Indian refugees who had returned to the Indian Territory confident they would receive proper care from the Federal forces occupying the area.¹²

General Blunt moved his headquarters to Fort Scott, some 124 miles southeast of Fort Leavenworth, during the third week of June. Dispatches from Colonel Phillips were waiting for him when he arrived at this forward depot. These reports announced in pointed terms the increase of enemy strength and the serious supply difficulties. The district commander made an estimate of the situation, then decided Phillips was indeed in danger, and asked General Schofield for reinforcements. Blunt declared his intention to take personal control of the forces in the

¹¹By the early summer of 1863, Blunt was exhibiting symptoms of the mental disorder which ultimately resulted in his commitment to a mental institution and his eventual death. He was convinced that there was a conspiracy in the military establishment and in Kansas which, separately and in combination, was seeking to disgrace him and bring about his removal from command. He could not endure opposition at any level, and he struck out at anyone who disagreed with his plans and ideas. Castel, A Frontier State at War, p. 83; Hopkins, "James G. Blunt and the Civil War," p. 127.

¹²Phillips to Blunt, May 15, 31 and June 6, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 283-284, 298, 310-311; U.S., Congress, House, Report of the Secretary of Interior 1863, 38th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), Executive Document Number 1, pp. 144-145. Hereinafter cited as U.S., Congress, House, Report of the Secretary of Interior 1863.

district, but due to the steady increase of Confederate forces, he indicated this would be hazardous without additional troops. Blunt also desired additional units commensurate with his rank, for he had made a similar proposal for the return of several Kansas cavalry units in May. Yet Blunt was concerned about the smallness of the force at Fort Blunt, and his repeated assurances of pending reinforcements to Colonel Phillips are ample testimony to this fact.¹³

One of the units which General Blunt had promised Colonel Phillips was the newly organized First Kansas Colored Infantry Regiment. Recruited by Senator Lane and outfitted at Fort Scott, this unit was composed of liberated slaves from Missouri, Arkansas, and the Indian Territory. There had been considerable public resistance, even in Kansas, to the enlistment of Negroes to fight against white Southerners. Elsewhere in the Union, the disapproval of this idea was so strong that the Lincoln administration moved quite cautiously in this untried and unpopular undertaking. This Kansas unit, which had white officers, was finally approved by the War Department, and the task of training and equipping these former slaves was carried out under the supervision of General Blunt and other abolitionists who eagerly sought commissions in the unit. After a period of several months, the regiment was moved to Baxter Springs, Kansas, sixty miles south of Fort Scott. Here it continued training and also acted as escort for supply trains returning to the Kansas depot from Fort Blunt.¹⁴

Colonel Phillips showed a decided change of attitude after the Indian

¹³Blunt to Chipman, May 14, 1863, Blunt to Phillips, May 30, 1863, Phillips to Blunt, June 6, 1863, Blunt to Schofield, June 26, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 279-280, 297-298, 311, 337-338.

¹⁴Castel, A Frontier State at War, pp. 90-94.

Brigade was firmly entrenched at Fort Blunt. He had been extremely confident of his ability to seize and control the Indian Territory. He had begged for permission to move into Cherokee country in order to eliminate Confederate factions from that area. Once he achieved this long sought-after goal he became very pessimistic. The failure of supply trains to arrive and the reports of Confederate troop strength increases had a severe adverse effect on Phillips' normally optimistic attitude.¹⁵

Colonel Phillips also had doubts as to the ability of higher commanders and supply facilities to provide proper support for the Fort Blunt garrison. This is apparent in his May messages which tell in a half-military and half-civilian vernacular of the plight of the Indian Brigade. In the May 31 report Phillips allowed himself the satisfaction of boastfulness, although it was hedged with caution. He did not mind that the Confederates were massing near Fort Blunt, for this would make it easier to defeat them, but "My position requires the utmost prudence and circumspection." In the final paragraph of his message, Phillips said, "Again I say that while I make no special appeal, I desire to add I ought to be re-enforced speedily."¹⁶

The skirmish at Greenleaf Prairie on June 16 was the culmination, from a Federal point of view, of a ten day cavalry raid by a Confederate force. The unit, commanded by Creek Colonel D.N. McIntosh, was composed of Texas and Indian mounted regiments who were to intercept and capture supplies coming to Fort Blunt from Kansas. This was the first major attempt of troops under the command of Confederate General Steele to force

¹⁵Phillips to Blunt, May 9, 15, 31 and June 6, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 276-277, 283-284, 298, 310-311.

¹⁶Phillips to Blunt, May 31, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 310-311.

the withdrawal of Federal units occupying the strategic post on the Arkansas River.¹⁷

Colonel Phillips was aware that several hundred mounted Confederate soldiers had crossed the Illinois River on June 6 and had moved off in a northerly direction. Due to the poor condition of the horses in Federal cavalry units, Phillips did not give chase until he was relatively certain of the enemy's general destination. He suspected an attack on his supply line, but he mistakenly thought this Confederate force was joining another from Missouri for a thrust against the Negro regiment at Baxter Springs. After dispatching messengers to alert this unit, he sent Major J.A. Foreman and a strong detachment from the Third Federal Indian Regiment to follow the rapidly moving Confederates. Foreman's instructions were to attack the Southerners if they were numerically equal or inferior. If the enemy force was superior in strength, Foreman was to follow and engage them from the rear when they attacked the Negro unit at Baxter Springs.¹⁸

At this point, the plans of the Federal and Confederate forces ran afoul of terrain conditions and the effect the grueling pace had on their under-nourished horses. The rivers in the area were flooded due to recent heavy rains, and most of the accessible fords were impassable. The Confederate force had separated shortly after crossing the Illinois River with the intent of rejoining for the assault on the Federal supply column in the northeastern part of the Cherokee Nation. Due to the high water, the divided Confederate detachments were unable to concentrate for the coordinated attack. Colonel McIntosh discovered that his position on

¹⁷General Report, Brigadier General William Steele, February 15, 1864, *ibid.*, Pt. 1, p. 32.

¹⁸Phillips to Blunt, June 20, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 348.

the Grand River near Spavinaw Creek was untenable, and promptly ordered his units to return to their base camp. They were to avoid all contact with Federal troops known to be in the vicinity.¹⁹

Colonel McIntosh had originally split his command in an attempt to disguise the size of the Confederate force and to facilitate movement through the hilly and thickly-wooded countryside. This separation of units was now a distinct disadvantage if either of the smaller elements were attacked by the pursuing Third Federal Indian Regiment. The Union and Southern forces played a game of hide-and-seek for more than a week. Major Foreman's command finally made contact with one of the Confederate detachments as it tried to ford the Arkansas River at Grand Saline. The Confederates withdrew from the encounter after suffering three casualties and the loss of some of their provisions.²⁰

On June 15 Colonel Phillips received confirmation that the raiders had dispersed into two groups. He immediately formed another force composed of soldiers from the Second Federal Indian Regiment, commanded by Colonel Stephen H. Wattles. Its mission was to move rapidly to the east and trap the withdrawing Confederates in conjunction with Foreman's detachment. General Cooper saw the intent of this second force, and ordered a contingent of Texas and Choctaw soldiers from his base camp to make a demonstration in front of Fort Blunt. He hoped this diversion would lessen the Federal pressure on those units attempting to get back across the river, but the ruse was unsuccessful. Phillips was not deceived by the mock attack which was noisy but not convincing.²¹

¹⁹Phillips to Blunt, June 20, 1863, General Report, Brigadier General William Steele, February 15, 1864, *ibid.*, pp. 349, 33.

²⁰Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, p. 89.

²¹Phillips to Blunt, June 20, 1863, Wattles to Phillips, June [20], 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 349, 350.

Colonel Wattles did not make contact with the Confederate forces on the night of June 15, although his unit passed very close to one group of concealed Southerners. The following morning he was informed of their location on Greenleaf Prairie, eighteen miles east of Fort Blunt. The unit immediately retraced its route for an attack, and the initial assault succeeded in dislodging the Confederates from their position along a tree line. The eager Federal soldiers pressed their pursuit, but the harrassed followers of Colonel McIntosh suddenly stopped and turned on their assailants. The Southern soldiers forced the Federal troops to withdraw to the protection of their artillery emplaced near the Arkansas River, twelve miles from Fort Blunt.²²

At this juncture the two Federal detachments were still in a position to trap this Confederate force, for Foreman's command was behind the Southern Indians. After ten days of exhaustive riding, and ignorant of Wattles' recent reversal, Foreman disrupted plans by abandoning the chase. Colonel Phillips was most unhappy at this premature disengagement, but he was determined to destroy the enemy force. He therefore sent an additional 500-man detachment, mounted on anything they could ride, to reinforce Wattles for one further attack on the Confederates.²³

Reports of Foreman's return to Fort Blunt caused Colonel Wattles to become fainthearted. After a hurried conference with his subordinates, he ordered his command to withdraw also to Fort Blunt, thus disobeying the implicit instructions from Phillips to maintain his position. When Phillips discovered this willful insubordination he was irate and had the guilty colonel relieved on the spot, but their prey had escaped. The

²²Phillips to Blunt, June 20, 1863, Wattles to Phillips, June [20], 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 350, 351.

²³Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, pp. 89-90.

Confederates eluded the pursuing Federals and finally recrossed the Arkansas River at Webber's Falls, fifteen miles south and east of Greenleaf Prairie.²⁴

Neither side could claim a victory, but the Federal forces, with help from the weather, had prevented the Confederate disruption of the all-important supply line. Colonel Phillips acknowledged the loss of seven men killed, nine men wounded, and five men thought to be captured. He would make no comment about Southern casualties, for there were conflicting reports as to their numbers.²⁵

Fifteen days later Confederate General Steele ordered a second attempt made to halt the flow of supplies and reinforcements to the Indian Brigade at Fort Blunt. This second effort was to be a coordinated operation, and the commander of the Southern raiders was changed. Colonel Watie was designated as the leader of the force coming from the Elk Creek camp, and he was to join forces with Brigadier General William L. Cabell who commanded a brigade of mounted troops from Texas and Arkansas. The choice of leaders was a partial improvement over the previous selection, for the Cherokee colonel had a reputation for being a skillful and aggressive tactician. General Cabell, on the other hand, was relatively unknown as to combat qualities, and his brigade was filled with large numbers of conscript soldiers who were not noted for their fighting ability.²⁶

The departure from Fort Scott of a critically-needed Federal supply

²⁴Phillips to Blunt, June 20, 1863, Wattles to Phillips, June [20], 1863, Official Records, 1, XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 349-350, 350-351.

²⁵Phillips to Blunt, June 20, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 350.

²⁶General Report, Brigadier General William Steele, February 15, 1864, *ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

train had been announced. Phillips, aware that the Confederates would make a maximum effort to intercept the column, sent 600 additional men to Baxter Springs to augment the train's escort. The primary Federal unit of the escort was the First Kansas Colored Infantry Regiment which was moving permanently to Fort Blunt to reinforce the Indian Brigade. The commander of the regiment, Colonel James M. Williams, was in charge of the slow-moving column.²⁷

Colonel Watie established his unit, the Second Cherokee Mounted Rifle Regiment, in a position astride the main road on the south side of Cabin Creek, fifty-four miles northeast of Fort Blunt. The Confederate plan called for the Cherokee unit to ambush the Federal column and hold it in place. General Cabell's force, with a sweeping flank attack, would destroy the escort and capture the long line of 200 wagons loaded with food and ammunition. The concept was basically sound, but hinged on Cabell's force being able to ford the Grand River and join in the final assault. Once again adverse terrain conditions prevented Confederate plans from being carried out.²⁸

The Cherokee Indians set up the blocking position, but General Cabell's command did not participate in the encounter since they could not cross the river. Apparently Colonel Watie was aware that the coordinated effort could not be accomplished, but he elected to attack the supply train with his unit alone. He obviously thought he could either win the engagement or prevent the forward movement of the column to the beleaguered forces at Fort Blunt.²⁹

²⁷Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, pp. 92, 95; Phillips to Blunt, July 7, 1863, Official Records, I, XXII, Pt. 1, p. 378.

²⁸General Report, Brigadier General William Steele, February 15, 1864, *ibid.*, p. 33; Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, pp. 95-96.

²⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

The choice of the ambush site was excellent. The steep banks of Cabin Creek were an obstacle for the loaded wagons and also for any force attempting to cross the stream. The Cherokee regiment, numbering 1600 men, but without artillery, dug entrenchments on the south bank and waited for the Federal column to arrive. The supply train reached the creek on July 1 and was only partially surprised by the Confederate attack. Because of high water, the Federal forces did not try to cross until the following day.³⁰

Colonel Williams used troops from his Negro regiment, the Third Indian Regiment, and a battalion of the Second Colorado Infantry Regiment in his first assault attempt. Prior to the launching of the Federal attack, he had his three artillery pieces, located on the flanks and in the center of his line, fire for forty minutes on suspected enemy locations. This preparation with shot and canister did not have the usual demoralizing effect on the Confederate Indian soldiers, probably because they were in emplacements which offered protection from the close-range canonading.³¹

When the Federal infantrymen and dismounted Indians attempted to cross the stream they were met with withering fire from the concealed Confederate positions. Before the advancing troops had made much progress, Major Foreman, who was directing the lead company of Indians, was severely wounded. When his Indian soldiers discovered their leader was gone, they stopped their advance and retreated to their original position. Colonel Williams replaced the Indian unit with a company from the Ninth Kansas

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Phillips to Blunt, July 7, 1863, Williams to Phillips, July [7], 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 379, 380.

Cavalry Regiment and ordered the units to renew their attack.³²

The second assault proved to be more successful, and the leading elements of the Negro regiment established a foothold on the south bank of the creek. The cavalry company, which replaced the Indian unit and assisted in the second assault, was ordered to charge the center of the Confederate position. When the dismounted cavalrymen carried out their attack with vigor, the Confederate soldiers faltered, and then broke and ran for their horses. They were followed by three fresh companies of Federal cavalry, but the pursuit was not pushed for fear of jeopardizing the safety of the much-needed supplies.³³

The Federal casualties for the engagement were one killed and twenty wounded. The estimate of Confederate losses was fifty killed, many wounded, and nine prisoners. Colonel Williams and Colonel Phillips praised the troops involved in the action, and Williams pointed out that while the total strength of the Federal column was greater than the Confederate force, only 900 men participated in the assault and pursuit. Significantly, the encounter at Cabin Creek was the first time the Kansas Negro unit had been committed for a test of its fighting ability, and the ex-slaves behaved well under fire.³⁴

The defeated Confederate force withdrew in disorder toward the safety of their camp on Elk Creek, and some of the frightened Indians, attempting to ford the Grand River, were drowned. Colonel Phillips mentioned that the bodies of both men and horses were observed floating downstream past

³²Williams to Phillips, July [7], 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 380-381; Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, pp. 97-98.

³³Williams to Phillips, July [7], 1863, Phillips to Blunt, July 7, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 380-381, 379.

³⁴Williams to Phillips, July [7], 1863, Phillips to Blunt, July 7, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 381, 379.

Fort Blunt. The failure of Colonel Watie's regiment to halt the supply train was serious, for the reinforcements and food which finally arrived at the Federal outpost not only improved the morale of the Indian Brigade, but it eliminated Confederate General Steele's hopes to starve the defenders of Fort Blunt into retreating.³⁵

General Blunt traveled from Fort Scott and arrived unexpectedly at the fort, named for him, on July 11. He announced to his surprised subordinates that he was present to lead a major operation against Confederate forces stationed on the south side of the Arkansas River. He immediately implemented plans for the pending attack by ordering the construction of three large boats, since the river was at a high water mark.³⁶

The Kansas general was cognizant of the vital role that supplies would play in any operation from Colonel Phillips' bastion, and he had left detailed instructions on supply matters with his adjutant, Major H.Z. Curtis, at Fort Scott. The supply train, which was attacked at Cabin Creek, arrived at Fort Blunt on July 2 and would be returned to the Kansas depot as soon as possible. Upon arrival at Fort Scott, it was to be rapidly reloaded with additional supplies and rushed back to the Indian Territory outpost. Blunt also informed his adjutant that sufficient escort would be placed with the long column of supply wagons to insure their safety.³⁷

Intelligence reports of Confederate troop strength and disposition

³⁵Phillips to Blunt, July 7, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 379; Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, p. 100.

³⁶Blunt to Curtis, July 13, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, p. 367.

³⁷Curtis to Marsh, July 16, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 379.

indicated that the combined forces of General Cooper and General Cabell would launch an attack either on Fort Blunt or the supply line of the post on July 17. General Blunt, fearful that 7,000 Confederate soldiers would eventually gather at the Elk Creek camp, decided that he had sufficient strength with his 3,000 available men to attack either of the converging Southern brigades, but the odds of defeating the Confederate units together were slim. He therefore ordered preparations made for a rapid crossing of the Arkansas River and an equally rapid attack on General Cooper's command of about 4,000 before it could be reinforced by General Cabell and his troops from northwest Arkansas.³⁸

The technique used in gaining a beachhead on the Confederate-defended south bank of the river was amazingly simple. On the evening of July 15 the Kansas general lead a battalion of the Sixth Kansas Cavalry Regiment and one battery of artillery thirteen miles up the Arkansas River to a ford that was passable. After crossing, this force moved rapidly down the south bank and cleared the area across from the Federal fort of Confederate pickets. Late in the afternoon of July 16, the newly-built boats began transporting the bulk of the command to the opposite shore.³⁹

The Federal command started its forward movement southward toward the enemy camp at 10:00 p.m. the same evening and, after an all-night march, arrived at advanced Confederate outposts, approximately five miles from the main camp. After a short skirmish which forced the withdrawal of the Southern defenders, the Federal soldiers, still in a column

³⁸Debo, The Road to Disappearance, p. 155; Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, pp. 115-116; General Report, Brigadier General W.L. Cabell, December 7, 1863, Official Records, I, XXII, Pt. 1, p. 604.

³⁹Blunt to Schofield, July 26, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 447.

formation, moved up to within a half mile of the main Confederate battle position. The Southern forces were entrenched in a timber line astride the Texas Road leading to Fort Blunt. Since the Federal troops were concealed and protected by a hill, General Blunt halted the movement of the column at this point and allowed his soldiers to rest and eat.⁴⁰

During this two hour break, the Kansas general issued detailed orders for the impending attack. The Federal command was to move in column for another quarter of a mile, and when the Confederate positions were visible, the units were to execute flanking movements and form a line formation which would be roughly parallel to the Confederate defensive works. This series of flanking maneuvers was to be done quickly so that the Southern commander would be unable to determine the exact number of Federal troops. For simplicity of control, Blunt divided his units into two provisional brigades which contained both Indian and white units, and the first brigade also contained the Negro regiment.⁴¹

The order of march was such that white dismounted cavalry units would be located on the flanks, and the center of the formation would be shared by the Indian regiments and the colored unit. Blunt's twelve artillery pieces, operating in four separate sections, would be situated at the flanks and in the center of the Federal line. Orders were given to insure the continuous movement of the entire command once the units deployed off the Texas Road. Skirmishers would move quickly toward the enemy positions, and the first phase of the general assault would begin without a halt.⁴²

⁴⁰ Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, pp. 116-117.

⁴¹ Blunt to Schofield, July 26, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 447-448.

⁴² Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, pp. 118-119.

While the troops were resting, General Blunt also made a personal reconnaissance of the Confederate line. He determined the exact location of the line of Confederate rifle pits, but due to expert camouflaging, the position of the lone Confederate artillery battery could not be pinpointed. The commanding general of the Federal forces demonstrated his lack of concern for his own safety during this time, for he was so close to the Confederate emplacements that a sniper wounded a member of his personal staff. At 10:00 a.m. on July 17 Blunt ordered the forward movement of his command, and thus opened the largest single engagement fought in the Indian Territory during the Civil War.⁴³

After deploying off the Texas Road, the Federal troops moved slowly through the underbrush in front of the Confederate positions. The line of advancing soldiers offered excellent targets for the concealed Southerners. As soon as the Confederate battery revealed its position by firing, the massed fire of the twelve Federal cannons fell on General Cooper's four guns, dismounted one of them from its carriage, and silenced the remaining three. The battle had only begun, and already Confederate firepower had been seriously curtailed.⁴⁴

Another calamity occurred which hampered the ability of the Confederate forces to withstand the Federal attack. Southern gunpowder was of Mexican manufacture and highly susceptible to moisture absorption. As it had rained intermittently throughout the morning, Confederate soldiers found much of their powder turned to paste, and it would fire improperly or not at all. To make matters worse, confusion occurred in one of the

⁴³Blunt to Schofield, July 26, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, p. 447; Grant Foreman, Fort Gibson: A Brief History (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936), p. 36.

⁴⁴Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, p. 119.

Confederate regiments, and this gave the Federal forces an advantage that proved to be decisive.⁴⁵

The 500-man First Kansas Colored Infantry Regiment was the left flank unit of the first brigade. During the second phase of the Federal assault, some members of the Second Indian Regiment, which was on the right flank of the Negro unit, inadvertently got in front of the colored troops. This occurred when the Federal and Confederate forces were only forty yards apart. The careless Indians were obstructing the fire of the Kansas regiment, and its executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel J. Bowles, called to the Indian soldiers to fall back.⁴⁶

The Twenty-ninth Texas Cavalry Regiment, which occupied a portion of the Confederate line generally opposite from the Negro unit, thought the command was for the withdrawal of the ex-slaves. The soldiers of the Texas regiment, thinking they had an advantage, climbed out of their entrenchments and charged toward the advancing Federal soldiers. The colored unit did not falter under the attack and deliberately fired a devastating volley into the onrushing Texans. The shock action of the heavy fire stopped the Confederate unit and forced it into a hasty retreat. Another volley from the Kansas regiment added to the toll of the original and caused the center of the Confederate line to buckle and collapse. The demoralized Texas troops moved rapidly to the rear.⁴⁷

The withdrawing Texans were soon followed by the remainder of Cooper's command, and what might have been an orderly retreat turned into

⁴⁵Cooper to Steele, August 12, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, p. 458.

⁴⁶Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, pp. 118, 120.

⁴⁷Bowles to Judson, July 20, 1863, Blunt to Schofield, July 26, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 450, 448.

a disorganized rout. The actual battle lasted for approximately two hours. The jubilant Federal soldiers, followed closely by their artillery, continued to press their defeated foes over Elk Creek, past the main Confederate camp, and on into the supply depot of Honey Springs, about three miles south of the initial action. An unwarranted commitment of reserves, prior to the Federal breakthrough, resulted in no Confederate units being available to act as rear guard. Little resistance was offered to the fast-moving soldiers of Blunt's command.⁴⁸

The rapid pursuit of the defeated Confederates continued for a mile south of the depot area where the Federal forces were halted and reorganized. At 4:00 p.m., two hours after the Federal forces were stopped, General Cabell arrived in the vicinity with 3,000 fresh troops from northwest Arkansas. The disorganized condition of Cooper's command was so severe that it was thought unwise to attempt a counter-attack, and during the night, all Confederate forces continued the withdrawal. Cabell and his troops returned to Arkansas, and the remains of Cooper's beaten command moved as rapidly as they could toward the safety of the Red River.⁴⁹

Casualties for the battle were heavy in comparison to the usual losses suffered by units fighting in the Indian Territory. Federal forces had thirteen men killed and sixty-two men wounded. Confederate losses were even heavier, for General Cooper admitted that 137 of his men were killed and forty-nine were taken as prisoners. A large percentage of the Confederate casualties were caused by the accurate Federal artillery fire.

⁴⁸ Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, pp. 121-122; Schaurte to Acting Assistant Adjutant General, July 20, 1863, Blunt to Schofield, July 26, 1863, Cooper to Steele, August 12, 1863, Official Records, I, XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 451, 448, 459.

⁴⁹ Blunt to Schofield, July 26, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 448; Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, p. 125.

In fact, the employment of Federal artillery was the major factor responsible for the Confederate defeat.⁵⁰

General Blunt, aware that his troops were short of ammunition, decided to remain in the battle area in case the Confederates continued the engagement the following day. But the rapid retreat of the forces of Cooper and Cabell prevented further fighting, and the Federal forces returned to the confines of Fort Blunt on July 18.⁵¹

General Cooper was again put in the unpleasant position of reporting another defeat, and again he managed to rationalize the loss to a minimum. His main excuse was the worthless Mexican powder which he said was responsible for the Federal success. If the weapons of his soldiers had fired properly, his command would have been able to hold their position in spite of the superior numbers of their foes. He also gave credit to Blunt's artillery for his defeat and exaggerated the number and size of the Federal guns by saying that they were ten times superior.⁵²

It does not appear that General Blunt realized the significance of his victory. He was pleased with the success of his command, but he made no serious attempt to follow the retiring Confederates. General Cooper, on the other hand, was keenly conscious of his insecure position and most anxious to withdraw from the seemingly invincible Blunt. General Cabell was of a similar frame of mind. The possibility that the divided Southern forces would be attacked separately was disregarded by

⁵⁰McReynolds, The Seminoles, p. 307; Blunt to Schofield, July 26, 1863, Cooper to Steele, August 12, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 448, 460.

⁵¹Schaurte to Acting Assistant Adjutant General, July 20, 1863, ibid., p. 451; Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, p. 124.

⁵²Cooper to Steele, August 12, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, p. 460.

the two Confederate generals as they sought to elude their more powerful adversary.

One reason for Blunt's lack of aggressiveness after the battle was his sudden illness. From his description of the malady which he called attacks of fever and physical weakness, he was suffering from malaria. There were other equally plausible reasons for his lack of activity. The recent battle had used up a large quantity of ammunition, and this had to be replaced by way of the long supply route from Fort Scott. Rations for the 5,000 Indian refugees living inside Fort Blunt could not be stockpiled, for food was consumed almost as rapidly as it was transported from Kansas.⁵³

The lag in communication between Fort Blunt and higher headquarters provided still another reason for Blunt's hesitancy toward offensive operations against the various elements of General Steele's divided command. Blunt did not know the exact number of Confederates facing him south of the Arkansas River, and he wanted additional reinforcements from the inactive commands located in southern Missouri. Requests for help would have to be sent to Saint Louis, and the total time involved in an exchange of messages would be two weeks or longer.

General Blunt waited eight days before he reported the battle at Elk Creek, which he officially called Honey Springs after the location of Cooper's headquarters and supply depot. The Kansas general wrote a subdued account of the fight, and he gave no glowing descriptions of the absolute victory his forces had achieved. He briefly and simply told the

⁵³Blunt to Schofield, July 26, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 448; Calkins to Curtis, July 23, 1863, Blunt to Curtis, August 19, 1863, *ibid.*, Pt. 2, pp. 393-394, 462; U.S., Congress, House, Report of the Secretary of Interior 1863, pp. 328-329.

facts. Several days later he revealed the condition of his command to General Schofield. Still firmly committed to the tactical concept of offense, Blunt elaborated the strength of the enemy and the weaknesses of his command in both men and artillery. The Kansas general said he could muster only 3,000 men, and this would leave Fort Blunt defended by convalescents. He concluded with the remark, "The odds against me are large, but I shall endeavor to do the best I can with the handful of troops under my command."⁵⁴

Major H.Z. Curtis, the adjutant left by Blunt at Fort Scott, added to the confusion with the alarming reports he sent to General Schofield. Curtis had no knowledge of the Honey Springs battle, and he indicated to the department commander that General Blunt was not only sick, but almost trapped inside the walls of his fort with a Confederate force of 13,000 menacingly close. This disturbing news should have forced Schofield into action, but it did not. The department commander, relying on the grasping character of his arch rival Blunt, made no effort to actively assist him in the defense of the Indian Territory. Schofield simply cautioned Blunt to use restraint in his actions and to be patient.⁵⁵

When Blunt's pessimistic message to Schofield arrived in Saint Louis, it goaded him into limited action. He informed the district commander in southwest Missouri, Brigadier General John McNeil, to move a force into northwest Arkansas where they could assist Blunt's command in case it was driven out of Fort Blunt and forced to retreat toward Fort Scott. He did not tell General McNeil to send this force to be under Blunt's command,

⁵⁴Blunt to Schofield, July 26, 1863, Official Records, 1, XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 447-448; Blunt to Schofield, July 30, 1863, ibid., Pt. 2, p. 411.

⁵⁵Curtis to Marsh, July 22, 1863, Schofield to Curtis, July 24, 1863, ibid., pp. 392, 394.

and when Schofield informed Major Curtis of his action, he reiterated his decision not to reinforce the Kansas general with troops which could be needed to defend the critical border area of Missouri and Arkansas.⁵⁶

The final results of Schofield's actions were entirely different from what he had intended. Whether or not his orders were willfully disobeyed by Blunt or unintentionally altered by Adjutant Curtis will never be determined. General Blunt contacted the blocking force sent into Arkansas by direct courier and ordered them to proceed immediately to his location on the Arkansas River. This 1500-man unit, the Second Kansas Cavalry Regiment, commanded by Colonel W.F. Cloud, needed little prodding to join their fellow Kansans in the Indian Territory. It moved into Fort Blunt on August 22.⁵⁷

The same day Colonel Cloud's regiment arrived, General Blunt began the final phase of his campaign against the Confederate forces of General Steele. The Kansas general informed Schofield of his future plans in strict military language. The new reinforced 4,500-man Army of the Frontier would move across the Arkansas River with the destruction of the Confederate command and the capture of Fort Smith, Arkansas, as its dual objective. Blunt mentioned that his poor health had prevented earlier operations, but he indicated he was sufficiently recovered to again assume personal command.⁵⁸

Significantly, the opening paragraphs of this message contained General Blunt's attitude toward the Indian soldiers which composed the

⁵⁶Schofield to McNeil, August 10, 1863, Schofield to Curtis, August 10, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 439, 439.

⁵⁷Cloud to McNeil, August 22, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 466-467.

⁵⁸Blunt to Schofield, August 22, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 465-466.

bulk of his command. General Schofield had written Blunt in early August concerning the removal of some Kansas Indians into the Indian Territory. This change of residence was probably caused by agitation of Kansas politicians to get rid of unwanted tribes which had been assigned reservations on some of the best agricultural lands in the state. General Schofield wanted to know the feasibility of inducting these red men into additional Indian regiments. Military service would separate the Indian men from their families and would simplify control during removal. As members of the army, these men would be subject to military discipline, and this would prevent unwanted violence by Indian males reluctant to give up their homes. Since Blunt had originally supervised the Indian regiments, and had additional experience with the Indian Brigade, he was the best authority available on the subject.⁵⁹

General Blunt wasted no words in describing his feelings about Indian units, for he said flatly that red men made poor soldiers. He continued by saying that even the best of them, the Cherokees, proved to be unsatisfactory troops once they arrived back in their own country. Blunt felt the Kansas Indians were far inferior to the best of the Five Civilized Tribes, and would be utterly worthless if recruited into the army. He suggested that the best solution for the Indian problem would be resettlement as farmers on government land with white troops nearby for protection. He concluded: "I would not exchange one regiment of negro [sic] troops for ten regiments of Indians."⁶⁰

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 465; General Order, Department of Kansas, May 5, 1862, ibid., XIII, p. 370; Abel, The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War, pp. 109-110.

⁶⁰Blunt to Schofield, August 22, 1862, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 2, p. 465.

The Confederate Indian Territory command of General Steele was re-assembled in early August near Briartown on the Canadian River. General Cabell once again moved his brigade into the Indian country. General Cooper collected troops in the Choctaw Nation, including one completely new regiment, and reluctantly rode north. General Steele had ambitious plans for a late-summer offensive to recover Confederate losses, but after observing the men and their equipment in his camp, he soon became convinced of the hopelessness of the situation.⁶¹

The brigade of General Cooper had not recovered from the defeat it received at Honey Springs the previous month. The size of Cabell's command had been increased with additional conscripts, but many of these men were Union sympathizers. The entire brigade was of doubtful value even under the best of circumstances. The Texas troops, reported for so long as being en route, had not arrived. Steele was thus faced with the prospect of fighting a Federal force equal to or larger than his own and far superior in equipment and artillery. After the recent Federal victory, the morale of Blunt's command was extremely high while the morale of the Confederate soldiers was unusually low.⁶²

These adverse conditions brought Steele to the only choice he had available. Since it would be suicidal to try to confront the advancing Federal forces, he would split his command and withdraw in hopes the Federal commander would extend himself to the point where his line of communication to Kansas could be severed. The decision not to stand and

⁶¹Blunt to Curtis, August 19, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 463; General Report, Brigadier General William Steele, February 15, 1864, *ibid.*, Pt. 1, pp. 33-34; Britton, The Civil War on the Border, II, p. 125.

⁶²General Report, Brigadier General William Steele, February 15, 1863, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 32-33.

fight was the easy way out of the Confederate commander's predicament, for Federal victories in the summer of 1863 convinced most of his Indian soldiers that further active resistance was not only foolhardy but senseless. General Steele, in spite of his military background, had probably come to the same conclusion.

For a second time in a month, General Cabell was ordered to counter-march his brigade to Arkansas and defend Fort Smith. The remainder of the Confederate command, composed of dejected Indians and Texans, moved south and west toward Boggy Depot in the Choctaw Nation. The pursuing forces of General Blunt, confused by the lack of fight in the Confederates, hesitated slightly, and then struck south in an effort to eliminate the force of General Steele before continuing their advance to Fort Smith.⁶³

On the evening of August 26 the retreating Confederates were overtaken by the lead element of the Federal column at Perryville in the Choctaw country. This skirmish between members of the Second Kansas Cavalry Regiment and a hastily-assembled band of Confederate Indians and Texans was over almost before it began. General Steele's troops were in the process of withdrawing from the town and offered only light resistance when attacked by the Federal cavalrymen. The Confederate commander said he was able to remove all supplies before he abandoned the depot, but General Blunt stated Perryville was filled with commissary stores which the Confederates were forced to burn to prevent their capture.⁶⁴

After the action at Perryville, General Blunt became convinced that the Confederate forces would offer little or no resistance to his advance,

⁶³Cloud to McNeil, August 27, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 598.

⁶⁴Blunt to Schofield, August 27, 1863, Steele to Sneed, August 28, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 597-598, 599-600.

and he drastically altered his troop dispositions. He sent a strong force from the Indian Brigade to garrison Webber's Falls and returned the balance of his old command to Fort Blunt. He proceeded toward Fort Smith with only the Second Kansas Cavalry Regiment and his artillery. The reports of the lack of fight in General Cabell's brigade were substantially correct, and after a small engagement at Backbone Mountain sixteen miles south of Fort Smith on September 1, the Confederate unit completely fell apart. Those members who did not desert retreated ignominiously with their general southward into Arkansas. General Blunt, accompanied by his staff, his personal bodyguard of soldiers, and a new Federal unit, the First Arkansas Infantry Regiment, took Fort Smith without opposition. Since the Kansas general was still suffering from the illness that had troubled him since July, he delegated the supervision of mopping-up operations to his subordinate, Colonel Cloud. After informing General Schofield that the entire Indian Territory and western Arkansas were in his possession, Blunt went to bed. The long campaign was over.⁶⁵

The final Federal offensive operations against the crumbling Confederate forces in the Indian Territory were anti-climatic. The ragged and forlorn Southerners, underfed and armed with little or nothing, proved to be no match for the advancing Federal command. The complete lack of hope is clearly apparent in General Steele's report, written several months after the fall of Fort Smith, when the Confederate general had been relieved of his command at his own request.

Steele presented a completely derogatory picture of Confederate

⁶⁵Blunt to Schofield, September 3, 1863, Cloud to Schofield, September 8, 1863, *ibid.*, pp. 601-602, 598-599; Blunt to Schofield, September 11, 1863, *ibid.*, Pt. 2, pp. 525-526; Castel, *A Frontier State at War*, p. 157; Blunt, "General Blunt's Account of His Civil War Experiences," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, I, p. 277.

affairs in the Indian Territory in 1863. Incompetent officers, a supply system which consistently malfunctioned, and faulty Mexican gunpowder were listed as primary reasons for the numerous Southern defeats in the Indian country. General Steele, like his Northern counterpart, had little respect for Indian soldiers, who he felt were undisciplined and worthless. He was also uncomplimentary about Indian officers, and he singled out Colonel McIntosh as being slow, uninspiring and completely responsible for the unsuccessful April raid which ended with the defeat at Greenleaf Prairie. Steele made an exception of Colonel Watie, whom he characterized as a capable and resourceful military commander.⁶⁶

The Federal government in its slow and deliberate way had attained its purpose of reconquering the Indian Territory. The planning had not been outstanding, and the execution of those plans had been at times barely satisfactory. The permanent occupation of Fort Blunt by Colonel Phillips had initiated the final Federal offense. These victories around that forward outpost, and those at Cabin Creek and Honey Springs were complete from the standpoint of achieving appropriate military objectives. Even more important, these successes killed the will to resist in all but the most rabid of Southern sympathizers. It was obvious that the Confederacy would not and could not supply the minimum necessities for fighting a war. The North had the men and material for winning battles, and this, more than broken promises and defeats, was what stifled the hopes of most of the Confederate Indians. Nothing seemed quite so futile as dying for a dream that had no chance for attainment.

The Civil War in the Indian Territory had eighteen months to run its

⁶⁶General Report, Brigadier General William Steele, February 15, 1864, Official Records, i, XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 28-36.

course. The Confederate Indian Brigade of General Cooper continued to carry out insignificant operations in the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations, and Colonel Watie and his Cherokee regiment raided intermittently across the Arkansas River. These were the only bright moments for the Confederates during the concluding months of the war. The dream of a Confederate Indian Territory died with the disintegration of General Steele's command in July and August of 1863. The capture of Fort Smith merely added more disillusionment for the advocates of the South. Federal ascendancy over Confederate resistance in the Indian Territory was now virtually complete, and the outcome of the war in the Indian country was no longer conjecture.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The years 1862-1863 in the Indian Territory saw Federal military power increase to the degree that the area was invaded, dominated, and generally pacified. The spasmodic efforts of Northern field commanders cannot be considered outstanding examples of how to fight a secondary military campaign, but in the final analysis, they accomplished their primary goal. The Indian Territory was subjugated by and large by September of 1863 when Fort Smith, Arkansas, was taken by Federal forces. In the Texas border regions, and also in the Cherokee Nation to the north, Confederate Indian units harassed their adversaries with hit-and-run tactics until the war ended, but these operations posed no basic threat to Union control of the country.

It was the overwhelming superiority of men, money, and material of the Federal government that brought about the eclipse of the Confederacy in the Indian Territory. Wars are not won with hopes, but with soldiers who have sufficient know-how and ammunition to destroy their enemies. This was the case with the North. On the other hand, the South hoped only that it would be able to maintain its position in the Indian country. The Five Civilized Tribes were undoubtedly lulled into a false sense of security by the grandiose promises of Confederate Commissioner Pike at the outbreak of the conflict.

The hopes of the Indians for a better and more prosperous life with an independent Confederacy were dampened significantly after the disastrous defeat at Pea Ridge in March, 1862. Their hopes received an even greater

blow with the advent of the Federal Indian Expedition. It is doubtful that the tribes were really encouraged by the sudden withdrawal of this invasion force. Even the most die-hard Southern sympathizer could see the potential of the Federal government and its superiority to that of its Confederate opponent.

The second invasion of the Indian Territory in 1863 completely disheartened the Confederate Indians, and they offered very little resistance to the Federal military machine. There were isolated exceptions to this, but the will to resist the United States Government died when Colonel Phillips moved his Federal Indian Brigade back to Fort Gibson in April, 1863. The battle of Honey Springs and the capture of Fort Smith were anticlimatic. All hope for an eventual Southern triumph had been destroyed some months previous to these events.

The inhabitants of the Indian Territory were victims of the war regardless of their allegiance. The Indian followers of Opothleyahola and Chief Ross who remained true to their treaty obligations with the United States suffered as much as those red men who eagerly sought the hand of Confederate friendship from Commissioner Pike. The wealth of the Indian country was in its farms and cattle, and the stability of its people was intertwined with personal possessions and friendships. These two aspirations, wealth and friendship, were the foundation of the new Indian civilization that was established in the territory. The war ruined the land, destroyed the possessions, killed countless innocent people, and so thoroughly disillusioned the Indian tribes that it took them many years to recover. War, like removal to the Indian Territory, was a traumatic experience for these red men. Both events involved associations with the white race, and both were highly detrimental to tribal growth and development. This was especially true with tribes which divided their

loyalty between the North and the South. These intratribal rivalries, begun with removal and reintensified by the war, were unusually slow in dying.

The Confederacy gained an advantage from initially holding the Indian Territory in spite of its eventual loss to the Federal army. The fighting was confined to the Indian country, and although the destruction of men and property was severe, it allowed Texas to escape the horrors of war. The civilian population of Texas was spared, and the large agricultural production of the state was shipped east to buttress the efforts of the more populous sections of the Confederacy. The South was forced to sacrifice the hopes of her Indian allies in order to gamble where there was some chance of success. It is doubtful that any of the Confederate political or military leaders ever considered the Indian Territory more than a buffer zone.

The Federal government was gravely hindered in its efforts to subdue the defected tribes of the Indian Territory by the continual quarreling of its military leaders for purposes of reputation, authority, or wealth. The purely selfish motives of the generals and politicians who had jurisdiction over the Indian country also caused additional hardships for its inhabitants. Most of this rivalry was on a person-to-person basis, but the efforts of Senator Lane of Kansas to control the territory were extremely broad, for Lane and his friends opposed anyone who threatened their methods of making dishonest profits from the war. Apparently, Colonel Phillips was the only high-ranking Federal officer who served in the Indian Territory due to his concern for its inhabitants.

The most controversial military figure on either side was Union General Blunt. A typical abolitionist fanatic of the Civil War era, Blunt was tinged with a psychotic condition, and this mental abnormality

made him more dogmatic and compulsive than would have been expected under peace circumstances. His slow mental deterioration did not prevent him from understanding the role of an aggressive commander committed to waging offensive action toward a definite goal. In fact, Blunt was one of the few Union Army generals who understood the concepts of modern warfare. He was a firm proponent of massed artillery fire and used this technique to great advantage in all of his victories in the Indian Territory. He was also a staunch believer in the principle of offense, even though he lacked a formal military education. Blunt clearly understood the necessity of carrying the fight to the enemy in order to obtain success on the battlefield.

The most maligned individual to emerge during the Federal offensive operations of 1862-1863 in the Indian Territory was Colonel Weer. While commanding the ill-fated Indian Expedition, Weer was arrested and his forces shamefully withdrawn to Kansas when victory was almost within reach. The circumstances surrounding this strange incident were shrouded with secrecy, but it seems certain that Weer, despite hardships and miserable military conditions, was determined to maintain his forward position in the Indian country. The safety of the Cherokee Nation was at stake, and even more important, Weer could see that the Confederacy would be unable to counteract the invasion of the territory by his command. The forceful exertion of power would solidify recent gains and make further strikes possible. His successor, Colonel Salomon, did not have the insight to understand the role he had usurped, and he quickly lost the advantage gained by the toil and sacrifice of 6,000 Federal soldiers.

An analysis of all operations within the Indian Territory during the eighteen-month period covered by this thesis demonstrates that properly trained and properly led Indian soldiers were reliable. Prejudice against

Indians in general allowed many military leaders from the North and the South to assume that the red man could not adapt himself to fighting a white man's war. Often the role which the Indian could perform with great ability was not understood. He could be an excellent scout, even when he had little or no equipment. This reconnaissance role was admirably suited for the Indian, and his ability to ride for great distances and to endure hardships made him an ideal component of the long-range mounted patrol. He was equally good as a guerrilla fighter, and the ambush and the raid were adaptations of a style of fighting known to Indians for generations.

It was unfortunate that the major commanders of the Northern and Southern forces in the Indian Territory did not understand the military skills of the red man. Both General Blunt and General Steele tried to fit the Indian soldier into the white pattern of warfare, and consequently they ended the campaign of 1863 with derogatory reports about the fitness and ability of the Indians under their commands. Confederate General Steele was biased against Indians for military purposes due to rivalry with his subordinate, General Cooper, who liked them as soldiers. Union General Blunt, as a result of his prejudice and his mental condition, was against the employment of Indians in future military operations. These two men played down the importance of the Indian in the fighting in the territory in 1862-1863. Only one Federal commander, Colonel Phillips, adequately appreciated the Indian soldier as a fighting man.

The difficulties of combating Confederate guerrilla warfare were first realized in the Indian Territory and in other border areas of the West during the Civil War. This tactic of attacking isolated posts, of ambushing slow-moving supply columns, and of destroying foodstuffs upon

which armies depended for survival, is now a doctrine of modern combat. During the Civil War these methods were considered barbaric, and all forms of retaliation were used to combat them. These clandestine operations, used often by Confederate Indians, were ideally suited for small and poorly equipped units. They forced the North to waste manpower and material in an unusually futile effort to protect all vulnerable points. This poor solution to the problem did not prevent guerrilla bands from striking, and the attacks were generally successful. The raiders did not attempt to hold their gains, but they captured materials for another attack, and then destroyed the remainder. Burned buildings, slaughtered animals, and dead sentries served as grim reminders to frighten and unnerve the enemy. This fear of the unknown was equally effective on the civilian population, and commanders at all levels experienced much frustration because of this problem.

Confederate guerrilla fighters did much to prolong the Federal effort to conquer the Indian Territory, and similar guerrilla bands throughout the West were responsible for rash and inopportune decisions by Federal commanders who could not cope with these tactics. But eventually the pressure of inadequate supplies and insufficient manpower wore the Confederates in the Indian Territory into exhaustion. Superior Federal resources gave the United States government nominal control of the territory by the middle of 1863, but Confederate guerrilla activity plagued the Union garrisons at Fort Gibson and Fort Smith with raids, patrols and ambushes. This harassment frequently disrupted the normal operations of the Army of the Frontier until the close of the war.

BIBLIOGRAPHY*

Unpublished Materials

Brooks, Marion Stuart. "The History of the Indian Territory During the Civil War." Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1917.

This thesis covers the entire war period in the Indian Territory. It does not have extensive documentation, nor does it delve into great detail about specific battles or occurrences. It gives the reader a sense of continuity for the war period.

Civil War Letters, Cherokee File, Grant Foreman Papers, Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

This is an extensive collection of valuable correspondence written by important Indian leaders of the North and the South. These personal letters tell in graphic detail of the trials and tribulations of the Five Civilized Tribes during the Civil War.

Francis, Charles Richard. "Confederate Ascendancy in Indian Territory 1860-1861." Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1963.

This excellent thesis covers the opening year of the Civil War and provided ample background material for the writing of this thesis. Commissioner Albert Pike's negotiations with the various Indian tribes in 1861 are covered by Francis in a most illuminating manner.

Hopkins, J.C. "James G. Blunt and the Civil War." Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1952.

This is a well-documented thesis which presents the wartime activities of a controversial general. This work portrays General Blunt as a radical and dominating personality who would allow nothing to stand in the way of his ambition.

"Indian-Pioneer History." 112 vols., Grant Foreman Collection, Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1937-1938.

This collection of typewritten interviews covers a vast range of subjects before and after statehood. The people interviewed were early settlers, pioneers and Indians of Oklahoma, and due to their advanced age, this information must be critically evaluated. The volumes are cross-indexed by name and subject matter and were compiled by the Works Progress Administration.

*Contains only items cited in footnotes.

Government Documents

Kappler, Charles J., ed. Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties. 5 vols., Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904-1941.

This set of documents contains all treaties made by the United States with Indian tribes. The numerous removal treaties with the Five Civilized Tribes are given verbatim.

U.S., Congress. Annals of Congress, 8th Congress, 1st Session (1803-1804). Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1852.

This volume of Congressional debates contains the formal discussions in the House of Representatives and in the Senate over the use of land of the Louisiana Purchase as a new home for Indians after their removal from the eastern portions of the United States.

_____, House of Representatives. Preliminary Report of the Eighth Census 1860, Executive Document Number 116, 37th Congress, 2d Session. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1862.

This is an incomplete report on the statistics of the 1860 census; it contains detailed information about slavery in Indian Territory prior to the beginning of the Civil War.

_____, House of Representatives. Report of the Secretary of Interior 1863, Executive Document Number 1, 38th Congress, 1st Session. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864.

The report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the year 1863 is contained in this document. It is a detailed analysis of the affairs and activities of the Indian tribes under the jurisdiction of the United States government during the year 1863.

_____, House of Representatives. Report of the Secretary of Interior 1865, Executive Document Number 1, 39th Congress, 1st Session. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1866.

This volume contains the annual report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the year 1865. The proceedings of the peace conference between negotiators for the United States and the Five Civilized Tribes are given verbatim. The Indian representatives were particularly articulate in presenting the circumstances which led to their defection in 1861.

_____, Senate. Report of the Secretary of the Interior 1861, Executive Document Number 1, 37th Congress, 2d Session. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1861.

The annual report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the year 1861 is contained in this report. The commissioner gives specific details about activities of the Five Civilized Tribes at the beginning of the Civil War.

_____, Department of Interior. Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1862. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1863.

This is the complete report by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1862, published separately from the Congressional Globe.

_____, War Department. War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. 70 vols. (128 books in the U.S. Serial Set), Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901.

These volumes contain most of the orders, reports and letters of the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War. This was the primary source material for the writing of this thesis.

Articles

Blunt, James G. "General Blunt's Account of His Civil War Experiences," Kansas Historical Quarterly, I (May, 1932), 211-265.

This lengthy and controversial document was written by Major General James G. Blunt in April, 1866. It was sent to the Kansas adjutant general but was misplaced and was not discovered until thirty-five years later. Due to the many accusations made in it, this report was not published until 1932 when most of the prominent men involved were dead. Many of the statements made by General Blunt in this narrative have never been substantiated.

Britton, Wiley. "Some Reminiscences of the Cherokee People," Chronicles of Oklahoma, V (June, 1927), 180-184.

This is a short article about the customs and activities of the Cherokee Indians during the Civil War and afterwards. Britton was very fond of this tribe, and he presents their story in a most favorable light.

Davis, J.B. "Slavery in the Cherokee Nation," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XI (December, 1933), 1056-1072.

This is an interesting article about slavery among the Cherokee Indians. It presents in great detail the laws passed by the Cherokee Council to control the "peculiar institution" prior to the Civil War, and it contains the deliberations of the same legislative body when slavery was outlawed in 1863.

Foreman, Grant. "The Centennial of Fort Gibson," Chronicles of Oklahoma, II (June, 1924), 119-128.

This condensed account of the history of the famous fort on the Arkansas River was written by an eminent Oklahoma historian. It traces the high points of military activity at the post from its founding until it was finally abandoned shortly before World War I.

Thoburn, Joseph B. "The Cherokee Question," Chronicles of Oklahoma, II (June, 1924), 141-242.

This long article gives an account of how the Cherokee tribe struggled in vain to prove its loyalty to the United States. The pro-Southern faction of the Indian nation was more than willing to give up large tracts of tribal lands to the Federal government in order to re-establish friendly relations. The Chief Ross faction of the tribe was unwilling to make concessions and lost their fight for recognition.

Wright, Muriel H. "Civil War Report on the Battle of Round Mountain," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXIX (Winter, 1961), 353-397.

Miss Wright contends that the first battle of the Civil War in the Indian Territory was fought near Keystone, Oklahoma, and not in Payne County as was suggested by Dr. Angie Debe in her article, "The Site of the Battle of Round Mountain," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVII (Summer, 1949), 187-206.

Books

Abel, Annie Heloise. The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist. Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1915.

_____. The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War. Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1919.

These two books provided a wealth of information about conditions within the Indian Territory during the years 1860-1863. Abel thoroughly documented her works, and her conclusions and assumptions about conditions and events of the Civil War are excellent.

Britton, Wiley. The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War. Kansas City: Franklin Hudson Publishing Co., 1922.

Britton was quite old when he wrote this book, and like all of his works, it is not documented. The great detail presented makes this book slow reading but provides some valuable information. The book is also valuable for the fact that the author was a participant in the Civil War in Indian Territory.

_____. Memoirs of the Rebellion on the Border, 1863. Chicago: Cushing, Thomas and Co., 1882.

This work was written approximately fifteen years after the end of the Civil War and covers only a one year period of the conflict. Though not documented, it gives much detail about military operations in the Indian Territory and is relatively accurate.

_____. The Civil War on the Border. 2 vols., New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1890-1904.

This two volume work covers all phases of the Civil War in Kansas, Arkansas, Missouri, and the Indian Territory. Military activity is given extensive coverage, although with a Northern bias. Like all of Britton's books, there is no documentation, but from his descriptions of events it is obvious that he did research before writing this study.

Brownlee, Richard S. Grey Ghosts of the Confederacy. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958.

This is a well-written book on guerrilla warfare in the West during the Civil War. Brownlee brings out the parallel between the efforts of military leaders of both the North and the South to coordinate their partisan activity with regular military operations, and modern concepts of war. The mobile role of cavalry is given extensive treatment.

Castel, Albert. A Frontier State at War: Kansas, 1861-1865. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958.

This work presents Kansas as a pro-Northern state which was filled with unprincipled politicians. The close connection between the military and political leaders in the state is brought out with great clarity. Castel has ample documentation to prove his accusations of fraud and deception.

Cunningham, Frank. Confederate Indians. San Antonio: The Naylor Co., 1959.

This is a biased account of the activities of Brigadier General Watie and his Confederate Cherokee regiment. The numerous skirmishes and engagements in which Watie and his unit participated are presented in great detail, but the pro-Southern point of view detracts from the overall value of the book.

Dale, Edward Everett, and Litton, Gaston, eds. Cherokee Cavaliers. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939.

This volume contains the correspondence of the Ridge-Watie-Boudinot family of Cherokee Indians, the leaders of the treaty faction of the tribe. Most of the male members of the large family played important roles in Cherokee politics for over fifty years. The family was pro-Southern in allegiance and was instrumental in persuading the Cherokee Nation to join the Confederacy.

Debo, Angie. The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934.

This is a well-written history of the Choctaw Indian tribe with emphasis on the cultural, political, and social characteristics of this distinctive group of people. The section of the book on the Civil War clearly shows the reasons for the Southern loyalty of the tribe.

_____. The Road to Disappearance. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941.

This is the best history available on the Creek Indian Nation, and the documentation is excellent. The portion of the book dealing with the Civil War is most concise.

Duncan, Robert Lipscomb. Reluctant General. New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1961.

This is an excellent biography of Brigadier General Pike. The connection between the Five Civilized Tribes and the rotund Southerner can be seen most clearly in the early chapters of the book, for Pike spent considerable time in the Indian Territory prior to the Civil War. The book is biased in favor of the misunderstood general, and it attempts to prove that his actions in 1862 were motivated by good intentions toward his Indian friends.

Foreman, Grant. A History of Oklahoma. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934.

This is an excellent general history of the state of Oklahoma. Foreman gives a balanced and finely written presentation of the development of the Sooner State. This book is not documented, but due to Foreman's extensive background in Oklahoma history, it can be considered very accurate.

- _____. Fort Gibson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936.
This is a brief history of the army post on the Arkansas River. Foreman presented only the highlights of its colorful history, but there is no real loss of continuity. The activities in and around the fort during the Civil War are covered in some detail.
- _____. Indian Removal. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932.
This study provides a detailed account of the emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes from the southern sections of the United States to the Indian Territory during the first half of the nineteenth century. This resumé is an excellent book for source material on Indian removal.
- Malone, James H. The Chickasaw Nation. Louisville: John P. Morton and Co., 1922.
Written by a missionary to the Chickasaw Indian tribe, this book has some excellent personal accounts of events and activities which occurred in this Indian nation before and after removal. It is somewhat limited by its lack of thorough documentation.
- McReynolds, Edwin C. Oklahoma. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954.
This is another well-written and well-documented history of the state of Oklahoma. McReynolds' style of writing makes reading this book a pleasure.
- _____. The Seminoles. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957.
This is the best work to date on the most primitive of the Five Civilized Tribes. This volume is also well-documented and has an excellent bibliography.
- Monaghan, Jay. Civil War on the Western Border 1854-1865. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1955.
Monaghan does not have his book documented, and this detracts from the value of the work. The writing style is journalistic, and fact and personal opinion are difficult to separate. The book has interest and is valuable when cross referenced with other material.
- Oates, Stephen B. Confederate Cavalry West of the River. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961.
This is a recent history of the cavalry units of Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, and the Indian Territory. This work is based on general assumptions which Oates proves with extensive documentation. Its broad and high level approach to cavalry tactics limits the book to those with backgrounds of military history and military science.
- Richardson, James D., comp. A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Confederacy. 2 vols., Nashville: United States Publishing Co., 1905.
These two volumes provide source material for Pike's treaties and his extensive negotiations with the Indian Territory tribes in 1861.
- Schofield, John M. Forty-Six Years in the Army. New York: The Century Co., 1897.

This long uninteresting work was written after General Schofield had retired from active duty. It is highly biased and void of documentation, but it can be most helpful in understanding the complicated political developments which were so significant in the Indian Territory during the Civil War.

Thoburn, Joseph B., and Wright, Muriel H. Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People. 4 vols., New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1929.

This is the definitive work on Oklahoma history. Volumes I and II were used extensively to provide background for this thesis, and the bibliography found in these volumes proved to be invaluable as a basis for detailed research.

Wardell, Morris L. A Political History of the Cherokee Nation 1838-1907. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1938.

This is one of the best Indian tribal histories published by the University of Oklahoma Press. Wardell is an obvious expert on Cherokee political institutions, and his treatment of the often divided Indian tribe provides candid insights into the efforts of various leaders to achieve complete independence from their white neighbors.

Woodruff, W.E. With the Light Guns in '61-'65. Little Rock: Central Printing Co., 1903.

This is a typical Civil War soldier memoir, and it is limited in scope since the author made no effort to document his work. The descriptions of life at Fort McCulloch in 1862 are the most important contribution of the book.

Woodward, Grace Steele. The Cherokees. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.

This is a new history of the Cherokee Indian tribe written from a woman's point of view. The social and political trends of the most advanced of the Five Civilized Tribes are given detailed emphasis.

VITA

Barney King Neal, Jr.

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: FEDERAL ASCENDANCY IN INDIAN TERRITORY, 1862-1863

Major: History

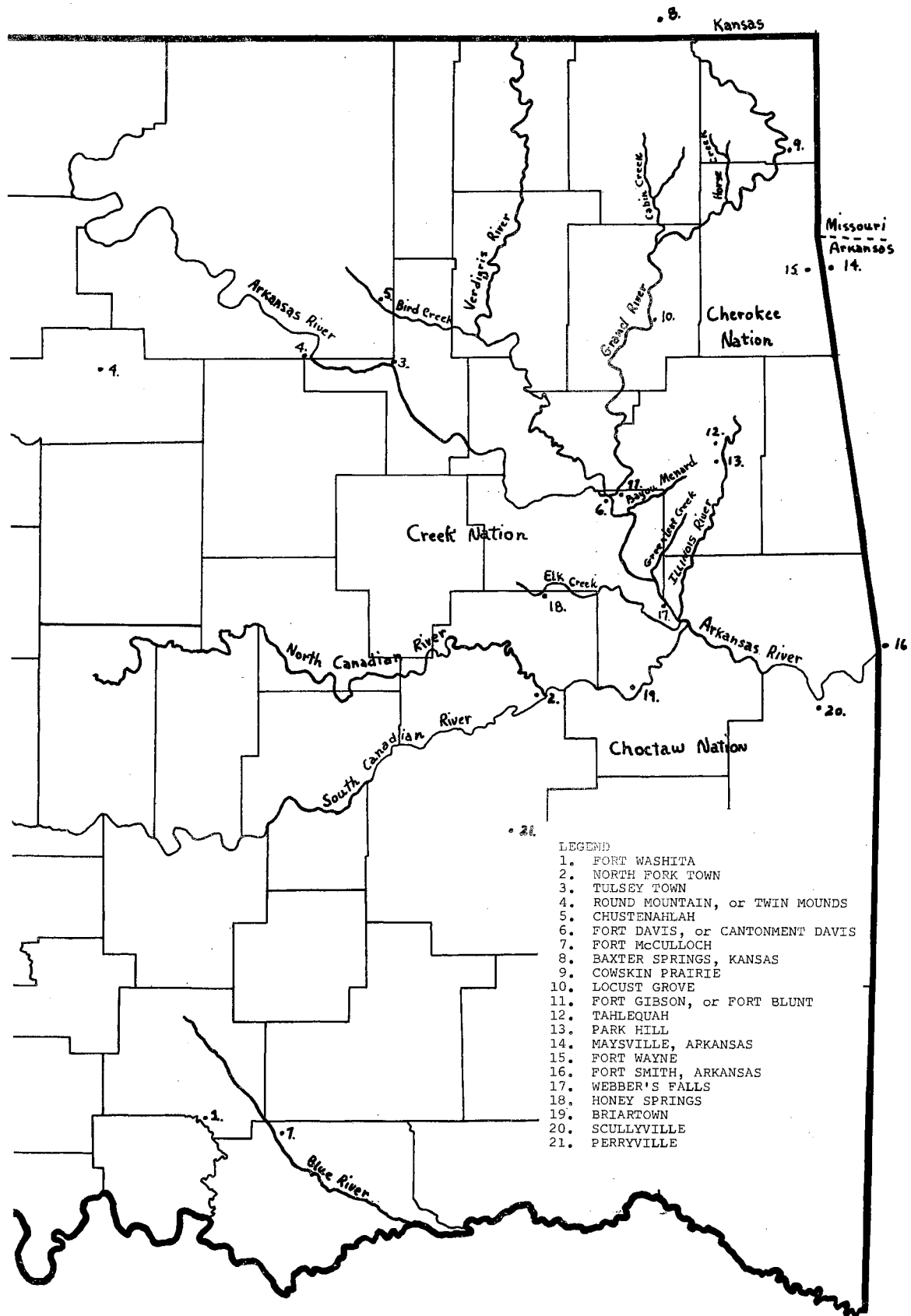
Biographical:

Personal date: Born in Atlanta, Georgia, July 4, 1928, the son of Barney K. and Doris M. Neal.

Education: Attended elementary school in Atlanta, Georgia; attended high school in Mobile, Alabama, and graduated from Allen Military Academy, Bryan, Texas, in 1946; received the Bachelor of Arts degree from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in 1950; completed requirements for the Master of Arts degree in 1966.

Professional experience: Served as a regular officer of the United States Army, 1950-1962, attaining the rank of Major; was a member of the staff and faculty of the Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, from 1953-1955, and taught Military Science and Tactics at Oklahoma State University from 1960-1962.

Professional organizations: Phi Alpha Theta.



- LEGEND
- 1. FORT WASHITA
 - 2. NORTH FORK TOWN
 - 3. TULSEY TOWN
 - 4. ROUND MOUNTAIN, or TWIN MOUNDS
 - 5. CHUSTENAH LAH
 - 6. FORT DAVIS, or CANTONMENT DAVIS
 - 7. FORT McCULLOCH
 - 8. BAXTER SPRINGS, KANSAS
 - 9. COWSKIN PRAIRIE
 - 10. LOCUST GROVE
 - 11. FORT GIBSON, or FORT BLUNT
 - 12. TAHLEQUAH
 - 13. PARK HILL
 - 14. MAYSVILLE, ARKANSAS
 - 15. FORT WAYNE
 - 16. FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS
 - 17. WEBBER'S FALLS
 - 18. HONEY SPRINGS
 - 19. BRIARTOWN
 - 20. SCULLYVILLE
 - 21. PERRYVILLE

Indian Territory 1862-1863