

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA  
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**Combat, Supply, and the Influence of Logistics  
During the Civil War in Indian Territory**

A THESIS

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By

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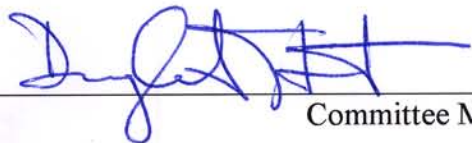
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APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

April 30, 2008

By   
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## **ABSTRACT OF THESIS**

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**TITLE OF THESIS:** Combat, Supply, and the Influence of Logistics During the Civil War in Indian Territory

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**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of combat, supply, and the influence of logistics during the war in Indian Territory. This thesis examines the war in detail, particularly the role and importance of supplies. In almost every instance, provisions were a driving force for engagements within the territory. This study draws upon vast collections of primary sources, including letters, diaries, and official reports. This work also employs secondary sources to add to the interpretation and develop the historiography and necessary background. Each chapter explores a significant period in the conflict. It chronicles the events, from the withdrawal of federal troops in 1861 through the end of hostilities in 1865. The federal command learned valuable lessons during the first two years of the war. Besides ineffective leadership, the inability of the army to supply Union troops led to an eventual mutiny even after successfully defeating enemy forces in the field. By late summer 1863, federal commanders reentered Indian Territory and occupied Fort Gibson and Fort Smith, dividing the Indian Territory and forcing Confederate forces south of the Arkansas River. During 1864 the war remained stagnant. Union troops

crossed the Arkansas River and drove south into the Choctaw Nation but failed to decisively defeat the enemy. Confederate troops attacked Fort Smith, driving in the federal pickets but could not force the garrison from the post. Throughout the remained of the year raids became the prominent form of warfare with both commands unable to muster the strength or supplies to drive the other from the territory. In early 1865, federal and Confederate troops prepared for renewed offensives; however, the war ended before soldiers began active campaigning. The end came quietly as officers waited their turn to surrender and moved to nearby federal garrisons to be paroled. From there, the troops returned home to begin their life after four years of war

## Chapter 1: Review of Literature

The American Civil War is one of the most studied periods of history. Authors have written and argued about a wide variety of topics. However, the bulk of available texts deal with the Civil War in the east while the war in the Trans-Mississippi West receives little attention. While grand armies marched across Virginia with over 100,000 soldiers, colonels moved with regiments across the Indian nations. That is not to say that Indian Territory was not an important theater. Indian Territory lay at the western flanks of both armies and served as a buffer for Confederate Texas and Arkansas from Kansas. In summer 1863, General James G. Blunt amassed the largest federal force in the territory during the entire war and moved south from Fort Gibson to engage the enemy. With Blunt was a mere 4,500 men. Federal troops struggled to maintain their supply lines which stretched over 160 miles from Fort Scott, Kansas, to Fort Gibson, Cherokee Nation. As war stripped the territory of livestock and farms went untended, Union troops grew dependent on wagons filled with war provisions for their very existence.

The Confederate troops suffered as well. At times, their force numbered between 9,000 and 12,000 men. However they suffered from a lack of arms, ammunition, and equipment. With the fall of Fort Gibson in 1863, Confederate dominance of Indian Territory fell below the Arkansas River. For the duration of the war, Confederate troops fought to deny the enemy of supplies and force their withdrawal from the territory. Even though Confederate troops rode circles around the Union garrison, they could not drive the federals from the field.



Within the borders of Indian Territory, soldiers fought not for territorial gain, but for supplies. As the war progressed, both sides grew desperate for materials as they divided the territory at the Arkansas River. Mules and horses became so scarce that federal commanders were willing to pay \$175 for each animal.<sup>1</sup> This study examines the role and importance of supplies and the engagements surrounding them. In almost every instance, supplies were the driving force of the engagements within the territory. In addition, this thesis includes a number of new primary sources and brings the significant secondary works together in one study to reexamine the conflict.

A number of works exist on the Civil War in the Indian Territory. The vast majority of written works fall into five categories. The first set of works were all written before 1925 by two authors. Annie Heloise Abel's trilogy examines the role of Native Americans in the Civil War, particularly diplomatic relations to the Confederate States of America and the postwar impact of defeat on the tribes.<sup>2</sup> However, additional "sources might also have served to temper Abel's ethnocentric perspective and racist language."<sup>3</sup> In their introduction to the reprinted edition, Theda

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<sup>1</sup> William A. Phillips to Samuel R. Curtis, Letter, 7 March 1864, United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 70 volumes in 128 books, 1880-1901), 524-527. and James G. Blunt to Samuel R. Curtis, Letter, 30 March 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 791-792.

<sup>2</sup> Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist*, Cleveland: Arthur C. Clark Co., 1915. and Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*. and Annie Heloise Abel. *The American Indian Under Reconstruction*, Cleveland: Arthur C. Clark Co. 1925. This work is available as *The American Indian and the End of the Confederacy, 1863-1866*, Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 1993. and Wiley Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, Kansas City, Missouri: F. Hudson, 1922. An excellent reprint is available in the Kansas Heritage Press 1994 reprint. and Wiley Britton, *The Civil War on the Border*, 2 volumes, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1899. The Kansas Heritage Press offers this publication in reprinted paperback form (1994).

<sup>3</sup> Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian and the Civil War, 1862-1865*, (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 1992), 5. Introduction by Theda Purdue and Michael D. Green.

Purdue, noted Cherokee historian, and Michael D. Green, Creek historian, go on to say, “access to Native sources would have produced a different book, one that still needs to be written.”<sup>4</sup> The second author who falls into this category is Wiley Britton. Britton served as a member of the Kansas cavalry in the Indian Territory and wrote several books and articles on the Civil War in the West. *The Civil War on the Border*, Britton’s first work, is a two volume narrative of operations in Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, and the Indian Territory, based on his personal experiences and the official reports of Union and Confederate commanders.<sup>5</sup> As he notes in his introduction, “the official reports are very meager, except as to larger operations, and give a very incomplete account of the war...”<sup>6</sup> This piece places the Indian Territory in the greater context of the border region during the war and focuses by focusing on troop movements and military defeats. It must be noted that both of Britton’s works heavily favor Union accounts of the war and lack any references. He stated that he compared his own personal observations with official records when possible. His second work, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, is a brigade history of Union troops and chronicles their participation in the Civil War.<sup>7</sup> This work is especially helpful considering Britton spent much of his Civil War service in Indian Territory. In this volume, Britton draws upon his personal observations of Indian troops during the conflict and the official reports of commanders.

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Reprint from the original edition entitled *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, Cleveland: Arthur C. Clark Co., 1919.

<sup>4</sup> Abel, *The American Indian and the Civil War, 1862-1865*, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Wiley Britton, *The Civil War on the Border*, 2 volumes, New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1899. The Kansas Heritage Press offers this publication in reprinted paperback form (1994).

<sup>6</sup> Britton, *The Civil War in the Border, Volume 1, 1861-1862*, iv.

<sup>7</sup> Wiley Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, Kansas City, Missouri: F. Hudson, 1922. An excellent reprint is available in the Kansas Heritage Press (1994.)

The second set of works is the official records. Several groups of official records exist. Any historiographical review of materials pertaining to the Civil War in the Indian Territory should begin with *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*.<sup>8</sup> This official series, published over a twenty-one year period, contains the official correspondence of the Union and Confederate Armies with a general index.<sup>9</sup> The material relating to Indian Territory is spread throughout the *Official Records* and many pages and can be searched with the general index or by volume for individual commander, place name, fort name, battle names, or unit names.<sup>10</sup> The *Official Records* helps the reader to

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<sup>8</sup> United States War Department, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. 70 Volumes, 128 Books. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901.

<sup>9</sup> The collection is broken into four series. Series I is the formal reports, both Union and Confederate, of the first seizures of United States property in the South, and of all military operations in the field, with the correspondence, orders, and returns relating specifically thereto. Series II contains the orders, reports, and returns, Union and Confederate, relating to Prisoners of War and (so far as the military authorities were concerned) to state and political prisoners. Series III contains correspondence, orders, reports, and returns of the Union authorities (embracing their correspondence with the Confederate officials) not relating specifically to the subjects of the first and second series. It embraces the annual and special reports of the Secretary of War, of the General-in-Chief, and the chiefs of the several staff corps and departments; the calls for troops and the correspondence between the National and the several state authorities. Series IV contains correspondence, orders, reports, and returns of the Confederate authorities, similar to that indicated for the Union officials, as of the third series, but excluding the correspondence between the Union and Confederate authorities given in that series.

<sup>10</sup> For a broad view of action within the Indian Territory it is easy to locate operations by individual year. Indian Territory operations for 1861 can be found in *Series I*, volumes 1, 3, 8, and 53. Operations for 1862 can be found in *Series I*, volumes 8, 13, 22, and 53. Operations for 1863 can be found in *Series I*, volumes 22, 26, and 53. Operations for 1864 can be found in *Series I*, volume 22, 34, and 41. Operations for 1865 can be found in *Series I*, 46, 47, 48, and 49.

Records for the organization and equipment within Indian Territory can be found in *Series I*, volumes 41 and 53; *Series III*, volumes 2 and 4; and *Series IV*, volume 1. Information pertaining to the restoration of civilian authorities within the territory can be found in *Series I*, volume 48 and *Series II*, volume 4. Information on departments of the Indian Territory can be found in *Series I*, volumes 1, 8, 13, and 22. Information on the Confederate District of the Indian Territory can be found in *Series I*, volumes 22, 23, 26, 34, 35, and 41. Information on Union District of the Indian Territory can be found in *Series I*, volume 1, 13, 22, 23, 26, 34, 35, and 41.

Information regarding both the Union and Confederate Indian units is extensive. The following Confederate forces are addressed within the *Official Records*. The 1<sup>st</sup> Cherokee Cavalry Battalion can be found in *Series I*, volumes 13, 22, and 48. Information on the 1<sup>st</sup> Cherokee Regiment, *Series I*, volumes 3, 8, 13, 22, 34, 41; *Series II*, volume 3; and *Series IV*, volume 1. Information on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cherokee Mounted Rifles can be found in *Series I*, volumes 22, 34, 35, and 41. Information on

gain firsthand knowledge of the war, however, many officers attempted to highlight their achievements while minimizing negative actions. Careful examination reveals discrepancies among the reports by commanders within a department as well as very different Union and Confederate descriptions of events.

Kansas regiments were instrumental to the federal war in Indian Territory.

The official military history of all Kansas regiments during the Civil War, composed from records of the adjutant general's office, is available in *Official Military History of Kansas Regiments during the War for the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*.<sup>11</sup>

Each regiment has an individual section, in chronological order. The records of the adjutant's general of Kansas are available in *Report of the Adjutant General for the*

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Drew's Cherokee Mounted Rifles can be found in *Series I*, volumes 3, 8, 13, 22, 34, and 41.

Information on Holt's Cherokee Battalion can be found in *Series I*, volume 22. Information on Scales' Cherokee Battalion can be found in *Series I*, volume 41.

Information on the 1<sup>st</sup> Chickasaw Cavalry Battalion can be found in *Series I*, volume 13, 22, 34, and 41. Information on the 1<sup>st</sup> Chickasaw Regiment can be found in *Series I*, volumes 41, 48, and 53. Information on Pickens' Chickasaw Battalion can be found in *Series I*, volumes 22 and 34. Information on the 1<sup>st</sup> Choctaw Battalion can be found in *Series I*, volume 41. Information on the 1<sup>st</sup> Choctaw Cavalry Regiment can be found in *Series I*, volume 13, 14, 22, 34, 41, and 48. Information on the 1<sup>st</sup> Choctaw Cavalry War Regiment can be found in *Series I*, volumes 13, 14, 22, 34, 41, and 48. Information on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Choctaw Regiment can be found in *Series I*, volumes 34 and 48. Information on the 1<sup>st</sup> Choctaw and Chickasaw Mounted Rifles can be found in *Series I*, volumes 3, 8, 13, 22, 34, 41, 48, and *Series IV*, volume 1.

Information on the 1<sup>st</sup> Creek Cavalry Battalion can be found in *Series I*, volumes 8, 9, and 13. Information on the 1<sup>st</sup> Creek Regiment can be found in *Series I*, volumes 3, 8, 13, 22, 34, 35, 41, 53, and *Series II*, volume 1. Information on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Creek Regiment can be found in *Series I*, volumes 22, 34, 41, and 53. Information on Kenard's Creek Squadron can be found in *Series I*, volume 41. Information on McSmith's Creek Company can be found in *Series I*, volume 13. Information on the Osage Battalion (Broke Arm) can be found in *Series I*, volumes 22 and 41. Information on the 1<sup>st</sup> Seminole Cavalry Battalion can be found in *Series I*, volumes 8, 9, 13, 22, 26, 34, 41, 53, and *Series IV*, volume 2. Material is available for Union Indian Troops as well. Information on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>, Home Guards can be found in *Series I*, volumes 13, 22, 34, 35, 41, and 48. Information on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Home Guards can be found in *Series I*, volume 22. For units operating within the Indian Territory originating outside of the Indian Nations consult the General Index with specific troops identification for the various volumes needed.

<sup>11</sup> W.S. Burke, *Official Military History of Kansas Regiments During the War for the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, Leavenworth, Kansas: Kansas Printing Office, 1870. A reprint is available, Ottawa, Kansas: Kansas Heritage Press, no date.

*State of Kansas*.<sup>12</sup> Another set of state records worth researching is *Annual Report of the Adjutant General and Acting Quartermaster General of the State of Wisconsin*.<sup>13</sup>

Several Wisconsin regiments served in the territory during the conflict.

The third set of historical works relating to the Civil War in the Indian Territory includes published, secondary works. Many of these suffer in a variety of ways. Some of the earlier pieces are heavily biased towards the Confederacy. In addition, a large number fail to cite their sources or are meant to be brief narratives of the events without interpretation.

*Opotheleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee: Their Flight to Kansas in the Civil War* by Lela J. McBride addresses the Creek Nation before the war erupts and then follows the pro-Union Indians flight to Kansas.<sup>14</sup> *Now the Wolf has Come: the Creek Nation in the Civil War* continues the examination of the effects of the Civil War on the Creek Nation as well as their participation during the conflict.<sup>15</sup> *The Cherokee Nation in the Civil War*, by Clarissa W. Confer, addresses the Cherokee Nation specifically in its pre-war years and the tribal government's decision to go to war. Confer also looks at Cherokee tribal members as refugees during the war years.<sup>16</sup> A short work by LeRoy H. Fischer and Jerry Gill, *Confederate Indian Forces Outside of*

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<sup>12</sup> Kansas, Adjutant General's Office. *Report of the Adjutant General for the State of Kansas*, Topeka: Kansas State Printing Office, 1896.

<sup>13</sup> Wisconsin, Adjutant General's Office. *Annual Report of the Adjutant General and Acting Quartermaster General of the State of Wisconsin*, Madison: Adjutant General's Office, 1866.

<sup>14</sup> Lela J. McBride, *Opotheleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee: Their Flight to Kansas in the Civil War*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Christine S. White and Benton R. White, *Now the Wolf has Come: the Creek Nation in the Civil War*, College Station, Texas: Texas AandM University Press, 1996.

<sup>16</sup> Clarissa W. Confer, *The Cherokee Nation in the Civil War*, Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007.

*Indian Territory*, provides a history of the limited role of Native American participation outside of the territory, including the Battle of Prairie Grove.<sup>17</sup>

For a more concise work on the Civil War in the area, consult *Civil War in the Ozarks* by Phillip W. Steele and Steve Cottrell.<sup>18</sup> This work provides a short summary of the region during the war years allowing for a broad view of hostilities, but lacks citations. For a description of the early war years, William M. O'Brien's *A Time of Decision: the Indian Territory in the first years of the Civil War, August 1861 through Early 1862*, provides a look at early decisions and diplomacy among Native Americans with the Confederacy and the decision to leave the protection of the United States.<sup>19</sup> Jay Monaghan's *Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865* places Indian Territory in the broad context of the West. However, Monaghan provides limited space for discussion of Indian Territory.<sup>20</sup>

Of the many single volume works on the Civil War in the Indian Territory, one of the earliest works is *Civil War in Indian Territory* by George H. Shirk.<sup>21</sup> LeRoy H. Fischer presents a compilation of articles entitled *The Civil War Era in Indian Territory*.<sup>22</sup> This arrangement covers the pre-war years through reconstruction. Another work by Fischer, *The Western Territories in the Civil War*,

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<sup>17</sup> LeRoy H. Fischer and Jerry Gill, *Confederate Indian Forces Outside of Indian Territory*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1969.

<sup>18</sup> Phillip W. Steele and Steve Cottrell, *Civil War in the Ozarks*, Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Co., 1993.

<sup>19</sup> William M. O'Brien, *A Time of Decision: the Indian Territory in the first years of the Civil War, August, 1861 through Early 1862*, Jenks, Oklahoma: Published by author, 1997.

<sup>20</sup> Jay Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865*, Boston: Little, Brown and Co, 1955.

<sup>21</sup> George H. Shirk, *Civil War in Indian Territory*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1900.

<sup>22</sup> LeRoy H. Fischer, *The Civil War Era in Indian Territory*, Los Angeles: L.L. Morrison, 1973. The papers in this book were originally published in the *Journal of the West* and include bibliographical references and index.

places Indian Territory within the context of the broad expanse of territorial states.<sup>23</sup>

A more recent history of the war in the Indian Territory is Larry C. Rampp and Donald L. Rampp's *The Civil War in Indian Territory*. This book chronicles the large scale movement of troops; however, a number of the cited sources are used incorrectly or do not correlate with the material referenced. Some sections of text vary significantly from primary source descriptions of events. Despite these shortcomings, this is the first modern history of the conflict within the territory from the opening shots of the war through the end of hostilities.<sup>24</sup> For a collection of various works in one volume, *Kepis and Turkey Calls: an Anthology of the War Between the States in Indian Territory*, edited by Mark L. Cantrell and Mac R. Harris, provides a brief history of the hostilities within the territory by arranging *Chronicles of Oklahoma* articles into the general framework of the war.<sup>25</sup> For a short summary of the war years in the territory look at Steve Cottrell's *Civil War in the Indian Territory*.<sup>26</sup> This book is concise; however it lacks an index or references and has an extremely limited bibliography.

There are a small number of works on individual battles, engagements, units, and places within the region. For the most part, they tend to be large pamphlets rather than monographs. Because of the scarcity of materials available for individual actions and the relatively low number of participants in each engagement, most skirmishes and battles are incorporated into larger works. In *State of Thieves:*

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<sup>23</sup> LeRoy H. Fischer, *The Western Territories in the Civil War*, Manhattan, Kansas: Journal of the West, 1977.

<sup>24</sup> Larry C. and Donald L. Rampp, *The Civil War in Indian Territory*, Austin, Texas: Presidial Press, 1975.

<sup>25</sup> Mark L. Cantrell and Mac R. Harris, ed., *Kepis and Turkey Calls: An Anthology of the War Between the States in Indian Territory*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Western Heritage Books, 1982.

<sup>26</sup> Steve Cottrell, *Civil War in the Indian Territory*, Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Co, 1995.

*Detailing the truth of the first Battles of the Civil War in Indian Territory*, Robert W. DeMoss examines the earliest battles in Indian Territory.<sup>27</sup> Another short work by DeMoss is *The Battle of Caving Banks or Chusto Talasah*.<sup>28</sup> Jess C. Epple's *Battle of Cabin Creek, September 18, 19, 1864, called 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Cabin Creek, Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory*, looks specifically at the Confederate victory and the capture of the large Union supply train.<sup>29</sup> For another perspective on the second Battle of Cabin Creek, Steven L. Warren's *Brilliant Victory: the Second Civil War Battle of Cabin Creek, Indian Territory, September 19, 1864*, recounts the engagement.<sup>30</sup> Honey Springs, Perryville, Skullyville, and Boggy Depot were key supply basis for Confederate troops during the war. Federal commanders struck each throughout the conflict, robbing the enemy of military goods. Another work by Epple, *Honey Springs Depot, Elk Creek, Creek Nation, Indian Territory*, provides a description of the Confederate depot located at Honey Springs as well as operations in the vicinity.<sup>31</sup>

Of all the individuals involved in the Civil War in Indian Territory, Stand Watie and his military career receives the most attention. Most authors, however, inflate Watie's success as a military leader and his troop's ability to fight on the battlefield. One best known work's is Frank Cunningham's *General Stand Watie's*

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<sup>27</sup> Robert W. DeMoss, *State of Thieves: Detailing the Truth of the First Battles of the Civil War in Indian Territory*, Cleveland, Oklahoma: R.W. DeMoss, 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Robert W. DeMoss, *The Battle of Caving Banks or Chusto Talasah*, Cleveland, Oklahoma: R.W. DeMoss, 1993.

<sup>29</sup> Jess C. Epple, *Battle of Cabin Creek, September 18, 19, 1864, called 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Cabin Creek, Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory*. Muskogee, Oklahoma: Hoffman Print Co., 1964.

<sup>30</sup> Steven L. Warren, *Brilliant Victory: the Second Civil War Battle of Cabin Creek, Indian Territory, September 19, 1864*, Spokane, Washington: S.W. Warren, 2002.

<sup>31</sup> Jess C. Epple, *Honey Springs Depot, Elk Creek, Creek Nation, Indian Territory*, Muskogee, Oklahoma: Hoffman Print Co., 1964. This work was reprinted in 2002 by Thomason Print Co., Muskogee, Oklahoma.



*Confederate Indians*.<sup>32</sup> Cunningham looks at Watie and his troop's role in the region, including the Battle of Prairie Grove and his book serves as a good general guide into the movement of Watie and his men; however, the general's role in combat is exaggerated. Wilfred Knight offers a different perspective with *Red Fox: Stand Watie and the Confederate Indian Nations during the Civil War Years in Indian Territory*.<sup>33</sup> This piece serves as a biography of Stand Watie and his military career within the greater context of Native American involvement. Another work on Watie is *Stand Watie and the First Cherokee Regiment, 1861-1865*, by Carolyn M. Bartels.<sup>34</sup> A short work on Stand Watie can be found in Mabel W. Anderson's *Life of General Stand Watie: the only Indian Brigadier General of the Confederate Army and the Last General to Surrender*.<sup>35</sup> This work stands out by providing significant information on the officers and soldiers of Watie's Brigade; however, the short booklet comes close to "hero worship." To examine Stand Watie in the context of the Cherokee Nation, *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation* by Kenny A. Frank's provides a look at the political situation within the tribe and Watie's reaction to developing events.<sup>36</sup> For a different perspective on Watie, B. Narasingarajan provides a foreign scholar's interpretation in *Stand Watie: an Analytical Study*.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Frank Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*. San Antonio, Texas: Naylor Co., 1959, This book was reprinted by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1998.

<sup>33</sup> Wilfred Knight, *Red Fox: Stand Watie and the Confederate Indian Nations During the Civil War Years in Indian Territory*, Glendale, California: A.H. Clark Co, 1988.

<sup>34</sup> Carolyn M. Bartels, *Stand Watie and the First Cherokee Regiment, 1861-1865*, Independence, Missouri: Two Trails Publishing, 1990s.

<sup>35</sup> Mabel W. Anderson, *Life of General Stand Watie: the only Indian Brigadier General of the Confederate Army and the Last General to Surrender*, Pryor, Oklahoma: M.W. Anderson, 1915. Brandy Station Bookshelf reproduced the work in 1995.

<sup>36</sup> Kenny A. Franks, *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation*, Memphis, Tennessee: Memphis State University press, 1979. This work is based on the author's thesis at Oklahoma State University, 1973.

<sup>37</sup> B. Narasingarajan, *Stand Watie: an Analytical Study*, Bangalore, India: Mayflower Publications International, 1984.

Works on other individual participants who fought within the Indian Territory are available as well. LeRoy H. Fischer and Larry C. Rampp have written a short piece entitled *Quantrill's Civil War Operations in Indian Territory*, chronicling Quantrill's operations within the area.<sup>38</sup> A firsthand account of the war years is presented in *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy: the Autobiography of Chief G.W. Grayson*, edited by W. David Baird.<sup>39</sup> For a perspective on a Union officer *General James G. Blunt, Tarnished Glory*, by Robert Collins, examines General Blunt and his activities in the West as well as the problems surrounding his command.<sup>40</sup> Another Confederate Cherokee is examined in *The Confederate Cherokee: John Drew's Regiment of Mounted Rifles* by Craig W. Gaines. Throughout the war, Drew dealt with desertions and constant problems motivating his full blood troops to fight against their own tribal brethren.<sup>41</sup>

Because of the large number of Texas troops operating in Indian Territory, researchers should look carefully at several books on commanders and units from Texas. *A Texas Cavalry Officer's Civil War, the Diary and Letters of James C. Bates*, edited by Richard Lowe, provides a white Confederate officer's perspective. Bates served extensively in the Indian Territory and offers commentary on a variety of issues.<sup>42</sup> One Texas regimental history of value is *Suffering to Silence: Twenty-Ninth Texas Cavalry, CSA, Regimental History*. The 29<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry actively

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<sup>38</sup> LeRoy H. Fischer and Larry C. Rampp, *Quantrill's Civil War Operations in Indian Territory*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1968.

<sup>39</sup> W. David Baird, ed., *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy: the Autobiography of Chief G.W. Grayson*, Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Collins, *General James G. Blunt, Tarnished Glory*, Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 2005.

<sup>41</sup> Craig W. Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokee: John Drew's Regiment of Mounted Rifles*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989.

<sup>42</sup> Richard Lowe, ed., *A Texas Cavalry Officer's Civil War, The Diary and Letters of James C. Bates*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1999.

served in Indian Territory and met disaster at the Battle of Honey Springs.<sup>43</sup> The role of the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry can be found in *Fighting With Ross' Texas Cavalry Brigade, CSA: The Diary of George L. Griscom, Adjutant, Ninth Texas Cavalry Regiment*, edited by Homer L. Kerr.<sup>44</sup>

The use of guerilla warfare in West was extensive. Union operations required a steady flow of supplies down the Texas Road from Fort Scott, Kansas, through Baxter Springs and Cabin Creek, to Fort Gibson. Confederate harassment of the supply line was continuous throughout the war. Several books deal with guerilla warfare in the area. Thomas Goodrich's piece *Black Flag: Guerrilla Warfare on the Western Border, 1861-1865* reviews racial violence in the west, especially in Kansas and Missouri.<sup>45</sup> Firsthand accounts of guerilla warfare can be found in John C. Livingston Jr.'s work, *Such a Foe as Livingston: The Campaign of Confederate Major Thomas R. Livingston's First Missouri Cavalry Battalion of Southwest Missouri*.<sup>46</sup> The war saw troops of all ethnicities used in combat. To fill the void in numbers, Black and Native American troops fought alongside white troops early in the war in the Trans-Mississippi west. In combat, colored regiments faced harsh atrocities in guerilla warfare.

The fourth set of works are compilations of published, personal accounts of the war. These draw directly from firsthand accounts and other primary sources and

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<sup>43</sup> Bradford K. Felmly and John C. Grady, *Suffering to Silence: Twenty-Ninth Texas Cavalry, CSA, Regimental History*, Quanah, Texas: Nortex Press, 1979.

<sup>44</sup> Homer L. Kerr, ed., *Fighting With Ross' Texas Cavalry Brigade, CSA: The Diary of George L. Griscom, Adjutant, Ninth Texas Cavalry Regiment*, Hillsboro, Texas: Hill Junior College Press.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Goodrich, *Black Flag: Guerrilla Warfare on the Western Border, 1861-1865*, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole, 1998.

<sup>46</sup> John C. Livingston Jr., *Such a Foe as Livingston: The Campaign of Confederate Major Thomas R. Livingston's First Missouri Cavalry Battalion of Southwest Missouri*, Wyandotte, Oklahoma: The Gregath Publishing Company, 2004.

are a great aid to researchers. *The Prairie was on Fire: Eyewitness Accounts of the Civil War in the Indian Territory* by Whit Edwards is a collection of personal accounts of the Civil War in Indian Territory from the opening of the war through the end of hostilities.<sup>47</sup> This piece provides accounts from military personnel, civilians, slaves, and Native Americans and is probably the most useful collection of its type. Frank Moore's eleven volume *The Rebellion Record; a Diary of American Events* is a compilation of various works including documents, narratives, illustrations, poetry, etc, published in 1864.<sup>48</sup> Information on Indian Territory is scattered throughout the collection. Another early collection of personal perspectives is *Reminiscence of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865* by Mamie Yeary. Yeary compiled a narrative from several hundred Confederate veterans who lived in Texas at the time of her research.<sup>49</sup> A recent, condensed version can be found in *Texas Boys in Gray* edited by Evault Boswell.<sup>50</sup>

Often overlooked and forgotten sources for manuscripts on the Civil War in Indian Territory are thesis and dissertations. This group of student works makes up the fifth, and last, assemblage of pieces on the war in Indian Territory. Leslie B. Scoopmire's *The Descent of Indian Territory into the Civil War* is a narrative of the pre-war years, as well as Union and Confederate government relations with the

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<sup>47</sup> Whit Edwards. *The Prairie was on fire: Eyewitness Accounts of the Civil War in the Indian Territory*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2001.

<sup>48</sup> Frank Moore, *The Rebellion Record; a Diary of American Events*, New York: G.P. Putnam or D. Van Norstrand, 1864-1868.

<sup>49</sup> Mamie Yeary, *Reminiscence of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865*, Dallas, Texas: Smith and Lamar Publishing House, 1912.

<sup>50</sup> Evault Boswell and Mamie Yeary, *Texas Boys in Gray*, Plano, Texas: Republic of Texas Press, 2000. A condensed and reprinted version of the 1912 version *Reminiscence of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865*.

Native Americans.<sup>51</sup> To examine the relationship of the Confederate government with the Native Americans, Edward E. Prag's thesis *The Confederate Diplomacy with the Five Civilized Tribes* Albert Pike and the Texas Commissioners work in negotiating treaties of alliance.<sup>52</sup> This work focuses specifically on the Confederacy's connection and interaction with Indian Territory. *The History of the Indian Territory during the Civil War* by Marian S. Brooks offers a broad overview of the Civil War in Indian Territory in early literature.<sup>53</sup> Even though dated, this thesis serves as a general view of early attempts at writing on the subject. Clinton S. Crowe's *A Civil War within the Civil War: the Division in the Indian Nations*, looks at the internal schisms within the tribes themselves. Crowe examines the resurrection of removal factions within the tribes and the divisions within tribal leadership.<sup>54</sup> Stand Watie and his military career are addressed in *Stand Watie, Cherokee Warrior*, by Kenny A. Franks.<sup>55</sup> Several works have been produced on Colonel William A. Phillips, an active Union commander in Indian Territory. Murray P. Tripp's *The Early Career of William A. Phillips* offers a background history of Phillips through the beginning of the Civil War.<sup>56</sup> Sharon D. Wyant covers Phillips before and during the war years in *Colonel William A. Phillips and the Civil War in Indian Territory*.<sup>57</sup> Several students

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<sup>51</sup> Leslie B. Scoopmire, "The Descent of Indian Territory into the Civil War," Masters Thesis, University of Missouri, 2000.

<sup>52</sup> Edward E. Prag, "Confederate Diplomacy with the Five Civilized Tribes," Masters Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1966.

<sup>53</sup> Marian S. Brooks, "The History of the Indian Territory During the Civil War," Masters Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1917.

<sup>54</sup> Clinton S. Crowe, "A Civil War within the Civil War: the Division in the Indian Nations," Masters Thesis, Northeastern State University, 1995.

<sup>55</sup> Kenny A. Franks, "Stand Watie, Cherokee Warrior," Ph. D. diss, Oklahoma State University, 1973.

<sup>56</sup> Murray P. Tripp, "The Early Career of William A. Phillips," Masters Thesis, University of Kansas, 1947.

<sup>57</sup> Sharon D. Wyant, "Colonel William A. Phillips and the Civil War in Indian Territory," Masters Thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1967.

have written on General James G. Blunt. Robert S. Jones looks at Blunt in the greater context of the border region in *General James G. Blunt and the Civil War in the Trans-Mississippi West*.<sup>58</sup> *The Military Career of James G. Blunt: an Appraisal*, by William R. Marsh, offers a critique of his questionable career as a military officer.<sup>59</sup> A third perspective on this character and his war years can be found in *James G. Blunt and the Civil War* by J.C. Hopkins.<sup>60</sup>

The purpose of this study is to broaden the historical knowledge of the war in Indian Territory by looking at the relationship between combat, supply, and logistics and the progression of warfare in the territory as a result. This thesis brings together unused primary source materials including letter and diaries and interprets significant secondary works to reexamine the conflict in detail, particularly the overlooked role and importance of provisions. In almost every instance, supplies were the driving force leading to engagements within the territory and rarely receive mention in most studies. This work also utilizes secondary sources to add to the interpretation and develop the historiography and necessary background to shape the thesis. Each chapter explores a significant period in the conflict. It chronicles the events in the Civil War in Indian Territory from the withdrawal of federal troops in 1861 through the end of hostilities in 1865.

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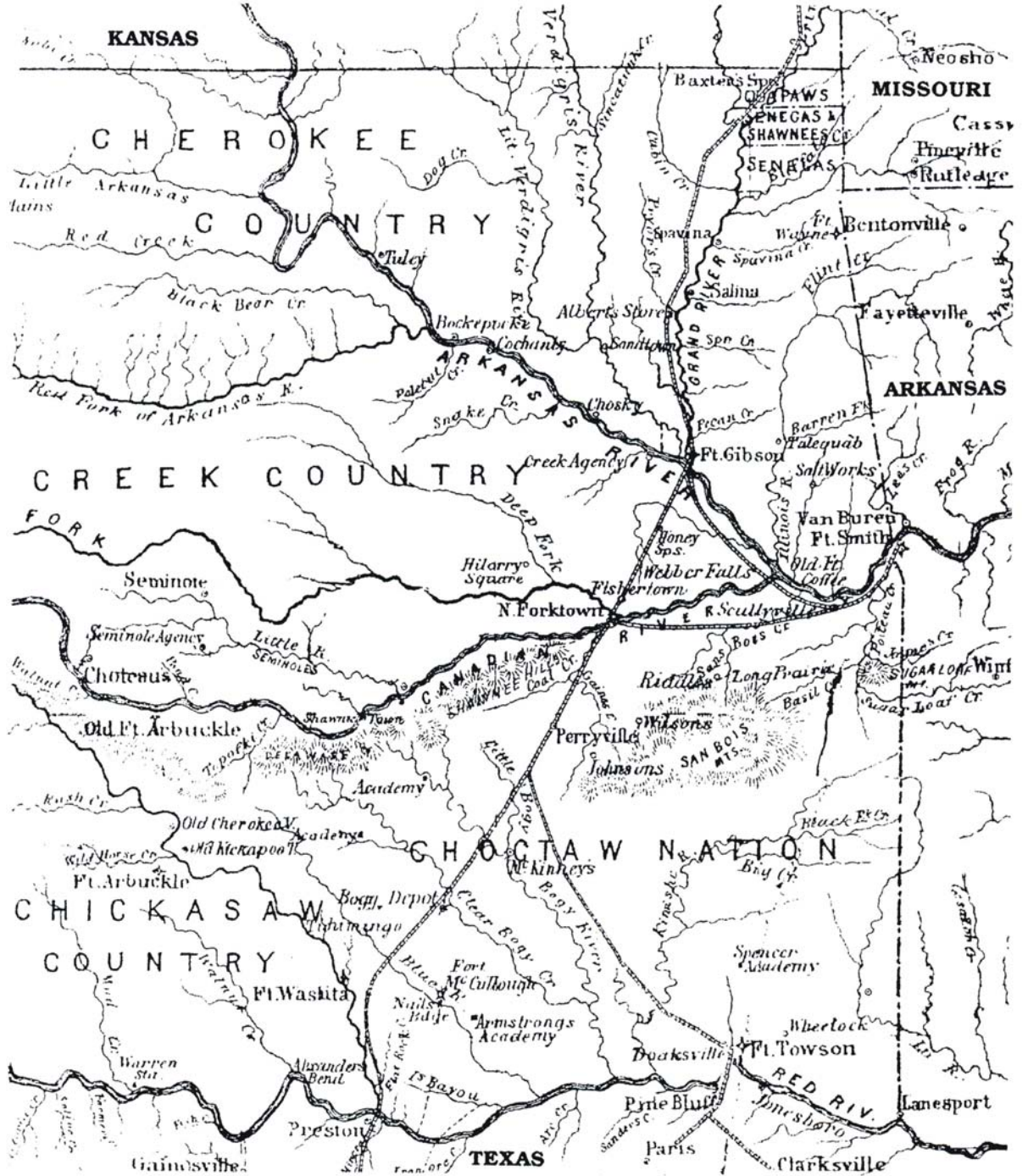
<sup>58</sup> Robert S. Jones, "General James G. Blunt and the Civil War in the Trans-Mississippi West," Masters Thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1990.

<sup>59</sup> William R. Marsh, "The Military Career of James G. Blunt: an Appraisal," Masters Thesis, Kansas State Teacher's College of Pittsburg, 1953.

<sup>60</sup> J. C. Hopkins, "James G. Blunt and the Civil War," Masters Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1952.

# Map 1: The Geography of Indian Territory

## Eastern Indian Territory



Adapted from an 1866 map in the Cartographic Records of the Archives Division of the Oklahoma Historical Society

## **Chapter 2: Hostilities Erupt: Federal Abandonment and the Flight of the Unionists**

As tempers flared across the nation in early 1861, citizens chose sides under the imminent threat of civil war. In the west, delegates tried to induce the Five Civilized Tribes to form alliances with the new government in Richmond while federal forces abandoned the territory and halted annuity payments. The southern emissaries cited the various tribes' cultural and economic ties to the south, including slavery. Drainage of local river systems flowed towards the southeast, tying the Indian Territory to the southern states. In addition, most tribal funds were invested in southern state bonds.<sup>61</sup> The Choctaw Nation led the way in early February 1861. Geography would transform the prairies and hills of Indian Territory into the battlefields of the far west as opposing forces fought the war on tribal lands, rather than in their own states. To the north of the Indian nations lay pro-Union Kansas, to the south and its flanks lay pro-Confederate Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri. As armies moved to meet each other in battle, Indian Territory would suffer the devastation of war.

At the outbreak of hostilities in April 1861, federal soldiers occupied several military posts within the territory. The United States stationed troops at Fort Washita, Fort Arbuckle, and Fort Cobb to protect the Five Civilized Tribes from plains Indians. Situated along the Arkansas River on the border of Arkansas, Fort Smith served as a supply depot for the garrisons to the west. (See Map 1.) With the secession of

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<sup>61</sup> Tom L. Fanzman, "Peculiarly situated between rebellion and loyalty" Civilized Tribes, Savagery, and the American Civil War," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 76 (Summer 1998): 145.



Arkansas, resupplying the garrisons up the Arkansas River would halt, forcing material to travel down the Texas Road from Fort Scott, Kansas, leaving the federal troops isolated and the posts untenable. In addition, provisions transported from the depot at St. Louis that made their way by rail to Rolla, Missouri, and then on to Fort Scott and Fort Gibson by wagon would have to be rerouted. The Texas Road, formed by two separate branches, served as the major thoroughfare running north-south through Indian Territory. One branch ran south from Baxter Springs, Kansas, and followed the divide between the Verdigris and Grand Rivers to Fort Gibson with the other beginning in Saint Louis and running southwest to Springfield, Missouri, and past Fort Wayne on upper Spavinaw Creek to Salina, and joined the other. From Fort Gibson the route proceeded southwest past Honey Springs and crossed Canadian River just below Fishertown, North Fork Town, Perryville, and Boggy Depot. At the latter place the road forked and one branch went directly south to Warren's on Red River and the other reached the river at Preston by way of Fort Washita.<sup>62</sup>

Just days after Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter, South Carolina on 12 April, Second Lieutenant William A. Averell left Washington, D.C., for Indian Territory with special orders from the War Department.<sup>63</sup> Lieutenant Colonel William H. Emory, commander of the garrisons in Indian Territory, returned to Fort Smith in late March with orders to mass his troops at Fort Washita. His entire force was 750

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<sup>62</sup> William H. Emory to E.D. Townsend, Letter, 13 April 1861, *OR*, 665-666. and Edward K. Eckert and Nicholas J. Amato, "A Long and Perilous Ride: The Memoirs of William A. Averell," *Civil War Times Illustrated* 16 (7, 1977): 36-41. and Muriel H. Wright, "Lieutenant Averell's Ride at the Outbreak of the Civil War," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 39 (Spring, 1961): 2-3. and Larry C. Rampp and Donald L. Ramp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory* (Austin, Texas: Presidial Press, 1975): 3-4. and Grant Foreman, "Early Trails Through Oklahoma," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 3 (June 1925):117.

<sup>63</sup> William H. Emory, Letter, 13 April 1861. and Eckert and Amato, "A Long and Perilous Ride: The Memoirs of William A. Averell," 36-41. and Wright, "Lieutenant Averell's Ride at the Outbreak of the Civil War," 2-3. and Rampp and Ramp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 3-4.

men in eleven companies, spread amongst the four forts. Upon his arrival, Emory found locals around Fort Smith clamoring for secession. His infantry had moved to Fort Washita and the cavalry from Fort Arbuckle was en route. On 13 April Emory rode west with all but two companies of cavalry. He left orders with Captain Samuel D. Sturgis to abandon Fort Smith the moment Arkansas seceded.<sup>64</sup>

En route to Fort Washita, Emory learned a large force of Texans was moving toward the post. After arriving on 16 April, he hurriedly loaded the garrison's supplies and equipment and moved the command toward Fort Arbuckle. The following day, Texas troops occupied Fort Washita. After Emory's departure, Captain Sturgis found his position at Fort Smith precarious as pro-southern sentiment exploded through the region. On 23 April he ordered the place abandoned and moved west with two companies of cavalry to make contact with Emory at Fort Washita. Just one hour after the federal troops departed, some 300 Confederate militia and ten pieces of artillery arrived by steamboat to occupy the fort and take possession of the town. Sturgis hurried to catch up to Emory's column.<sup>65</sup>

On 2 May, Averell finally caught up with Emory and delivered his special orders. The War Department advised the commander, "by order of the General-in-Chief, with all troops in the Indian country west of Arkansas, march to Fort

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<sup>64</sup> William H. Emory to E.D. Townsend, Letter, 13 April 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 1, 665-666. and E.D. Townsend to William H. Emory, Letter, 18 March 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 1, 656. and S. Williams to Alexander Montgomery, Letter, 19 March 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 1, 656-657. and E.D. Townsend to Secretary of War, Letter, 27 March 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 1, 659-660. and William H. Emory to S. Williams, Letter, 6 April 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 1, 661-662. and William H. Emory to Commanding Officer, Fort Cobb, Letter, 6 April 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 1, 662.

<sup>65</sup> William H. Emory, Report, 19 May 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 1, 648-649. and Eckert and Amato, "A Long and Perilous Ride: The Memoirs of William A. Averell," 36-41. and Wright, "Lieutenant Averell's Ride at the Outbreak of the Civil War," 10.

Leavenworth, Kans.”<sup>66</sup> On 3 May the garrison of Fort Arbuckle met Emory’s men on the east bank of the Washita River, five miles from the post. The next morning, the entire column headed towards Fort Cobb, the last federal post remaining in the territory.<sup>67</sup> Texans pursued the federal force on their move north. When Emory learned of the chase, he ordered Sturgis and Avery along with a company to bring in the Texans advance guard. The federal troops moved to intercept the Texans and brought in a group, “composed of gentlemen acting under erroneous impressions.”<sup>68</sup> The following morning, Emory released the prisoners and moved towards Fort Cobb. On 9 May, Emory’s column ran into the fort’s garrison. An overwhelming force of Texans had occupied Fort Cobb on 5 May. Unable to offer resistance, First Sergeant Charles E. Campbell surrendered the post. The Texans promised Campbell safe passage for the Union soldiers and their families to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.<sup>69</sup> On 9 May Emory prepared to move north to Kansas. The whole command, 750 soldiers, 150 women, children, teamsters, and other non-combatants from the four abandoned forts, headed towards Fort Leavenworth.<sup>70</sup>

Emory’s withdrawal from Indian Territory ended federal occupation of the territory. As his men moved north, Texans and pro-Confederate Indians occupied the abandoned posts. Emory’s departure was more than just the abandonment of four

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<sup>66</sup> Samuel D. Sturgis, Report, 12 May 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 1, 650-651. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 4.

<sup>67</sup> E.D. Townsend to William H. Emory, Communication, 17 April 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 1, 667. and Eckert and Amato, “A Long and Perilous Ride: The Memoirs of William A. Averell,” 36-41. and Wright, “Lieutenant Averell’s Ride at the Outbreak of the Civil War,” 10-11.

<sup>68</sup> William H. Emory, Report, 19 May 1861.

<sup>69</sup> William H. Emory, Report, 19 May 1861. and Eckert and Amato, “A Long and Perilous Ride: The Memoirs of William A. Averell,” 36-41. and Wright, “Lieutenant Averell’s Ride at the Outbreak of the Civil War,” 10-11.

<sup>70</sup> <sup>70</sup> William H. Emory, Report, 19 May 1861. and Eckert and Amato, “A Long and Perilous Ride: The Memoirs of William A. Averell,” 36-41. and Wright, “Lieutenant Averell’s Ride at the Outbreak of the Civil War,” 13-14.

military posts. The removal of federal soldiers violated many of the treaties held with the Five Civilized Tribes further alienating them with the government in Washington. Tribal leaders trying to remain neutral soon fell to pressure from their citizens and delegates from the new Confederate government to sign treaties aligning the Native Americans with Richmond.

On 13 May, Benjamin McCulloch, of Texas, received a commission from Richmond appointing him a brigadier general and commander of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Indian Territory. In order to secure cooperation of the Indian nations, the Confederate government appointed Albert Pike special commissioner to the tribes. Pike worked quickly and secured agreements with the various tribes. In December 1861, the Confederate Congress ratified the treaties and designated the Indian Territory a military district in the Trans-Mississippi Department.<sup>71</sup>

Commissioned a brigadier general, Pike was placed in command and charged with raising and equipping troops in Indian Territory. Supply problems began almost immediately. Despite these official treaties aligning the tribes with Richmond, many Native Americans chose to remain loyal to the federal government. Isolated, they sought leadership to guide them.<sup>72</sup>

In early September 1861 E. H. Carruth, Indian Commissioner for the United States, contacted Opothleyaholo, leader of the pro-Union Creeks, and other loyalists requesting that tribal representatives travel from Indian Territory to Kansas in order to

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<sup>71</sup> The Trans-Mississippi Department of the Confederacy consisted of Arkansas, Louisiana west of the Mississippi River, Texas, Missouri, Indian Territory, and New Mexico.

<sup>72</sup> Samuel Cooper to Ben McCulloch, Letter, 13 May 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 3, 575-576. and Windham, "The Problems of Supply in the Trans-Mississippi Confederacy," 152.

maintain the alliance between the tribes and the federal government.<sup>73</sup> Opothleyaholo gained fame in the Creek War against Andrew Jackson, becoming the recognized leader of the Upper Creeks. Opothleyaholo's influence helped maintain the loyalty of many Creeks to the United States. As pressure from Confederates sympathizers in Indian Territory mounted, the Unionists decided to seek refuge in Kansas.

In late fall, groups of pro-Union Indians, mainly Creek and Seminole, joined with Opothleyaholo near North Fork Town on the Canadian River. (See Map 2.) Confederate Colonel Douglas H. Cooper, former United States Indian agent to the Choctaws, learned that as many as 6,000 loyalists had joined Opothleyaholo's camp. Many were women and children along with escaped slaves. In an effort to prevent open hostilities, Cooper sent messengers to arrange a meeting between the two forces; however, the attempts failed. Fearing that Opothleyaholo would align himself with Unionists in Kansas Cooper took action.<sup>74</sup>

By mid November, Cooper amassed a force of 1,400 men, including both Native American and white troops. They left Fort Gibson on 15 November 1861 and moved toward Opothleyaholo's camp.<sup>75</sup> By the end of the first day, Cooper's men located the fleeing Indian's trail. In an attempt to elude the pursuers, Opothleyaholo's followers set fire to the prairies behind them, masking their route and destroying vital forage for anyone who followed. On 19 November Cooper's

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<sup>73</sup> E.H. Carruth to Hopoeithleyohola [sic], Letter, 10 September 1861, Series 1, Volume 8, 25. Carruth dispatched the letter from Barnsville, Kansas, but no destination for the party is mentioned. and E.H. Carruth to the Chickasaws and Choctaws, Letter, 11 September 1861, *OR* Series 1, Volume 8, 26. and E.H. Carruth to Tusaquach, Letter, 11 September 1861, *OR* Series 1, Volume 8, 26.

<sup>74</sup> Steve Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 1995): 21. and Whit Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2001): 3.

<sup>75</sup> Fort Gibson had been abandoned by federal troops in 1857 and turned over to the Cherokee Nation per treaty stipulations. It was reoccupied by Confederate forces shortly after the war began.

## Map 2: Opothleyaholo and the Loyal Indians Retreat



Adapted from Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*

men spotted smoke near the Red Fork of the Arkansas River and ordered Lieutenant Colonel William Quayle, commander of the Ninth Texas Cavalry, to attack. Hoping to destroy the enemy's means of subsistence nearly 500 Texans charged the site only to find it abandoned, but the Confederates soon discovered scouts from Opothleyaholo's camp.<sup>76</sup>

Quayle's men pursued the retreating party toward Round Mountain, hoping to locate the main camp. (See Map 2.) Near dusk the Texans discovered Opothleyaholo's main camp spread along a timber-lined stream. As the Confederates approached, a devastating volley erupted from the cover of the trees. The sudden barrage from the concealed warriors halted the cavalry's advance. Unable to regroup in the darkness, the Texans retreated. As the Confederates fell back Opothleyaholo's men gave chase, protecting the numerous civilians in the camp.<sup>77</sup>

At the first signs of battle, Colonel Cooper dispatched additional mounted troops to support the Texans but as darkness engulfed the battlefield the Union Creeks disappeared into the night. To cover their withdrawal, the prairie was again set on fire threatening both Cooper's supply train and the forage necessary to sustain

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<sup>76</sup> M. J. Brinson, Report, 25 November 1861, OR, Series 1, Volume 8, 14. and William A. Quayle, Report, January 1862, Special Microfilm Collection, Roll IAD-5, Oklahoma Historical Society, Archives Division, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. and Robert A. Young, Report, 30 November 1861, OR, Series 1, Volume 8, 15. and James C. Bates, *A Texas Cavalry Officer's Civil War: The Diary and Letters of James C. Bates*, edited by Richard Lowe (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), 27-33. and George L. Griscom, *Fighting With Ross' Texas Cavalry Brigade: The Diary of George L. Griscom, Adjutant, Ninth Texas Cavalry Regiment*, edited by Homer L. Kerr (Hillsboro, Texas: Hill Junior College Press, 1976), 5-6. and William Coffman, Letter, 25 November 1861, 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Collection, Harold B. Simpson Research Center, Hillsboro, Texas. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 24. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 4.

<sup>77</sup> M. J. Brinson, Report, 25 November 1861, OR, Series 1, Volume 8, 14. and William A. Quayle, Report, January 1862. and Robert A. Young, Report, 30 November 1861. and Bates, *A Texas Cavalry Officer's Civil War: The Diary and Letters of James C. Bates*, edited by Richard Lowe, 27-33. and Griscom, *Fighting With Ross' Texas Cavalry Brigade: The Diary of George L. Griscom, Adjutant, Ninth Texas Cavalry Regiment*, 5-6. and William Coffman, Letter, 25 November 1861. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 24. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 4.

his cavalry mounts. As dawn broke, Confederate soldiers entered the abandoned camp. Cooper reported his losses during the engagement at Round Mountain as six killed, four wounded, and one missing. Opothleyaholo left no records. Thus ended the first serious engagement within Indian Territory.<sup>78</sup>

As the Union column continued north, General McCulloch ordered Cooper to move his army toward Colonel Stand Watie's Camp at Fort Wayne along the Arkansas River. As they pressed forward, Opothleyaholo's followers took advantage of the reprieve and prepared for continued assault by the enemy force. While en route to meet Watie, Cooper marched to Concharta to obtain supplies. (See Map 2.) While there, Cooper received a dispatch freeing him to engage Opothleyaholo.<sup>79</sup> On 29 November, Cooper's men, now re-supplied and rested, moved toward Opothleyaholo in two groups. Cooper led one column, composed of six companies of the First Regiment of Chickasaw and Choctaw Mounted Rifles and the Creek and Seminole battalion, toward Tulsey Town while Colonel William B. Sims moved a second column, composed of Ninth Texas Cavalry, toward Coody's Settlement to join the First Cherokee Mounted Rifles under Colonel John Drew.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 20 January 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 5-14. and Bates, *A Texas Cavalry Officers Civil War: The Diary and Letters of James C. Bates*, 27-33. and Griscom, *Fighting with Ross' Texas Cavalry: The Diary of George L. Griscom, Adjutant, Ninth Texas Cavalry*, 5-6. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 25.

<sup>79</sup> Cooper Report, 29 January 1862. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 25-27. and Willey Britton, *The Civil War on the Border, Volume I 1861-1863* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1899, Reprinted by the Kansas Heritage Press): 167-168. Union General John C. Fremont moved to Springfield Missouri, with the intention of attacking Confederate Generals Sterling Price and Benjamin McCulloch in Southwestern Missouri. General McCulloch ordered Cooper and the Native American forces to move towards Maysville, bringing the force within operating distances. General Fremont was relieved of command and his force transferred to General David Hunter, who moved the Union army into winter quarters at Syracuse, Sedalia, and Rolla. With Union pressure removed, General McCulloch moved into Northwestern Arkansas and directed Cooper to continue searching for Opothleyaholo.

<sup>80</sup> Cooper Report, 29 January 1862, 5-14 Cooper's force consisted of 430 men from the Choctaw and Chickasaws Mounted Regiment under Major Mitchell Lafloure, 50 men under Captain



One of Cooper's soldiers escaped from Opothleyaholo's camp and located his commander camped at Tulsey Town. (See Map 2.) He informed Cooper that Opothleyaholo planned to attack him with about 2,000 warriors. With just 780 men, Cooper ordered Sims and Drew to quickly march to his aid. The Texans located Cooper's column; however, Drew and his men misinterpreted the command and marched toward Bird Creek. (See Map 2.) Once encamped Drew discovered his 480 men were within miles of Opothleyaholo's supporters.<sup>81</sup> Within Drew's regiment, many of the Cherokee soldiers still remained opposed to engaging the pro-Union faction. Soon Cooper and Sims arrived and took up positions near the Cherokee troops.<sup>82</sup>

On the night of 8 December, nearly all of the full-blood members of the First Cherokee Mounted Rifles deserted, unable to bear arms against a foe they viewed as brethren. Together, with his roughly sixty remaining men, Drew abandoned his camp and moved toward Cooper's position. In the chaos, Drew realized that his men had abandoned their ammunition. Wanting to keep the supplies out of enemy hands, he dispatched several riders to inform Cooper of the situation and returned with a small force to recover the cartridges. Cooper reacted quickly to the mass Cherokee desertion and ordered Colonel Quayle to take a company of his cavalry to Drew's camp while he moved his force toward Opothleyaholo along Bird Creek.<sup>83</sup>

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Alfred Wade from the Choctaw Battalion, 285 men from the First Creek Regiment under Colonel D.N. McIntosh, and 15 Creeks under Captain James M.C. Smith. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 27. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 6-7.

<sup>81</sup> Cooper Report, 29 January 1862, 5-14. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 28.

<sup>82</sup> Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 4 January 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 8-9. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 28-29. and Edwards, *The Prairies was on Fire*, 6-7.

<sup>83</sup> Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 4 January 1862. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 28-29. and Edwards, *The Prairies was on Fire*, 6-7.

As Cooper's skirmishers approached, the Union Indians opened fire. Opothleyaholo's troops feigned an attack and then fell back. Assuming the enemy line was breaking, Cooper's troops followed as the small retreating force led them toward an ambush. Leaving his supply train on the prairie with a small guard, Cooper ordered all of his forces into the fight. The approaching Confederates ran straight the waiting warriors. For over five hours both sides fired relentlessly at each other along a bend of Bird Creek called Chusto-Talasa.<sup>84</sup> (See Map 2.) As evening approached, a number of Opothleyaholo's Creeks charged toward the Choctaw and Chickasaw soldier's horses, gathered to allow the soldiers to fight dismounted. The Confederates repulsed the attack, but soon abandoned their line and fled toward their mounts. As night fell, Colonel Cooper retired from the field and encamped some five miles from the battle field.<sup>85</sup>

During the night Opothleyaholo's force abandoned their camp at Chusto-Talasa and continued north. As dawn broke, Cooper discovered their retreat. He reported losses as fifteen killed and thirty-seven wounded. Union losses were not recorded; however, Cooper reported "their loss, admitted by prisoners taken on our last scout, was 412. It probably was 500 killed and wounded."<sup>86</sup> No other reports exist to substantiate Cooper's report. The intense fighting at the Battle of Chusto-Talasa depleted Cooper's supplies, forcing the Confederates to retire to Fort Gibson

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<sup>84</sup> Thorton B. Heiston, Letter, 26 May 1862, Grant Foreman Collection, Box 43, Folder 97, Thomas Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

<sup>85</sup> Cooper Report, 29 January 1862. and E. A. Folsom, Reminiscence of E.A. Folsom, no date, E.E. Dale Collection, Box 218, F17, University of Oklahoma, Western Histories Collection, Norman, Oklahoma. and Griscom, *Fighting With Ross' Texas Cavalry Brigade: The Diary of George L. Griscom, Adjutant, Ninth Texas Cavalry Regiment*, 8-9. and Heiston Letter, 26 May 1862. and Robert A. Young, Report, No Date, 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 15. and Cooper Report, 4 January 1862, 8-9. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 29-31.

<sup>86</sup> Cooper Report, 29 January 1862.

for provisions. In just two weeks, Cooper's men exhausted their ammunition and food stuffs.<sup>87</sup>

The desertion of over 400 of Colonel Drew's men forced Cooper to request reinforcements. Colonel James McIntosh, commander of Confederate troops at Van Buren, took to the field with 1,600 Confederate cavalry to assist Cooper. Unlike many of the troops currently in the field, McIntosh brought battle hardened, veteran troopers to the campaign. His column consisted of five companies of Colonel Walter P. Lane's South Kansas-Texas Regiment, seven companies of the Third Texas Cavalry, Captain H.S. Bennett's company of Texas Cavalry attached to division headquarters, four companies of the Second Arkansas Mounted Riflemen, and all of the available troops from the Sixth Texas Cavalry.<sup>88</sup>

Arriving at Fort Gibson on 20 December, McIntosh planned a campaign to finally destroy Opothleyaholo's band. With over 2,000 men, Cooper and McIntosh decided to move in two separate columns. On 22 December, Cooper and his Indian troops, assisted by Major John Whitfield's Texas Cavalry, moved up the north side of the Arkansas River. McIntosh proceeded up the Verdigris River with seven companies of the 11<sup>th</sup> Texas, Captain H.S. Bennett's Independent Cavalry, a battalion of the Third Texas Cavalry, and a battalion of the Second Arkansas Mounted Rifles.<sup>89</sup>

Colonel McIntosh's column left Fort Gibson and by Christmas crossed the Verdigris River as planned. As his men set up camp, some 200 mounted troops

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<sup>87</sup> Cooper Report, 4 January 1862. and E. A. Folsom, Reminiscence. and Heiston Letter, 26 May 1862. and Griscom, *Fighting With Ross' Texas Cavalry Brigade: The Diary of George L. Griscom, Adjutant, Ninth Texas Cavalry Regiment*, 8-9. and Robert A. Young, Report, No Date, 1861. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 29-31.

<sup>88</sup> Britton, *The Civil War on the Border, Volume 1 1861-1862*, 169-170.

<sup>89</sup> Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 31. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 9-10.

appeared about a half mile away. McIntosh himself led a battalion in pursuit, but he did not repeat Cooper's mistake and quickly ordered his men back to camp. During the night, a dispatch arrived from Cooper reporting his column would be delayed two to three days because of a large desertion of teamsters. Choosing to move without Cooper, McIntosh proceeded west toward Shoal Creek and Chustenahlah on 26 December. (See Map 2.) Opothleyaholo's scouts sighted the approaching enemy and alerted the camp, allowing the warriors to move into a defensive position along a rocky, tree-covered hill overlooking the creek.<sup>90</sup>

As the enemy advance forded the stream, Opothleyaholo's men opened fire. McIntosh's Texans immediately moved toward cover and returned fire. As his main force arrived, he prepared for an attack on the ridge. The Texans charged the slopes, forcing Opothleyaholo's line to break. The Unionists attempted to rally three times as the Confederate cavalry advanced, each without success. They formed one final line three miles from the initial contact, but the Texans again overran their position and Opothleyaholo's men scattered across the prairie. Many of retreating Union Indians were hunted down in the ensuing hours. In their haste, the refugees abandoned their camp, leaving precious stores behind. Colonel McIntosh reported his casualties for the Battle of Chustenahlah as three dead and thirty-two wounded. He estimated Opothleyaholo's losses at 250.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Walter P. Lane, Report, 26 December 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 9, 30-38. and H.L. Taylor, Report, 26 December 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 29. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 33.

<sup>91</sup> H.S. Bennett, Report, no date, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 30-31. and William Gipson, Report, 28 December 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 29-30. and Sam Love, Letter, 30 December 1861, Sixth Texas Collection, Harold B. Simpson Research Center, Hillsboro, Texas. and James M. McIntosh, Report, 26 December 1862, *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Volume 1, Part 1, (95 volumes edited by James B. Hewitt, Wilmington, North Carolina: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1999), 538. and W.P. Lane, Report, 26 December 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8,

The additional Texas veterans were too much for Opothleyaholo's men to fend off. The engagement devastated the Union camp. The Confederates captured 160 women and children, 20 blacks, 30 wagons, 70 yoke of oxen, 500 horses, 100 sheep, and a small number of cattle. In addition, the Unionists lost hundreds of buffalo robes and large quantities of food needed to sustain Opothleyaholo's camp through the winter. Late that evening, Colonel Stand Watie and 300 men from the Second Cherokee Mounted Rifles reached the battlefield while Opothleyaholo's defeated force fled north.<sup>92</sup>

The Confederate column moved north early on 27 December, with Watie in the lead until lead scouts found the enemy's trail. After traveling about twenty-five miles Watie's troopers sighted two wagons; however, they were set afire before the cavalry could approach. As the Texans arrived, they heard gunfire in the distance as Watie's soldiers engaged Opothleyaholo's men. The Cherokee Mounted Rifles moved in two groups to attack. Half of the regiment, under Major Elias Boudinot, moved forward on the left flank while Watie engaged Opothleyaholo on the right. For more than an hour, Watie's men fought through ravines and rough terrain forcing the enemy back.<sup>93</sup>

Watie reported no losses and claimed ten enemy killed. In addition, his men captured another seventy-five women and children, and thirty pack horses. That

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28-29. and James M. McIntosh, Report, 1 January 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 22-25. and W.C. Young, Report, no date, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 26. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 33-34.

<sup>92</sup> H.S. Bennett, Report, no date. and William Gipson, Report, 28 December 1861. and Sam Love, Letter, 30 December 1861. and James M. McIntosh, Report, 26 December 1862. and W.P. Lane, Report, 26 December 1861. and James M. McIntosh, Report, 1 January 1862. and W.C. Young, Report, no date. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 34.

<sup>93</sup> Stand Watie, Report, 28 December 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 32. and E.C. Boudinot, Report, 28 December 1861, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 32-33. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 35-36. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 13-14.

evening Colonel McIntosh decided Opothleyaholo and his fleeing column no longer presented a threat to Confederate operations. They were destitute, fleeing across the frozen prairie starved and nearly naked. The following morning McIntosh returned to Fort Gibson with his troops. Cooper continued north, pursuing the retreating refugees until lack of supplies and inclement weather forced him to retire. Following the battle, the pro-Union force continued up the Verdigris River Valley towards Kansas.<sup>94</sup>

The abandonment of Indian Territory by federal forces at the outbreak of hostilities left many loyal Indians refugees in their own nations. Fearing they would be unable to supply the posts, the War Department believed its only course of action was to remove the troops to the north. Confederate negotiations with the tribes proceeded unopposed from the beginning. Pike managed to secure treaties with each of the Five Civilized Tribes, providing a buffer to the newly formed Confederacy in the west. The Trans-Mississippi was expected to supply large quantities of salt, sugar, bacon, beef, wheat, wool, and cotton to the war effort. In addition, vital supplies imported from Europe could enter the Confederacy through Mexico.<sup>95</sup> When the Unionist finally gathered, Confederate officers moved to attack before the group could become a significant threat. Forced to flee to Kansas, Opothleyaholo's followers fended off several enemy attacks before overwhelming numbers routed their camp. In quick haste, the vital provisions needed to maintain the group were abandoned. The Unionists crossed into Kansas destitute, starving, and nearly naked.

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<sup>94</sup> Stand Watie, Report, 28 December 1861. and E.C. Boudinot, Report, 28 December 1861. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 35-36. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 13-14.

<sup>95</sup> William T. Windham, "The Problems of Supply in the Trans-Mississippi Confederacy," *The Journal of Southern History* 27 (May 1961): 150.

Once in Kansas, the southern superintendent of Indian affairs was forced to act, placing a tremendous burden on the quartermaster stores at Fort Scott.

Despite battlefield success during the first year of the war the Trans-Mississippi region suffered several drawbacks. The region was almost entirely agrarian with limited industrial infrastructure. Compared to the rest of the south, the trans-Mississippi lacked any substantial railroad network. Louisiana contained just 328 miles of track, and Texas slightly more, compared to 1400 miles in Georgia and 1800 in Virginia. With a limited rail network, the Trans-Mississippi Department depended on river systems and wagons to move the bulk of its goods.<sup>96</sup> When trans-Mississippi states occupied federal arsenals at the outbreak of the war they confiscated all equipment and weapons; however, a majority of these firearms proved obsolete and the state governments located few serviceable cannon. Many of the field pieces acquired were smoothbores from the 1850s. By the end of the year the Ordnance Bureau began shipping field pieces west and in February several guns arrived in Indian Territory.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Windham, "The Problem of Supply in the Trans-Mississippi Confederacy," 150.

<sup>97</sup> Alwyn Barr, "Confederate Artillery in the Trans-Mississippi," *Military Affairs* 27 (Summer 1963): 77.

### Chapter 3: A Failed Return: The Indian Expedition of 1862

By the end of 1861 thousands of refugee Indians had arrived in Kansas. Failure of the United States government to fulfill treaty obligations and the abandonment of the military posts in the region left loyal Indians at the mercy of Confederate forces. Once in Kansas, the destitute natives overwhelmed the Southern Superintendency and military quartermasters at Fort Scott with demands for provisions prompting a military expedition to return the refugees. The plan called for a military invasion and occupation of Fort Gibson, but this force would have to receive supplies from the quartermaster department at Fort Scott, nearly 160 miles away. Once in Indian Territory, federal troops would receive supplies from Fort Scott by wagon train via the Texas Road and gather provisions from the recently returned civilians as they put in crops. Before the federal plan could succeed, Union soldiers had to drive the enemy from the area.

News of the Indians plight and the atrocious condition they were in reached General James W. Denver, military commander of the District of Kansas, and William G. Coffin, Southern Superintendent of Indian Affairs. George W. Collamore, Mayor of Lawrence, wrote to William P. Dole, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, "they were reduced to such extremity as to be obliged to feed upon their ponies and their dogs...and in some cases absolute nakedness was their condition" and "the women and children suffered severely from frozen limbs, as did the men."<sup>98</sup> Coffin ordered all of the agents under his supervision to Fort Row, Kansas, to take

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<sup>98</sup> Collamore quoted in Carolyn Ross Johnston, "The Panther's Scream is Often Heard" Cherokee Women in Indian Territory during the Civil War," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 78 (Spring 2000): 89-90.



charge of the various groups of natives. For weeks, destitute groups of loyal Indians poured into southern Kansas. Slowly, government officials relocated the refugees toward Leroy, Kansas, in an effort to better care for them and ease logistical problems for distributing agents by moving them closer to Fort Scott and governmental supplies. (See Map 4.) The arrival of large numbers of refugees quickly depleted the available resources. Coffin turned to the army for help, but by mid February the quartermaster ran out of provisions.<sup>99</sup> The Commissary Department, responsible for providing the army with subsistence, or food, purchased all provisions by contract. Once materials are obtained, the quartermaster provides transportation for all goods and stores it for distribution. Fort Scott received its supplies from the St. Louis depot. First the goods traveled west to Fort Leavenworth by boat along the Missouri River and then south by wagon. Dole arrived at Leavenworth in January to take charge and provide assurances of an early return to their homes in Indian Territory.<sup>100</sup>

Wanting to return the Indians to their homes where they could sustain themselves, Commissioner Dole concluded that an invasion of Indian Territory could be made with the available federal troops stationed in Kansas. On 13 March, he recommended to Secretary of the Interior Caleb B. Smith that he “procure an order from the War Department detailing two Regiments of Volunteers from Kansas to go with the Indians to their homes and ... to furnish two thousand stand of arms and

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<sup>99</sup> Annie H. Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War* (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1919), 79-89. and Lela J. McBride, *Opothleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2000): 182-191.

<sup>100</sup> A.B. Warfield, “The Quartermaster’s Department, 1861-1864,” *The Quartermaster Review* (September-October, 1928): no pagination. This article was received from the Quartermaster Museum, OQMG USA, Quartermaster Center, Fort Lee, Virginia. and *Daily Conservative* (Leavenworth, Kansas), 28 January 1862, 8 February 1862.

ammunition to be placed in the hands of the Loyal Indians.”<sup>101</sup> This recommendation achieved immediate results. In less than a week Dole received the promise of two white regiments and permission to enlist five thousand Indian troops.<sup>102</sup>

On 19 March, Adjutant General Lee L. Thomas dispatched a letter to Major General Henry W. Halleck, Commander of the Department of Missouri, stating “It is the desire of the President, on the application of the Secretary of the Interior and Commissioner of Indian Affairs, that you should detail two regiments to act in the Indian country, with a view to open the way for the friendly Indians who are now refugees in southern Kansas to return to their homes and to protect them there.”<sup>103</sup> Despite the army’s decision to abandon the territory the previous year, arming and returning loyal Indians back to their homes became a priority.

General Halleck disapproved of the order and opposed arming the Indians. Federal troops had withdrawn just a year before because of the fear of supplying troops at such distances. At the time, he remained occupied with suppressing raiders along the border with Missouri and sought Dole’s nominee for the commander of the Indian Expedition for his own operations. Finally in April, Halleck relented and ordered General James W. Denver to designate the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Infantry, the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry, and two batteries of artillery for an Indian Expedition. The procurement of firearms for the Indian troops began slowly, but by 8 April the weapons shipped to Superintendent Coffin in Kansas.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> United States Government, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1862* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1862), 147-149.

<sup>102</sup> L. Thomas, Adjutant General to W.H. Halleck, Letter, 19 March 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 624-625.

<sup>103</sup> L. Thomas, Letter, 19 March 1862.

<sup>104</sup> Gary N. Heath, “The First Federal Invasion of Indian Territory,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 44 (Winter, 1966-1967): 410. and Frederick Solomon, Letter, 7 May 1862, *OR*, Series 1,

# Map 3: Area of Operations, 1862



From Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*

Federal forces patrolling the northern borders of the Cherokee Nation had not sighted Confederate troops in some time, finding only small bands of raiders. General Denver decided that the proposed Indian Expedition should begin its invasion as soon as possible. However, on 10 April, in a last order before the operation commenced, Halleck replaced Denver with General Samuel D. Sturgis.<sup>105</sup> The reasons for Halleck's decision soon became apparent when Sturgis brought the expedition to a standstill by halting the enlistment of Indians without further instructions and directed the arrest of any person found in violation on 25 April.<sup>106</sup> Superintendent Coffin and Colonel John Ritchie, commander of the incomplete 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Regiment, immediately protested the order and notified Commissioner Dole.<sup>107</sup>

In the midst of the conflict over the use of Indian troops and the forthcoming invasion of Indian Territory, the departments of the west were reorganized. The former Department of Kansas, including Indian Territory west of Arkansas, was reinstated on 2 May, with General James G. Blunt, an adamant abolitionist from Kansas, placed in command.<sup>108</sup> Without delay Blunt directed, "...the two Indian regiments ordered to be raised will be fully carried out, and the regiments will be raised with all possible speed." Once again, it appeared arming and returning the Indians to their homes was a priority. Blunt saw beyond the refugee problem. He

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<sup>105</sup> H.W. Halleck to Samuel L. Curtis, Letter, 5 April 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 662. and S.D. Sturgis, General Orders Number 4, 10 April 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 683.

<sup>106</sup> Thomas Moonlight, General Orders No. 8, 25 April 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 365.

<sup>107</sup> Superintendent Coffin to Commissioner Dole, Letter, 29 April 1862, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1862. and McBride, *Opothleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee*, 192-193.

<sup>108</sup> L. Thomas, Adjutant General, General Orders No. 50, 2 May 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 368-369.

intended to occupy Indian Territory and use Fort Gibson as a supply depot for federal incursions into western Arkansas.<sup>109</sup>

With increased Confederate activity in Missouri, Indian Territory appeared to be lightly defended. The Union command determined to move quickly with plans for invasion and the relocation of the refugee Indians.<sup>110</sup> Recruiting officers soon completed enlistment in the 1st Indian Regiment, with eight companies of Creeks and two companies of Seminoles. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Regiment, composed of soldiers from various tribes, still lacked the men needed to fill the ranks. Colonel John Ritchie, commander of the unit, ventured into the Osage Nation looking for recruits.<sup>111</sup> However, disagreement and lack of cooperation between Superintendent Coffin and Agent Peter Elder delayed Ritchie's return and enrollment into the regiment.<sup>112</sup>

Placed under the command of Colonel William Weer from the 10<sup>th</sup> Kansas Infantry, the Indian Expedition received equipment for their move south at Humboldt, Kansas, from the quartermaster department. The quartermaster department at Fort Scott was responsible for providing clothing, camp equipage, garrison equipage, and transportation for its supplies. Regulations allowed each staff officer one tent and every fifteen infantry soldiers or thirteen mounted soldiers one tent. In addition, each infantry and cavalry group were entitled two camp kettles, five mess pans, two hatchets, two axes, two pickaxes, and two spades. Each soldier received his uniform including shirt and socks, and one knapsack, haversack, cartridge box, cap pouch, bayonet and scabbard, and canteen. Weer noted the inferior quality of the supplies

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<sup>109</sup> Thomas Moonlight, General Orders No. 2, 5 May 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 370.

<sup>110</sup> Heath, "First Federal Invasion," 411.

<sup>111</sup> United States Government, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1862*, 164-166.

<sup>112</sup> McBride, *Opothleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee*, 194-195.

and weapons issued to the Indians and attempted to locate replacements at Fort Scott. In some cases, the weapons would not fire and proved completely worthless. Finally, Weer discovered additional weapons at Fort Leavenworth and issued different muskets to portions of the regiment.<sup>113</sup>

The amount of provisions needed by an actively campaigning army is staggering. All of the cavalry horses and wagon teams required twelve pounds of hay and ten pounds of grain daily. Regulations provide each man with daily rations consisting of “beef, salt and fresh, pork, bacon, flour, pilot or hard bread, cornmeal, coffee, sugar, beans, peas, rice, hominy, molasses, vinegar, soap, candles, and desiccated vegetables.” Each day’s rations for one man average three pounds in weight. All of the beef is provided by local contractors or brought in from the north. Pilot bread is made in Cincinnati and St. Louis and shipped west. While in camp, the soldiers usually receive fresh bread, reserving the hard bread for active campaigning. To properly supply 100 men required 300 pounds of rations per day, or 9,000 pounds per month. To transport the provisions the army required one wagon for every two tons, or 2,000 pounds of goods. Each wagon required a team of mules or oxen, ranging from two to eight head, and an additional forty to one hundred sixty pounds of forage each day.<sup>114</sup>

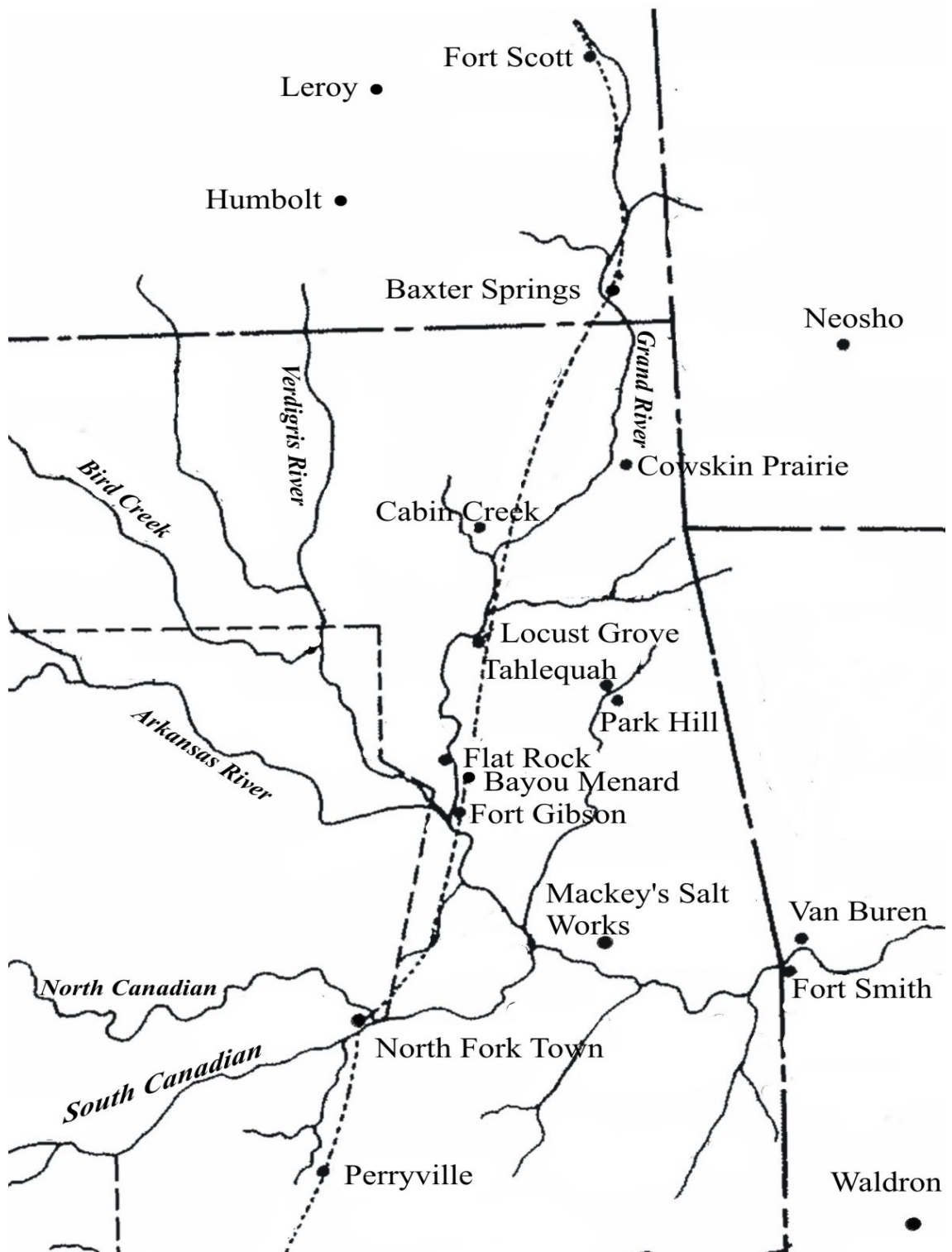
While the Indians were readied for the move south, the white troops kept busy chasing small bands of bushwhackers in Missouri and the Cherokee Neutral Lands. When General Blunt took charge of the Department of Kansas, Colonel Frederick

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<sup>113</sup> William Weer to Thomas Moonlight, Letter, 5 June 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 418. and William Weer to Charles Doubleday, Letter, 6 June 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 418-419. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 61. and Warfield, “The Quartermaster’s Department, 1861-1864,” no pagination.

<sup>114</sup> Warfield, “The Quartermaster’s Department, 1861-1864,” no pagination.

## Map 4: Area of Operations, Weer Expedition



Adapted from Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*

Solomon of the 9<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry was commander of Fort Scott. At the post were eight companies of the 9<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin, part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ohio Cavalry under Colonel Charles Doubleday, the 10<sup>th</sup> Kansas Infantry under Colonel William F. Cloud, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indiana Battery. These troops could be mustered into service if needed for the push south. In another change of command to the expedition, Blunt reassigned the Indian Expedition to Colonel Doubleday.<sup>115</sup>

As Doubleday assembled his force at the border of Indian Territory, Blunt once again decided to replace the leader of the Indian Expedition. Blunt designated Colonel Weer as overall commander and reassigned Doubleday to the second brigade. Ignoring Blunt's orders, Doubleday moved ahead with plans for the expedition. He entered Indian Territory on 1 June with troops from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ohio Cavalry, 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry, 9<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry, 10<sup>th</sup> Kansas Infantry, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indiana Mounted Light Artillery. Colonel Weer and the Indian troops remained behind.<sup>116</sup> Acting on his own, Doubleday decided it was possible to march to Fort Gibson before Confederate forces in the area could unite and stop the federal invasion so he immediately moved towards Cowskin Prairie to attack the Confederates under Colonels Watie and J.T. Coffee. (See Map 4.) Even if the federal troops proved successful in their campaign, the various delays moved the invasions departure into early summer and would prevent any of the returning Unionists Indians from planting crops. Without the opportunity to begin farming, the natives would once again be

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<sup>115</sup> Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, 118, 371-372, 377.

<sup>116</sup> Joseph B. Thoburn and Muriel H. Wright, *Oklahoma, A History of the State and Its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1929), Volume 1, 334. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 16.



forced to turn to the army for subsistence. This time, 160 miles separated the Indians from Fort Scott.

On 6 June, Doubleday moved south toward the Grand River and Cowskin Prairie with 1,000 men and a battery of artillery. The expedition reached the area near dusk, locating the enemy camp just three miles away. Doubleday ordered the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ohio across the river to take up a position south of the enemy, followed by the artillery and infantry as support. The troops closed in on Watie's men, not knowing their exact numbers. In a bold move, Doubleday planned to surprise the Confederate force before they could mount an effective defense and drive them from the field.<sup>117</sup>

As dawn approached, the artillery opened fire at a distance of 500 yards, sending six rounds into the camp. "The shelling was splendid. The shells would bound from tree to tree and burst with a thundering noise."<sup>118</sup> As the federal rounds exploded amongst their tents, Confederate soldiers scrambled putting up only minimal resistance. Watie and the majority of his men escaped; however, the Union troops captured 500 to 600 horses along with a number of cattle.<sup>119</sup> Watie wrote of the engagement briefly, "Federal forces supposed to be 600 strong dashed into Cowskin Prairie yesterday and drove in our pickets. I have moved my train onto

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<sup>117</sup> Charles Doubleday, Report, 8 June 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 102, 397, 408.

<sup>118</sup> Luman H. Tenney, *War Diary of Luman Harris Tenney, 1861-1865* (Cleveland, Ohio: Evangelical Publishing House, 1914), 17.

<sup>119</sup> David Cartter, Letter, July 1862, Cartter Family Papers, LM101, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. and Frank Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 69. and Charles Doubleday, Report, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 102. and Isaac Gause, *Four Years with Five Armies: Army of the Potomac, Army of the Missouri, Army of the Ohio, Army of the Shenandoah* (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1908), 85. and David G. Rabb, Report, June 1862, *Supplement OR*, Volume 15, Part 2, 546. and Tenney, *War Diary of Luman Harris Tenney, 1861-1865*, 17.

Spavinaw Creek.”<sup>120</sup> Regardless of the outcome, the engagement served as a warning for the Confederates; Union troops had entered Indian Territory.

Watie immediately requested reinforcements, knowing that he and Colonel Coffee did not have the numbers needed to engage the federals in open combat. General Pike, commander of Indian Territory, refused to move his troops from the Red River while Cooper slowly pushed his men toward the Cherokee Nation. Reacting to Pike’s various delays, General Thomas C. Hindman, commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department, sent Colonel James J. Clarkson and a portion of the Missouri State Guard to Watie’s assistance.<sup>121</sup>

As Doubleday made his way through the Indian nations, Colonel Weer arrived at Fort Scott to take command of the Indian Expedition. Finding Doubleday absent, he immediately ordered him to return to Baxter Springs, Kansas rather than take to the field. (See Map 4.) The decision to withdraw the troops from Indian Territory, and Weer’s replacement of Doubleday as commander of the expedition, caused some controversy in the local press.<sup>122</sup> With enemy forces aware of his expedition’s intentions, Weer determined to move the command before Watie could unite with Brigadier General James S. Rains. Colonel Weer never indicated why he decided to recall the troops from the field. The decision to wait for their return delayed the move south nearly a month.

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<sup>120</sup> Stand Watie, Letter, 9 June 1862, Grant Foreman Collection, Box 11, Thomas Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

<sup>121</sup> Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 11-12. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 17-18.

<sup>122</sup> *Leavenworth Conservative*, Kansas, 23 June 1862. and *Leavenworth Daily Times*, Kansas, 26 June, 1862.

Weer continued to train his new Indian regiments, placing troops from the Tenth Kansas in command positions with Colonel Robert W. Furnas in command of the Indian Brigade. Even with the new attention, the Indian regiments lacked the necessary transportation to begin the move south. By mid June Weer returned to Leroy, Kansas leaving Solomon and Doubleday at Baxter Springs. Constant delays frustrated Weer and required re-supplying the troops from Fort Scott, eighty miles north, before any move south could commence. If the expedition was to be successful, he knew that he had to get his troops moving. Finally, the Indian regiments were readied for action and supplies gathered for the expedition. In an attempt to gain experience, Weer dispatched patrols from the Indian Regiment to maintain contact with the enemy and determine their exact locations and strength across the border.<sup>123</sup>

As dawn broke on 28 June, the Indian Expedition finally began its official move south and the first federal invasion of Indian Territory commenced. Thousands of refugees longing to return home accompanied the expedition and the newly uniformed Indian soldiers. Union detachments located Confederate troops under Watie at Spavinaw Creek and Colonel Clarkson and his Missourians at Locust Grove. (See Map 4.) Wanting to strike before the enemy forces could unite, the expedition moved south in two columns along the Texas Road, and went into camp at Hudson's

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<sup>123</sup> David K. Cartter, Letter, July 1862, Cartter Family Papers, LM101, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. and McBride, *Opothleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee*, 195. and James G. Blunt to William Weer, Letter, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 461. and Heath, "The First Federal Invasion of Indian Territory," 414.

Crossing on the Neosho River. Here the soldiers waited for the supply trains from Fort Scott to catch up with the column.<sup>124</sup>

After a two day delay, the main Union force under Colonel Lewis R. Jewell crossed the Neosho River and moved down the east side of the Grand River. From Carey's Ford the soldiers continued southeast to Round Grove on Cowskin Prairie, where they went into camp.<sup>125</sup> Weer learned from the locals that the Confederates had moved south. They also reported that Colonel John Drew and the Cherokee Mounted Rifles were at Park Hill and Tahlequah, wavering in allegiance to the Confederacy.<sup>126</sup> (See Map 4.) Colonel Weer's troops moved down the Verdigris River toward Grand Saline to confront Clarkson at Locust Grove. However, the federal troops were not alone. Watie and his men remained in the vicinity of Cowskin Prairie, determined to halt the Union advance into Indian Territory.

On 23 June, General Pike ordered Colonel Cooper north of the Canadian River to assume command of all troops in the region. On 26 June, General Hindman issued contrary orders for Colonel Clarkson to assume command of all forces within the Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole nations. Clarkson's men would be the first

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<sup>124</sup> McBride, *Opothleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee*, 195. and James G. Blunt to William Weer, Letter. and Thomas Moonlight, General Orders Number 21, 5 June 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 418-419. and William Weer to Thomas Moonlight, Letters, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 430-431, 434, 441, 458-461. The First Brigade composed of two sections of the Indiana Battery, one Battalion of the Second Ohio Volunteer Infantry, and six companies of the Ninth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. The following day the Second Brigade and unmounted men of the First Indian Brigade moved as well.

The exact location of Hudson's Crossing was not found. It is situated along the Neosho River, near Spring Creek and the Grand River.

<sup>125</sup> Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, 126. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border, Volume I, 1861-1862*, 300. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 64.

<sup>126</sup> Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 12. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 61.

Confederate force to meet the approaching Union advance.<sup>127</sup> Frustrated with the developing situation, Pike turned to Richmond for help. He reported to Secretary of War George W. Randolph that General Earl Van Dorn had transferred twelve Parrot guns and 3,000 pounds of artillery powder as well as nearly all tents, clothing, and shoes for his Indian forces from Fort Smith to Little Rock, depriving his men of valuable supplies.<sup>128</sup> In an attempt to solve his supply problem, Pike sent agents to San Antonio and Mexico to locate provision. Despite his efforts, by the end of the year he reported he had “no ammunition, no provisions, no transportation, no money, and little credit.”<sup>129</sup>

In order to strike at Clarkson, Colonel Weer sent his supply trains, a portion of his artillery, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ohio Cavalry, and the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry to the west bank of the Grand River and ordered them to Cabin Creek. In the early evening of 2 July, Weer moved with 300 men from the 10<sup>th</sup> Kansas Infantry and 9<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry, along with a section of Rabb’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Indiana Battery, to engage Colonel Clarkson at Locust Grove. Moving across the open prairie, the column passed a number of Indian cabins en route. The Union soldiers immediately arrested the local men to prevent the enemy from learning of their advance.<sup>130</sup> At daylight on 3 July, the federal troops attacked. Awakened by the gunfire, Clarkson and his men only

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<sup>127</sup> Fayette Hewitt, General Orders Number – (blank), 23 June 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 839-840. and Albert Pike to Secretary of War George W. Randolph, Letter, 26 June 1862, 841-844, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 841-844. and Fayette Hewitt, General Orders Number – (blank), 25 June 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 844-845. and R.C. Newton, General Orders Number 21, 25 June 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 845-846. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 12.

<sup>128</sup> Albert Pike to George W. Randolph, Letter, 26 June 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 846-847.

<sup>129</sup> Pike quoted in Windham, “The Problems of Supply in the Trans-Mississippi Confederacy,” 153.

<sup>130</sup> Theodore Gardner, “The First Kansas Battery: An Historical Sketch, with Personal Reminiscences of Army Life, 1861-1865,” *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society*, 14 (1915-1918): 235-240.

mounted minimal resistance. The engagement was brief as a sudden barrage of gunfire routed the Confederate forces. According to Union accounts, Clarkson was completely defeated, losing 30 men killed and over 100 captured.<sup>131</sup>

Colonel Clarkson painted a different picture. Sick at the time, he reported detaching a portion of his regiment to Watie leaving about seventy-five men in charge of the baggage train. Clarkson also stated he sent Watie across the Grand River to watch the federals; however, Watie had disregarded the request and “the consequence was the enemy came down the west side of the river, crossed about one mile above me, and captured myself and forty-eight men together with all the baggage and trains.”<sup>132</sup> Members of Clarkson’s own regiment seem to support the Union accounts of the engagement, reporting that there were roughly 250 men with the supplies. They suggested that Watie contacted Clarkson and advised him to move in the direction of Fort Gibson.<sup>133</sup>

Along with the over 100 taken prisoner, the Confederates lost large quantities of supplies, including their entire wagon train.<sup>134</sup> This small skirmish had significance outside of the prisoners and the provisions captured; more importantly the Confederate force had been defeated. Clarkson’s routed men fled to Tahlequah,

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<sup>131</sup> Michael W. Buster, Report, 10 July 1862, *Supplement OR*, Volume 2, Part 2, 466-468.

<sup>132</sup> James L. Clarkson, Report, 29 February 1864, James L. Clarkson Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie’s Confederate Indians*, 69-70.

<sup>133</sup> Buster Report, 10 July 1862. and Hervey Buckner, Letter, no date, Hervey Buckner Collection, Box 96.47, Oklahoma Historical Society, Archives Division. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 64-66.

<sup>134</sup> Buster Report, 10 July 1862. and John Cooke, Report, 6 July 1862, Special Microfilm Collections, Roll IAD-5, Oklahoma Historical Society, Archives Division. and Gardner, “The First Kansas Battery: An Historical Sketch, with Personal Reminiscences of Army Life, 1861-1865.” and Stand Watie, Report, 6 July 1862, *Supplement OR*, Volume 3, Part 1, 20-21. and William Weer, Report, 4 July 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 137-138. and James Whittaker, Letter, 30 July 1862, James Adams Collection, Kansas State Collections, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 66.

spreading fear along the way. The panic that ensued opened schisms between the Indians and their governmental leaders, raising questions about the ability of the Confederate government to protect them. Many of the Unionists fled toward the federal lines, increasing the numbers in the invading force.<sup>135</sup>

The Indian Expedition expected opposition from Confederate forces in the area. Colonel Phillips and his scouts kept Weer's rear free from enemy troops; however, the road ahead was unknown. Watie learned the location of the Union forces and planned to halt the advance guard of the federal expedition. Encamped at his mill near Spavinaw, Watie lay in wait for the approaching Union force. (See Map 3.) Two companies of 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry, under the command of Captain Harris S. Greeno, attacked his position. A small force, under Major Elias C. Boudinot, slowed the Union crossing at Salina Creek. However, the engagement at the mill resulted in a defeat for Watie and his soldiers. The federals captured a large quantity of sugar and other supplies, which were destroyed for lack of transportation. Following their victory, the Union troops retired to Cabin Creek and celebrated the Fourth of July. (See Map 4.) Colonel Watie rallied his men and moved toward Colonel Cooper near Fort Gibson.<sup>136</sup>

The Union expedition entered Indian Territory with a predefined policy on Indian affairs. Before their departure, Commissioner Dole suggested to Superintendent Coffin that Commissioner Carruth and H.W. Martin accompany the

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<sup>135</sup> Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, 132. and Cooke Report, 6 July 1862. and Rapp and Rapp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory* 12.

<sup>136</sup> Buster Report, 10 July 1862. and United States Government, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1862*, 162-163. and W. S. Burke, *Official Military History of Kansas Regiments During the War for the Suppression of the Great Rebellion* (Ottawa: Kansas Heritage Press, 1870): 123. and Rapp and Rapp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 12-13.

command as special Indian agents to assure the loyal Indians that the government would protect them and honor treaty arrangements.<sup>137</sup> The United States government planned to offer Chief John Ross and the Cherokee the chance to repudiate their treaty with the Confederacy and open the area to reoccupation by federal troops.<sup>138</sup> The skirmish at Locust Grove offered Colonel Weer the opportunity to reach out to the tribal government with victory on his side. Weer wrote to Ross, advocating his desire to meet and bring the loyal Cherokee under his protection.<sup>139</sup>

Despite Ross's initial attempts to remain neutral at the outbreak of hostilities his response proved unacceptable. He referred to the Cherokee treaty of alliance with the Confederacy dated 7 October 1861 and stated that "...the destiny of this people became identical with that of the Southern Cherokee...I cannot, under existing circumstances, entertain the proposition for an official interview between us."<sup>140</sup> Much to Weer's relief, verbal reports reached him that Ross was acting diplomatically and waited for the right opportunity to change his allegiance openly. Weer forwarded the matter to General Blunt, who ordered him into the area immediately to take advantage of the situation.<sup>141</sup>

Colonel Weer moved the federal troops to Flat Rock on 10 July, with a plan for the complete takeover of Indian Territory. Again, he divided his command. On 14 July, two detachments moved out under Major William T. Campbell and Captain Greeno. Campbell moved south and ran into a superior force of Confederates at Fort

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<sup>137</sup> McBride, *Opothleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee*, 195.

<sup>138</sup> James A. Phillips to John Ross, Letter, 26 June 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 450. and William Weer, Reports, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 137-138.

<sup>139</sup> Colonel Weer to Ross, Letter, 7 July 1862. *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 464.

<sup>140</sup> Ross to Weer, Letter, 8 July 1862. *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 486-487.

<sup>141</sup> Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 13-14.



Davis. After a brief skirmish, he moved toward Fort Gibson in order to rejoin Weer's column. Captain Greeno took the Sixth Kansas Cavalry and two companies from the Indian Regiment and moved toward Tahlequah to secure the Cherokee capital.<sup>142</sup>

Greeno and his troops arrived in the area on 15 July, finding some 200 Cherokee waiting to join with the Union force. Greeno quickly summoned the various leaders of the tribe. When his troops found orders from General Cooper instructing the men to report to Fort Davis, Greeno arrested the Cherokee leaders and made them prisoners of war. Released on parole, Ross and others accompanied Greeno's men back to Flat Rock. From there, the Cherokee leader took the Cherokee treasury and large portions of their archives, moved on to Fort Scott.<sup>143</sup>

Hoping to press the Confederates, Colonel Weer took 600 troops and moved south. He met some resistance as he combed the country around Fort Gibson for the enemy. About 2:00 a.m. he met Major Campbell, who had driven the Confederate pickets from the area and occupied the post. On 15 July Weer moved toward the banks of the Arkansas River and discovered a considerable force on the opposing shore. The federals fired a few shots and fell back to Flat Rock. The federals troop's success throughout the campaign thus far was tremendous; however, the tide was about to turn as weaknesses within the expedition began to mount.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> John Drew, Letter, 6 August 1862, Manuscript No. 6740, Box 2, University of Virginia, Alderman Library, Charlottesville, Virginia. and Harris Greeno, Report, 17 July 1862, *OR*, Series 1 Volume 13, 160-161. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 67-70.

<sup>143</sup> John Drew, Letter, 6 August 1862. and Harris Greeno, Report, 17 July 1862. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 71. and Heath, "The First Federal Invasion of Indian Territory," 417. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 71-72.

<sup>144</sup> Albert C. Ellithorpe, Diary, entry dated 14 July 1862, General Sweeny's Museum, Springfield, Missouri. It should be noted that the collections of General Sweeny's Museum were acquired by the National Parks Service after the research for this thesis was conducted. Most of the collection was transferred to the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield in Missouri. and Rampp and

When Colonel Weer retired to Flat Rock, he fell into a drunken stupor for several days.<sup>145</sup> While some of the troops were volunteers from Kansas, a majority of the white enlisted men were from Ohio, Colorado, and Wisconsin. They were poorly prepared for a campaign through Indian Territory during the hottest summer months. With supplies diminishing and troops exhausted from constant movement in the July heat, the expedition ground to a halt. Forage for the livestock disappeared quickly due to the large number of animals needed by the army. Each day the animals required twelve pounds of hay and ten pounds of grain. Without the necessary hay and grain, the animals turned to the prairie.<sup>146</sup> In addition, supply trains from Fort Scott failed to arrive with the desperately needed provisions to maintain the army. Knowing the expedition represented a majority of the forces at his disposal, General Blunt warned Weer not to overstretch his supply lines from Fort Scott. Operating over 160 miles from Fort Scott required constant communication and shipments of goods down the Texas Road, both easily disrupted by Confederate troops. As food and ammunition dwindled, Weer ordered a Union expedition to the Grand Saline River in an attempt to replenish his salt supply. Receiving ordnance was a second major problem. Munitions had to be brought south from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas,

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Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 13-14. and William Weer, Report, 17 July 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 160-161. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 73.

<sup>145</sup> Problems with alcohol seemed to be common for Colonel Weer. According to Wiley Britton "so it happened one time when the command was to make a night march...that one commissary sergeant was directed to have the rations issued to the companies of his regiment by dark. He took the requisition to Colonel Weer's headquarters to have him approve it; but was unable to see him, that officer being drunk in his tent; the errand was repeated three or four times, and finally just before midnight his approval was secured; his drunk condition caused a delay of several hours in the movement of the troops" *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 67.

<sup>146</sup> Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 67. and Warfield, "The Quartermaster's Department, 1861-1864," no pagination.

along the Texas Road. Transporting these materials through enemy lines over such distances left them open to attack as they crossed the open prairie.<sup>147</sup>

As conditions worsened in the camp, the Indian Expedition slowly disintegrated. On 18 July, Colonel Solomon acted. In a clear case of mutiny, he arrested Weer and assumed command. Solomon reported, “The time had arrived, in my judgment, in the history of this expedition when the greatest wrong ever perpetrated upon any troops was about to fall with crushing weight upon the noble men composing the command. Someone must act, and that at once, or starvation and capture were the imminent hazards that looked us in the face.” In explaining the details to his fellow officers, Solomon went on to say, “By Colonel Weer’s orders we were forced to encamp where our famishing men were unable to obtain but putrid water...Our reports for disability and unfitness for duty were disregarded; our cries for help and complaints of unnecessary hardships and suffering were received with closed ears.”<sup>148</sup>

A council of war decided the expedition should fall back so regular communication could be reestablished and supplies received from Fort Scott; however Colonel Weer refused to move. With nearly two weeks passing since the last communication with Fort Scott, the men of the expedition were forced on half rations while the horses devoured the scant prairie grass around the camp. Solomon’s

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<sup>147</sup> William Weer, Report, 16 July 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 160-161. and William T. Campbell, Report, 14 July 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 161. and Frederick Solomon, Report, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 476-477. and Frederick Solomon to Corps Commanders, Indian Expedition, Letter, 18 July 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 475-476. and Frederick Solomon, Report, 25 July 1862, E.B. Quiner Papers, Special Collections, M933, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

<sup>148</sup> Frederick Solomon, Report. and Frederick Solomon to Corps Commanders, Indian Expedition, Letter, 18 July 1862. and Frederick Solomon, Report, 25 July 1862.

arrest of Weer brought the expedition to a complete halt.<sup>149</sup> Ironically, on 19 July, the day after Weer's arrest, General Blunt sent a dispatch from Fort Leavenworth to Weer ordering him to hold his ground and "accept the services of all persons, without reference to color, who are willing to fight for the American flag and the maintenance of the Federal Government."<sup>150</sup>

It was too late to preserve the expedition. On 19 July, the white troops began moving toward Hudson's Crossing, where couriers reported a supply train waited. The morale boost caused by early success disappeared as troops faced starvation. Solomon chose Hudson's Crossing as the site of the base camp because "the vicinity...appears as the most commanding point in this country not only from a military view as a key to the valleys of Spring River, Shoal Creek, Neosho and Grand River, but also as the only point in this country now where an army could be sustained with limited supply of forage and subsistence, offering ample grazing and good water."<sup>151</sup> By the time the expedition made it to Hudson's Crossing, nearly half of the cavalry were dismounted, their horses giving out under the harsh conditions. Becoming desperate for forage, many of the ponies began eating each other's manes and tails while picketed on the prairie.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> William Weer, Report, 16 July 1862. and William T. Campbell, Report, 14 July 1862. and Harris S. Greeno, Report, 17 July 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 161-162. and Thomas Moonlight to William Weer, Letter, 14 July 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 472. and E.H. Carruth to James G. Blunt, Letter, 19 July 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 478. and William Weer to Thomas Moonlight, Letter, 12 July 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 487-488. and James G. Blunt to William Weer, Letter, 12 July 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 488-489. and Frederick Solomon to Corps Commanders, Indian Expedition, Letter, 18 July 1862. and Frederick Solomon, Report, 25 July 1862. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 14. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 73-74.

<sup>150</sup> Blunt to Weer, Letter, 19 July 1862, *OR* Series 1, Volume 13, 489.

<sup>151</sup> Colonel Solomon quoted in Heath, "The First Federal Invasion of Indian Territory," 419.

<sup>152</sup> Frederick Solomon, Report, 25 July 1862. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume 1, 1861-1862*, 307-308.

To guard the retreat of the white soldiers, Solomon left the Indian regiments along the Grand and Verdigris Rivers to block any advance by enemy forces in the area. He knew that Colonel Watie and some 1,200 Confederates were moving up the east side of the Grand River in an effort to destroy his command and capture what little supplies remained.<sup>153</sup> When General Blunt received news of Weer's arrest and the retreat of the white troops, he immediately sent orders to Solomon to halt the retreat and provide reinforcements for the Indian troops. Blunt left Fort Leavenworth to personally take command of the expedition. The general rushed to Fort Scott, and to his surprise found Solomon and the entire command had beaten him to the post. Blunt later learned that Solomon had received his orders while at Baxter Springs on his march north.<sup>154</sup>

Colonel R.W. Furnas, commander of the isolated Union Indian troops, combined the three Indian Regiments into a single brigade. The new 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Brigade moved into a new position along the Verdigris River; however, numerous desertions quickly diminished his ranks, forcing him to move north. Upon reaching Baxter Springs the Indian Brigade caught up with Colonel Solomon. Before Solomon continued his retreat, the Indian Brigade received a small detachment of infantry and a section of artillery, but more importantly, they obtained supplies. With a renewed vigor, the Indian Brigade moved into a new position along Horse Creek and established Camp Wattles and began dispatching regular patrols.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Frederick Solomon, Report, 25 July 1862. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 74.

<sup>154</sup> James G. Blunt, "General Blunt's Account of His Civil War Experiences," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 1 (May 1932): 223-224. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume 1, 1861-1862*, 309.

<sup>155</sup> Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume 1, 1861-1862*, 309-311. and Ramp and Ramp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 15.

With Solomon at Fort Scott, the newly formed 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Home Guard and a battery of Kansas artillery, under Major William A. Phillips' command, marched to the Tahlequah and Park Hill vicinity in late July. From there, Phillips ordered his men down the three roads that converged upon Bayou Menard, seven miles from Fort Gibson. Phillips' men marched south on 27 July. (See Map 4.) The center column ran head long into the 1<sup>st</sup> Cherokee Regiment under Colonel Thomas F. Taylor. As fighting erupted between Phillips' soldiers and Taylor, the two federal flank columns arrived. Quickly overwhelmed, the routed Confederates fled toward Fort Gibson, leaving thirty-two bodies on the field. Colonel Phillips reported the capture of twenty-five prisoners.<sup>156</sup> The engagement at Bayou Menard helped to keep the Confederate forces in the area in check following Colonel Solomon's retreat.

While the military forces tried to regroup and avoided contact with one another, civilians began waging war upon each other. The influx of Unionists back into the territory, and the presence of the Indian regiments, allowed some families to settle old scores. Murders, house burnings, and robbery became prevalent following the withdrawal of federal forces in early 1861. Unionists took revenge on Confederate sympathizers for their actions over the past year and sought to persuade neutral families to their cause. Pro-southern partisans, in turn, victimized the newly returned Indians. Neither side could muster enough strength to push the other from the area. "A federal Indian agent noted it created a "spirit of license." He feared that

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<sup>156</sup> Smith Christie, Letter, 27 November 1862, John Ross Papers, Folder 1202, Thomas Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma. and E.A. Folsom, *Reminiscences of E.A. Folsom*, no date, E.E. Dale Collection, Box 218, F17, University of Oklahoma, Western History Collection, Norman, Oklahoma. and William A. Phillips, Report, 27 July 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13: 181-182. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume 1, 1861-1862*, 310-312. and Ramp and Ramp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 16.

it if “our citizens are in the habit of taking vengeance into their own hands, the Indians may follow the example.”<sup>157</sup> Union forces implemented a policy of dispatching patrols to protect loyal Indians while at the same time extracting a heavy toll on those still in support of the enemy. Civilians in the Cherokee Nation faced physical dangers as well as the constant psychological terror because raids were so frequent.<sup>158</sup>

As raids throughout the territory continued, General Hindman persisted in his fight with General Pike. He wanted Pike to move into Arkansas, but Pike refused, citing Confederate agreements with the tribes. Finally Pike resigned his commission and Colonel Cooper assumed his position. After Pike’s arrest on 14 November, Confederate troops transferred him to Little Rock to stand trial for treason; however, he was never prosecuted. The Confederate government in Richmond accepted his resignation. Colonel Cooper ordered his new command north from Pike’s camp at Fort McCulloch toward the Cherokee Nation.

The buildup of Confederate troops at Fort Davis, the reorganization of Watie’s men, and reduced supply caused alarm among the Union Indian regiments. As a result, Colonel Furnas ordered the Indian brigades to return northward. The 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Brigade retired to Baxter Springs, Kansas, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Brigade moved to Shirley’s Ford on the Spring River near Carthage, Missouri, while the 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Brigade

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<sup>157</sup> Quoted from Franzman, “Peculiarly situated between rebellion and loyalty” *Civilized Tribes, Savagery, and the American Civil War*,” 151.

<sup>158</sup> Hannah Hicks, *Diary*, 25 September 1862, Thomas Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma. and Robert C. Horn, *The Annals of Elder Horn: Early Life in the South-west*, ed. John W. Bower and Claude H. Thurman (New York: R.R. Smith, Inc., 1930): 33-35. and Bess Howard, “A Frivolous History of Fort Gibson,” unpublished manuscript, 236, T.L. Ballenger Collection, Northeastern State University, University Archives, Tahlequah, Oklahoma. and Robert S. Weddle, *Plow-Horse Cavalry: The Caney Creek Boys of the Thirty-Fourth Texas* (Austin, Texas: Madrona Press, 1974): 43. and Johnston, “The Panther’s Scream is Often Heard” *Cherokee Women in Indian Territory during the Civil War*,” 93.

moved to Neosho, Missouri, leaving Indian Territory open to reoccupation by Confederate forces.<sup>159</sup>

With this final withdrawal the first federal invasion of Indian Territory ended. The Indian Expedition had moved rapidly, almost unopposed from the beginning. Union victories on the battlefield helped to destabilize Confederate alliances with the tribes in Indian Territory, particularly the Cherokee. However, weaknesses in the army's ability to maintain a steady flow of supplies compounded over time and the failure of Weer to react to the situation culminated in his arrest. Solomon and the majority of the command fled north, against General Blunt's orders, abandoning the Indian regiments and leading to the complete failure of the Indian Expedition. As a result of the withdrawal to the north, Confederate troops again pushed into the area causing large numbers of Unionist Indians to again flee into Kansas.

The federal command learned a valuable lesson during the campaign. The Indian Expedition moved south with the intention of occupying the area. Besides the ineffective leadership of the expedition, the inability of the army to supply these troops led to an eventual mutiny even after successfully defeating the enemy forces in the field. At the end of federal campaign, Cooper remained south of the Arkansas River and Watie retired across the border into Arkansas. Had the army prepared for the expedition and provided the necessary provisions, the Indian Expedition could have maintained their occupation. The next time federal troops entered Indian Territory, they would understand the complications of forward operations.

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<sup>159</sup> Edwards, *The Prairie Was on Fire*, 26-27. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 74.



## **Chapter 4: Into the Heart of the Rebellion: The Union Invasion of 1863**

For the first two years of the war, Confederate dominance over Indian Territory reigned supreme. Union operations in the territory had been disastrous. The year 1863 proved to be a turning point for the Civil War in Indian Territory. Union success depended on maintaining a force at Fort Gibson and securing the Texas Road as a supply route from Fort Scott, Kansas. Colonel William Weer's attempt to occupy and return refugees resulted in mutiny just a year before, causing thousands of Unionists to again seek protection in Kansas. In order to maintain a garrison at Fort Gibson, federal supply lines had to remain open. Failure to stabilize the area surrounding the post would force refugees to seek the safety of the Union fortification, adding to the burden of supplying the post. In addition, an effective occupation of the Cherokee Nation would open the door for expanding operations to Fort Smith and western Arkansas. Establishing a garrison 160 miles from their supply base posed additional problems. Overwhelming enemy troops and small raiding parties could constantly harass the federal army, threatening to end the occupation with the capture of each approaching wagon train. Increasing pressure to remove pro-Union Indian refugees back to Indian Territory would finally lead to another military expedition into the Cherokee Nation in April.

The situation in Indian Territory changed rapidly in early 1863. On 8 January Confederate Brigadier General William Steele, of Texas, took overall command of Indian Territory and assumed his position at Fort Smith, Arkansas. Colonel Douglas H. Cooper retained control of all troops in the field and worked on reorganizing the

scattered units of Indians and Texans in the southern sections of Indian Territory.<sup>160</sup> In early 1863, the Trans-Mississippi Department was unified under General E. Kirby Smith, with his headquarters at Shreveport, Louisiana. The department suffered from a lack of funds and the poor transportation system forced transportation by wagon train. During spring 1863 Union General James K. Blunt ordered Colonel William A. Phillips to start relocating Indian refugees from Neosho, Missouri, back into Indian Territory. Roughly 1,000 Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole families began the ninety-mile trip back, escorted by Phillips and 3,000 Union Troops. Upon reaching Park Hill, just south of Tahlequah in the Cherokee Nation, Phillips encamped. The second invasion of Indian Territory had commenced.<sup>161</sup> (See Map 5.)

On 3 April 1863, one federal battalion from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Regiment and one company from the 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry under Captain N.B. Lucas moved from Park Hill southeast towards Fort Smith to search the area for any signs of enemy movement. En route, Captain Lucas ventured to Fort Gibson, and easily drove the small garrison from the post. Upon his return, Lucas informed Phillips that no significant enemy units were north of a line running from the Arkansas River to Van Buren, Arkansas. Federal occupation of the post could offer Phillips' command additional protection and help create the permanent presence along the Arkansas River that General Blunt wanted to establish in the territory.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 63. and William H. Steele to Douglas H. Cooper, Letter, 8 January 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 2, 770.

<sup>161</sup> Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 65. and Willey Britton, *The Civil War on the Border, Volume II 1863-1865* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1899, Reprinted by the Kansas Heritage Press): Volume 2, 32-33. and Willey Britton, "Some Reminiscences of the Cherokee People Returning to Their Homes the Exiles of a Nation," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Volume 6, Number 2 (1928): 163-177. and Windham, "The Problems of Supply in the Trans-Mississippi Confederacy," 153.

<sup>162</sup> William A. Phillips to James G. Blunt, Letter, 12 April 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 2, 211-212. and Britton, *Civil War on the Border Volume 2, 1863-1865*, 34-35.

## Map 5: Area of Operations, 1863



Adapted from Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*

On the morning of 9 April, a refugee train, over a mile long and under the protection of Captain A.C. Smith, arrived from Neosho motivating Phillips to continue south. A guard of 300 Indian soldiers arrived with many women and children, reuniting many of the pro-Union families for the first time in over a year. Phillips marched on to Fort Gibson, reaching it on 13 April and immediately began improving the fortifications. However, there was a major disadvantage to this new location. Fort Gibson was 160 miles from the supply base at Fort Scott, Kansas. In order to maintain a permanent presence, Phillips would be responsible for the protection of the supply line south from Baxter Springs, some eighty miles.<sup>163</sup>

Rather than wait for the enemy to attack his vulnerable supply lines Phillips went on the offensive, hoping to take the war to the enemy and allow provisions to reach Fort Gibson. On 24 April, Colonel Phillips took roughly 600 mounted men from the three Indian regiments and the 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry, crossed the Arkansas River and started south to find the enemy. At daylight he found them at Webber's Falls, some twenty miles south of Fort Gibson, under Colonel Stand Watie. (See Map 5.) With total surprise, the Union troops opened fire on the enemy soldiers. A short and vigorous fight ensued killing fifteen and wounding about the same number of Confederates. The Union losses in the skirmish were reported as two killed. Caught

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<sup>163</sup> William Steele to S.S. Anderson, Letter, 10 April 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 2, 816. and William A. Phillips to M. La Rue Harrison, Letter, 12 April 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 2, 212. and Wiley Britton, *Memoirs of the Rebellion on the Border 1863* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993) reprint from original 1882 edition, 205 and 216. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 209. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border, Volume II 1863-1865*, 33-35, 39.

off guard, Watie made little effort to rally his men and the federals completely routed his troops.<sup>164</sup>

On his return from Webber's Falls, scouts informed Phillips that General William L. Cabell had advanced north from Fort Smith to the vicinity of Cane Hill, Missouri, placing 1,000 cavalry on his flank, endangering the vulnerable supply line from Fort Scott. (See Map 5.) To remove the threat Phillips dispatched 800 men and a section of Hopkins' Battery, under Lieutenant Colonel Fredrick W. Schuarte, to locate and attack the enemy. Schuarte spent the next week of marching through the mountainous area along the border of Indian Territory and Arkansas but never came within ten miles of the Cabell. Despite failing to find the enemy, the expedition did stop the Confederate threat towards Fort Gibson and its supply line. As the Union force returned to their post, Cabell moved east to occupy Fayetteville, Arkansas. General Cooper moved north from the Choctaw Nation towards Webber Falls to help expel the Union troops from Fort Gibson.<sup>165</sup>

To drive the federals from the Cherokee Nation, General Steele ordered Cooper, now promoted to Brigadier General, with his 5,000 men and three mountain howitzers, towards the general vicinity of Fort Gibson. With little delay Cooper took up a position five miles south of the fort. From this new location Cooper watched the movements of the Union troops in and around the post and forded the Arkansas and

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<sup>164</sup> Edward Butler, Letter, 3 July 1863, Edward Butler Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society, Archives Division. and William A. Phillips, Report, 26 April 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 314. and William A. Phillips, Report, 9 May 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 315. and Charles C. Reed, Report, 26 April 1863, *Supplement OR*, Volume 21, Part 2, 302. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 222.

<sup>165</sup> William A. Phillips to James G. Blunt, Letter, 9 May 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 316. and William Steele to D.H. Cooper, Letter, 24 April 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 2, 830. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 223. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 43.

Verdigris Rivers above his camp to harass approaching Union supply trains from Fort Scott.<sup>166</sup> With the increased pressure from Cooper, Phillips' position at Fort Gibson became precarious. Phillips sent urgent requests to General Blunt for reinforcements. He was aware that if Cooper and Cabell joined forces, he would be unable to hold his position at Fort Gibson.

On 19 May, General Cooper sent Watie across the Arkansas River during the night with parts of five regiments to engage the federals and capture as much Union livestock as possible.<sup>167</sup> Moving into position under the cover of darkness, Watie's men waited anxiously to begin their assault. Federal troops discovered the Confederates around 9:00 a.m., throwing the garrison into panic. As the alarm sounded, Union troops within the fort took arms and moved at the double quick into position. Many rushed to their mounts and raced forward to stop the enemy advance. They soon came within sight of the Confederates, mostly Choctaw and Chickasaw, formed for battle in the timber.<sup>168</sup> A sharp skirmish took place, forcing the federal soldiers to retreat. Phillips set out to the east with two battalions of Indian infantry and a section of Hopkins' battery. Locating the enemy position, the federal artillery opened fire while the cavalry advanced on the left breaking the Confederate line. The Union horsemen pursued them some fifteen miles down the Arkansas River towards Webber's Falls.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 227.

<sup>167</sup> David Mefford, Report, 30 May 1863, *Supplement OR*, Volume 21, Part 2, 308. and William A. Phillips, Report, 30 May 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 2, 338. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 230.

<sup>168</sup> James Bell, Letter, 25 May 1863, E.E. Dale Collection, Box 112, F10, University of Oklahoma, Western History Collection. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 231.

<sup>169</sup> Leslie Demorse, Report, 20 May 1863, *Supplement OR*, Volume 68, 242. and William A. Phillips, Report, 20 May 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 337-38. and Bell Letter, 25 May 1863.

Cooper responded to the retreat and ordered three artillery pieces, supported by infantry, to a position three miles south of Fort Gibson. Within minutes Confederate shells began to fall upon a Union picket station on the Arkansas River. Cooper intended to attract Phillips' attention and force him to recall the troops chasing Choctaws and Chickasaws. Rather than recall the cavalry, Phillips took his infantry and a section of Hopkins' Battery to the river bank opposite the Confederates and made contact, allowing the riders to continue the pursuit south. The Union guns opened fire upon the Cooper's men with shot and shell, compelling them to retire. Following the assault, the garrison returned to its daily operations.<sup>170</sup>

With a supply train approaching, Phillips took about 500 men and a section of Hopkins' Battery from Fort Gibson and marched to Rabbit Ford on the Arkansas River on 24 May in an attempt to hold Confederate troops while his supplies came in. His men located the enemy at the ford and immediately opened fire on the Confederates. In an attempt to engage the enemy troops, Phillips' column feigned a crossing, hoping to remove some of the danger of a concentrated Confederate attack on the wagon train en route with desperately needed supplies and munitions. Cooper's men responded, however, after the brief engagement Phillips' troops retired from the field without fording the river. Following the Union withdrawal, Cooper hurriedly moved back into position to intercept the supply train.<sup>171</sup>

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and Britton, *Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 81-83. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 233.

<sup>170</sup> William A. Phillips, Report, 20 May 1863. and Bell Letter, 25 May 1863. and David Mefford, Report, 30 May 1863. and Leslie DeMorse, Report, 20 May 1863. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 81-84, and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 233.

<sup>171</sup> William A. Phillips, Report, 20 May 1863. and Leslie Demorse, Report, 30 May 1863, Supplement *OR*, Volume 68, 242. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 83-84. Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 237.

Once Phillips returned from Rabbit Ford, he ordered all of his available cavalry to meet and reinforce the approaching supply train while the remaining troops moved within the protection of the post's fortifications. The reinforcements reached the approaching column about nine miles from Fort Gibson on the Texas Road, bringing the escort to nearly 1,000 men. To prevent attack, the column moved under the cover of darkness until about an hour before daybreak. Upon reaching the timber along the Grand River, about five miles north of the fort, skirmishers discovered the Confederate troops advancing. Within minutes, firing erupted as the Confederates moved to take the wagons full of supplies. The Union troops determined to move forward under fire and the train during the entire action. With musket fire erupting from both sides the teamsters continued to push their teams, resulting in a running fight. The supply train arrived at Fort Gibson shortly after sunrise on 25 May without the loss of a single wagon. After a four day rest, Phillips took advantage of high water in the Arkansas River caused by recent storms and ordered Major Foreman to escort the unloaded wagons north to Baxter Springs. Again Phillips sent an urgent request for reinforcements to General Blunt.<sup>172</sup> Though federal troops repulsed the attack, Phillips his men required each train arrive successfully to maintain his position.

The failure of Cooper to capture the wagon train may have been a disappointment, but it did not diminish his efforts to harass the Union forces at Fort Gibson for long. Cooper understood the capture or destruction of a supply train

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<sup>172</sup> Edward Butler, Letter, 28 May 1863, Edward Butler Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society, Archives Division. and Mamie Yearly, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865*, (Dallas Texas, No Publisher, 1912), 351-352. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 53 and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 85. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 238-40.



would force Phillips to withdraw from Fort Gibson immediately. To maintain pressure on the Union forces, Cooper ordered Watie to make a raid through the Cherokee Nation to gather supplies and engage the federals as best he could. Watie's raid served another purpose, intimidating Unionists around Fort Gibson would force them to seek protection at the post, straining the quartermaster stores and increasing the federal dependence on each train's arrival. Watie and his men would operate on the Union flank until the next supply train was en route. Cooper intended for Watie to reinforce the troops he would send up the Grand River to intercept the next Union train.<sup>173</sup>

Watie's movement did not go unnoticed by the federals for long. Phillips ordered Major Foreman to return down the east side of the Grand River and strike at Watie's marauding troops. Upon making contact, Foreman pursued Watie from near Spavina Creek through Tahlequah and Park Hill to the Arkansas River, forcing him to withdraw. (See Map 5.) When early reports of Watie's retreat reached Phillips, he sent Colonel Stephen Wattles with about 400 men and a detachment of Hopkins' Battery from Fort Gibson to join Forman. However, by the time the troops reacted, Major Foreman had given up the pursuit. Recalled after marching only fifteen miles, Wattles returned the Fort Gibson. After a four-day rest, Foreman received orders to move north and escort the next supply train from Baxter Springs.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> William Steele to Douglas H. Cooper, Letter, 24 May 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 2, 847-848. and Douglas H. Cooper to William Steele, Letter, 2 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 2, 902. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume 2, 1863-1865*, 88. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 249.

<sup>174</sup> William A. Phillips, Report, 20 June 1863, *OR*, Volume 22, Part 1, 348-350. and Charles J. Stewart, Report, 30 June 1863, *Supplement OR*, Volume 73, part 2, 548-549. and Charles C. Reed, Report, 30 June 1863, *Supplement OR*, Volume 73, part 2, 530. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 95. and Britton, *Memoirs of the Rebellion on the Border, 1863*, 294. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 54 and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 250-

Colonel Phillips was aware of the danger of his situation. He clamored for reinforcements and additional supplies knowing Cooper had at least three regiments of Texans and five Indian regiments under his command ready to attack the Union forces.<sup>175</sup> In response to Phillips' plea for reinforcements, General Blunt ordered additional troops south with a large wagon train in late June 1863. The reinforcements consisted of six companies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Colorado Infantry, one company of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Cavalry, the 9<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry, and one section of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas Artillery. Upon reaching Baxter Springs, the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry under Colonel James M. Williams joined the supply train.<sup>176</sup> Through scouts, Phillips learned that General Cabell's army would soon join Cooper's men in an attack on the supply train north of Fort Gibson. If the Confederate forces managed to unite, their overwhelming numbers could easily capture the wagons train en route. On 20 June, Phillips sent Foreman and 600 men from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Regiments to help escort the train in safety. The two columns met north of Cabin Creek on 28 June. Colonel Williams took overall command of the force and placed Foreman in front of the column to scout the area ahead.<sup>177</sup> High water from heavy rains slowed the train as it crossed the Neosho River delaying its advance for three days. To avoid a surprise attack, Major Foreman

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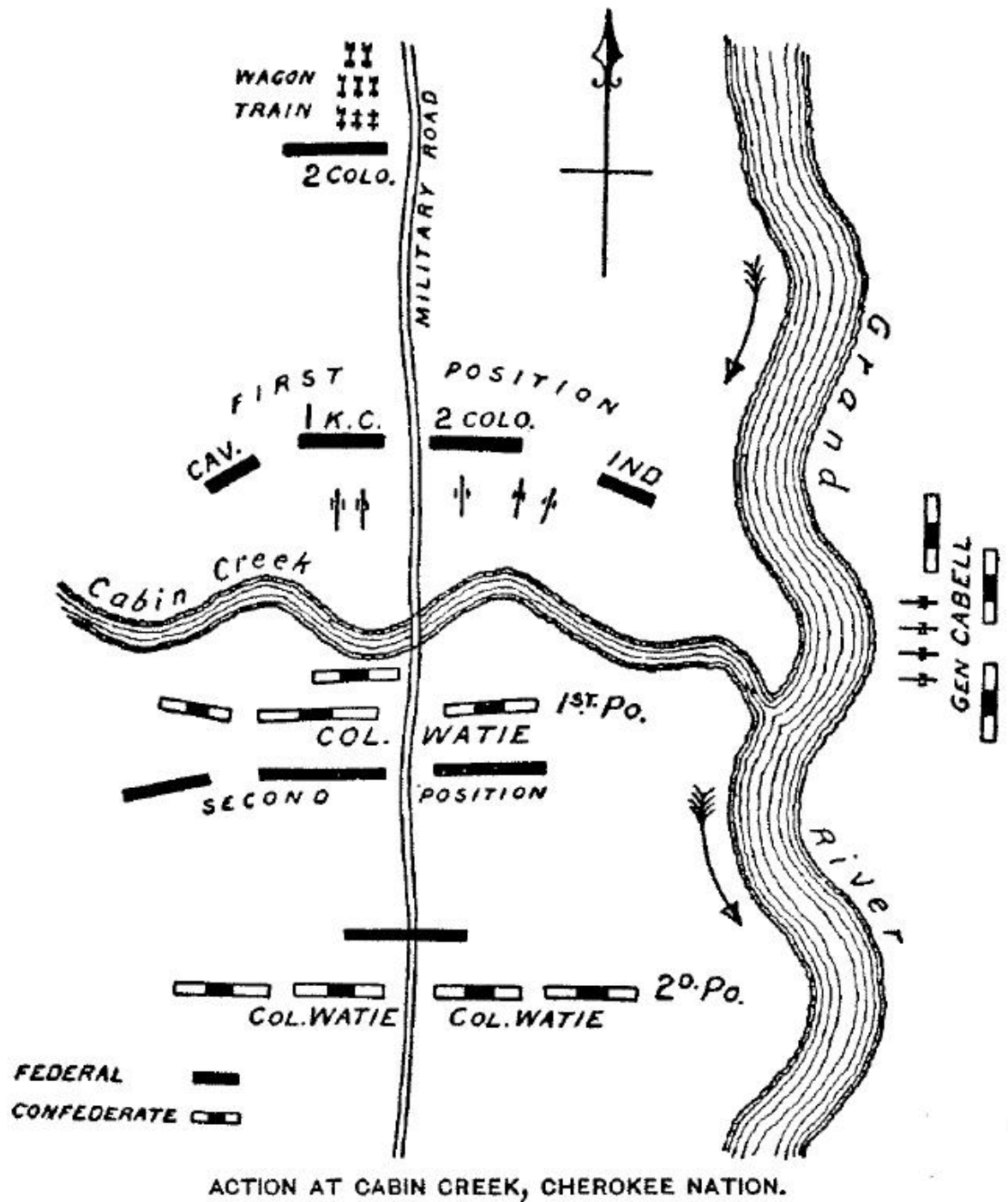
252. and Moore, *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, with Document, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc.*, vol. 7, 179-180. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 251.

<sup>175</sup> Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 246.

<sup>176</sup> Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 99.

<sup>177</sup> James M. Williams, Report, July 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 378-382. and William Steele to W.B. Blaire, Letter, 1 July 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 2, 902. and William Steele to D.H. Cooper, Letter, 2 July 1862, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 2, 902. and William Steele to W.B. Blaire, Letter, 3 July 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 903. and W.S. Burke, *Official Military History of Kansas Regiments During the War for the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, (Leavenworth: Kansas Heritage Press, no date), 410-411. and Moore, *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, with Document, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc.*, vol. 7, 179. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 257-258.

# Map 6: Battle of Cabin Creek



From Wiley Britton's, *The Civil War on the Border* Volume 2, 1863-1865.

detached Lieutenant Luke F. Parsons and twenty Cherokees to scout ahead of the column. After traveling just four miles, Parson's troops came upon thirty of Watie's men. In a brisk skirmish, the Union soldiers killed four and took three prisoners.<sup>178</sup> Through interrogation of the captives, Williams learned that Watie fielded 1,600 men at Cabin Creek and Cooper deployed another large contingent up the east side of the Grand River to be joined by Cabell and his 1,500 white troops with three pieces of artillery.<sup>179</sup> Following the skirmish, Watie's pickets returned and informed him of the wagon's approach. Watie knew William's supply train had to cross Cabin Creek at a particular ford. His troops began preparing for the upcoming fight by digging a line of rifle pits along south side of Cabin Creek and covering them with willow branches to hide them from the approaching enemy. Cabell arrived on the east side of the Grand River, but could not cross because of high water.<sup>180</sup> (See Map 6.)

On 1 July, the federal supply train reached the heights overlooking Cabin Creek. Heavy rains plagued their march and slowed their progress as the Texas Road turned into a muddy bog. The delay allowed Colonel Williams the chance to plan his strategy for the impending with Watie's troops. Williams ordered the supply train corralled in the open prairie a mile north of the crossing at Cabin Creek while Major Foreman, supported by the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry and several pieces of artillery, went out in a skirmish line to determine the position of the enemy. Upon initial

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<sup>178</sup> John A. Foreman, Report, 5 July 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 382. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 259.

<sup>179</sup> James M. Williams, Report, 7 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 1, 377-378. and John A. Foreman, Report, 5 July 1863. and William A. Phillips, Report, 7 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 1, 378-380.

<sup>180</sup> James M. Williams, Report, 7 July 1863. and John A. Foreman, Report, 5 July 1863. and William A. Phillips, Report, 7 July 1863. and Britton, *Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 95. and Stand Watie, Letter, no date, Jay L. Hargett Collection, Box H-57, University of Oklahoma, Western History Collection. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 259-260.

contact, Foreman found the enemy occupying a strong position along the south bank of the creek; however, the stream was swollen by recent heavy rain. Unable to cross, the Union troops encamped for the night and anxiously waited for the water to fall.<sup>181</sup> During the evening, Williams consulted with Lieutenant Colonel Theodore H. Dodd and Foreman. Fearing Cabell would soon reinforce Watie, they decided to cross the creek the next morning under the cover of artillery. The federal commanders counted on the water level dropping just enough to allow troops to cross. Delaying the move any longer could endanger the entire operation in Indian Territory by denying the federal garrison at Fort Gibson desperately needed provisions. Dodd posted pickets to guard the train and watch the enemy to prevent a surprise attack during the night.<sup>182</sup>

It was already beginning to heat up on the morning of 2 July as the Union command prepared to take the offensive. Colonel Williams ordered the artillery into position for the engagement. Lieutenant A. Wilson took a section of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas Battery and placed it on the extreme left of the Union line in an elevated position overlooking the field while Lieutenant Jule C. Cayot took one mountain howitzer and moved into position on the right of the line. Captain A.J. Armstrong moved his guns into the Union center, just 200 yards from the enemy.<sup>183</sup> Once in position, the artillery opened fire with shell and canister hoping to soften up the enemy before the

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<sup>181</sup> Britton, *Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 96. and Burke, *The Official Military History of Kansas Regiments During the War for the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, 411. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 259-260.

<sup>182</sup> John A. Foreman, Report, 5 July 1863. and James M. Williams, Report, 7 July 1863.

<sup>183</sup> Benjamin F. Van Horn, Report, 3 July 1863, Benjamin F. Van Horn Collection, Manuscripts Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. and U.S. War Department, Company Returns, Indian Home Guard, August 1863, Roll IAD-5, Special Microfilm Collection, Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society. and Moore, *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, with Document, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc.*, vol. 7, 179-180. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 262.

advance.<sup>184</sup> It would later become apparent that the Union guns were firing over the heads of the Confederates in the rifle pits. After a barrage of more than half an hour, Major Foreman, assigned to command the attack, moved forward. Foreman's initial assault included a mounted company of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Home Guard, the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Colorado Infantry, and three companies of the 9<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry.<sup>185</sup>

Once the Union advance reached the opposite bank of the creek, the Confederates rose up from the rifle pits and fired a heavy volley into the blue clad soldiers, wounding Foreman and others. The federals failed to see the hidden entrenchments, so the sudden fire from the concealed enemy caused some confusion in the advance. Almost immediately, the Union soldiers fell back. The 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry began to fire their muskets from a ridge on the north bank directly into the Confederates, driving them from their trenches. Colonel Williams seized the opportunity and pushed forward, moving three companies to the bank of the creek as his artillery again fired upon the Confederates.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> John A. Foreman, Report, 5 July 1863. and Benjamin F. Van Horn, Report, 3 July 1863. and James McCombs, Report, no date, Section X Biographies, Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. and Stand Watie, Letter, no date, Jay L. Hargett Collection, Box H-57, University Oklahoma, and Western History Collection. and U.S. War Department, Company Returns, Indian Home Guard, August 1863, Special Microfilm Collections, Roll IAD-5, Oklahoma Historical Society, Archives Division. and Britton, *Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 97.

<sup>185</sup> U.S. War Department, Company Returns, Indian Home Guard, August 1863, Special Microfilm Collections, Roll IAD-5, Oklahoma Historical Society, Archives Division. and Britton, *Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 97. and John A. Foreman, Report, 5 July 1863. and Watie Letter, no date, Hargett Collection.

<sup>186</sup> John A. Foreman, Report, 5 July 1863. and Watie Letter, no date. and James M. Williams, Report, 7 July 1863. and Benjamin F. Van Horn, Report, 3 July 1863. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 99. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 100. and Moore, *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, with Document, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc.*, vol. 7, 179-180. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 263-265. and U.S. War Department, Company Returns, Indian Home Guard, August 1863, Special Microfilm Collections, Roll IAD-5, Oklahoma Historical Society, Archives Division.

Williams ordered a company of the 9<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry, under Lieutenant R.C. Philbrick, to take the place of the Indian company in the advance. Philbrick pushed forward under the cover of the artillery and secured a footing on the south side of the creek. Once across, his men continued to draw heavy small arms fire. Responding to Philbrick's initial success, Williams advanced through the creek to aid the Kansans and formed a line of battle in front of the enemy. A strong Union line developed and drove the Confederates from the brush, but they reformed and rallied on the edge of the prairie about a quarter mile away.<sup>187</sup> As the Confederate established a new line of battle, Williams ordered Captain Stewart and two companies of cavalry to the right to keep the enemy from flanking his position. Philbrick again pressed forward, breaking the Confederate center. Once the Confederate line collapsed, Williams ordered Stewart and all of the available cavalry to while pursuing the retreating Confederates. The mounted soldiers dispersed their foe throughout the brush and creeks preventing Watie from rallying his troops. Williams believed it ill advised to leave the train poorly defended and pursue the enemy for too great a distance so he called back cavalry as the train moved out towards Fort Gibson.<sup>188</sup>

The federals reported three men killed and thirty wounded. Williams reported Confederate losses as about fifty killed and nine taken prisoner. The Union supply

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<sup>187</sup> James M. Williams, Report, 7 July 1863. and John A. Foreman, Report, 5 July 1863. and Watie Letter, no date. and Benjamin F. Van Horn, Report, 3 July 1863. and Jams McCombs, Report, and no date. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 99. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 100. and Moore, *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, with Document, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc.*, vol. 7, 179-180. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 263-265.

<sup>187</sup> James M. Williams, Report, 7 July 1863. and Foreman Report, 5 July 1863. and Watie Letter, no date. and Benjamin F. Van Horn, Report, 3 July 1863. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume 2, 1863-1865*, 98-99. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 263-265. and Moore, *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, with Document, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc.*, vol. 7, 179-180.

<sup>188</sup> James M. Williams, Report, 7 July 1863.

train reached Fort Gibson without further Confederate harassment. Watie and his troops retired towards Honey Springs Depot. Having failed to reinforce Watie because of high water on the Grand River, General Cabell moved back towards Fort Smith.<sup>189</sup>

The attempt of the rebels to take the train at Cabin Creek and the large build up of Confederate forces at Honey Springs Depot prompted General Blunt to take to the field from Fort Scott with additional cavalry and artillery.<sup>190</sup> Additional troops would allow for active campaigning against the Confederate forces operating around Fort Gibson. By taking the fight to the enemy, Blunt could secure the supply line from Fort Scott to Fort Gibson and deliver a decisive blow to Cooper.

The 600 Union reinforcements brought the total force at Fort Gibson to just over 3,000 men.<sup>191</sup> When Cooper received news of the defeat at Cabin Creek and Blunt's arrival at Fort Gibson, he dispatched a runner to General Cabell asking him to return to Honey Springs as soon as possible in order to make a combined attack on the Union forces. The Confederate general still believed a successful strike at the Union forces would drive them from the territory. Cooper posted strong pickets at all of the fords on the Arkansas River with instructions to slow any enemy advance and alert him to any Union troop movement. The 6,000 Confederates at Honey Springs

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<sup>189</sup> James M. Williams Report, July 7 1863. and Stand Watie, Letter, and no date. and William Steele to W.B. Blair, Letter, 5 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 2, 905.

<sup>190</sup> Blunt would bring reinforcements with him consisting of a battalion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry, commanded by Colonel William R. Judson, two twelve pound howitzers, a battalion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Cavalry, commanded by Captain E.R. Stevens, and two sections of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas Battery, commanded by Captain Edward A. Smith.

<sup>191</sup> Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 77. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 268.



prepared to march on Fort Gibson, waiting on the arrival of Cabell and his 3,000 additional troops and artillery from Arkansas before they moved out.<sup>192</sup>

After a forced march from Fort Scott, Blunt and his men reached Fort Gibson on 11 July.<sup>193</sup> Upon his arrival, Blunt received information of the proposed assault on Fort Gibson by the Confederates. He determined to strike Cooper at Honey Springs Depot before Cabell could arrive to reinforce him.<sup>194</sup> Due to unseasonably heavy rainfall, the Arkansas River was not fordable below the mouth of the Verdigris River. As a result, Blunt ordered his men begin construction of boats to transport them across the swollen river. At midnight on 15 July, Blunt rode out of Fort Gibson with 250 men from the 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Calvary and four pieces of light artillery, marched up the Arkansas River about thirteen miles, forded it, and then returned down the south bank. Confederate pickets downstream, near the mouth of the Grand River, noticed the federal troop's movement and returned to Cooper's headquarters at Honey Springs warning him of the Union advance.<sup>195</sup>

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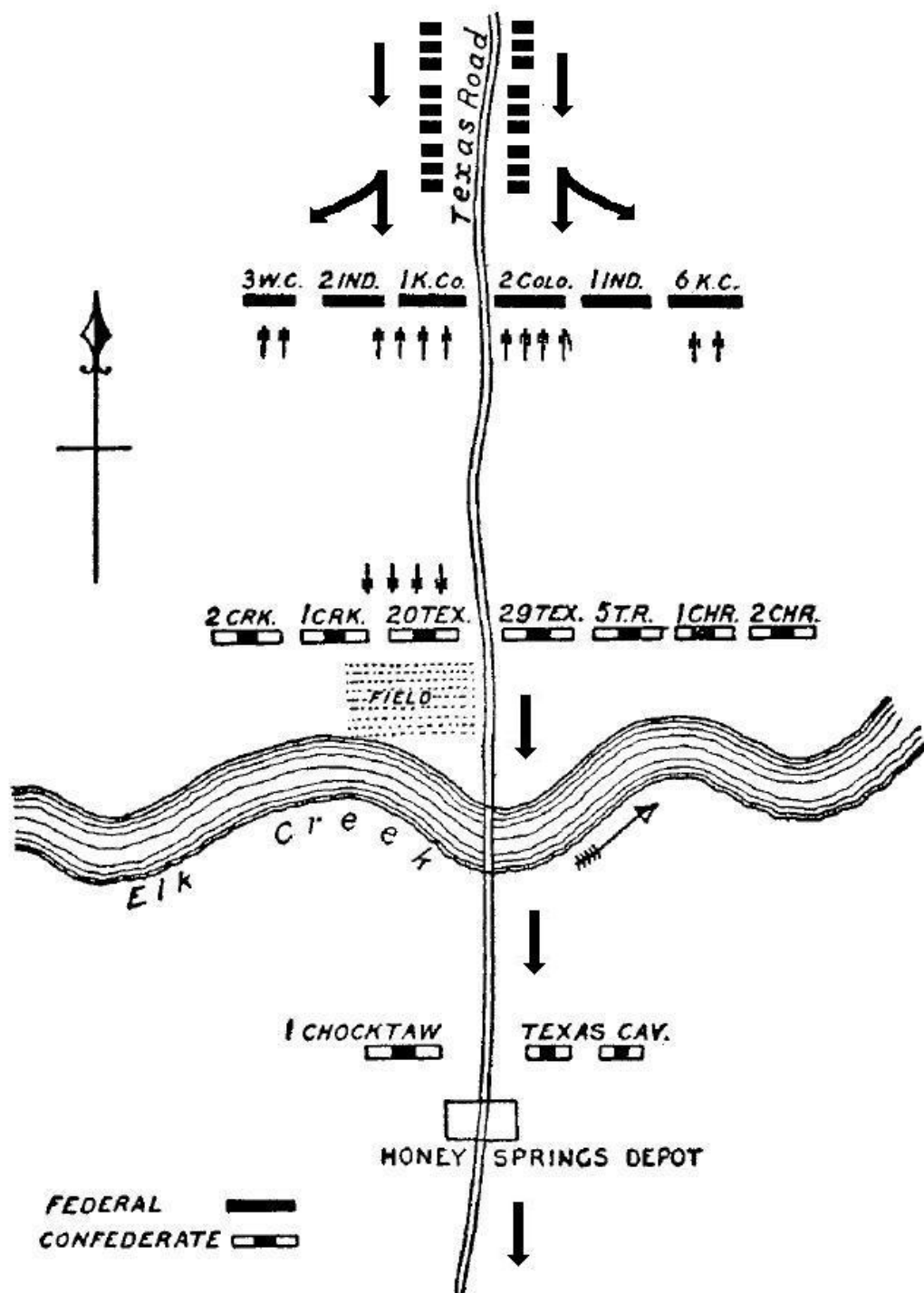
<sup>192</sup> William Steele to W.B. Blair, Letter, 5 July 1863. and William Steele to Douglas H. Cooper, Letter, 5 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 2, 906. and William Steele to W.R. Boggs, Letter, 7 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 2, 909-911. and William Steele to Douglas H. Cooper, Letter, 8 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 2, 911-912. and B.G. Duval to William L. Cabell, Letter, 10 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 2, 916-917. and William Steele to William L. Cabell, Letter, 10 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 2, 917. and William Steele to S.P. Bankhead, Letter, 11 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 2, 921-922. and Edwards, *The Prairie Was on Fire*, 61. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 115.

<sup>193</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 26 July 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 447. and Burke, *The Official Military History of Kansas Regiments During the War for the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, 412.

<sup>194</sup> Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 77. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 115.

<sup>195</sup> Blunt Report, 26 July 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 447-448. and Frederick W. Schuarte, Report 20 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 1, 451-452. and William T. Campbell, Report, 19 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 1, 452-453. and Edward A. Smith, Report, 19 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 1, 454. and Henry Hopkins, Report, 21 July 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 1, 456-457.

# Map 7: The Battle of Honey Springs



From Willey Britton's, *The Civil War on the Border Volume 2, 1863-1865.*

The remainder of Blunt's men crossed the rain swollen Arkansas River at the mouth of the Grand by flat boat on the evening of the 16 July, and by 10:00 p.m., the federal army moved south down the Texas Road with just under 3,000 men and 12 artillery pieces.<sup>196</sup> General Blunt organized his troops into two brigades. The first brigade, commanded by Colonel William R. Judson, consisted of the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Home Guard, a battalion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin with two howitzers, and four guns from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas Battery. The second brigade, under the command of Colonel Phillips, comprised of six companies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Colorado Infantry, the 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Home Guard, and Hopkins' Kansas Battery with four artillery pieces.<sup>197</sup>

Around daylight, the federal vanguard under Captain William Gordon came upon a force of Confederates, near Chimney Mountain, and formed to attack them. Gordon's party quickly engaged their foe, but superior numbers forced the Union troops back until reinforcements could be brought up and the action continued. (See Map 5.) As Blunt's column approached, the federal forces reengaged the Confederates driving them from their position with cavalry. The routed men fell back to the safety their main line, allowing Cooper to deploy for battle and to stop the Union advance.<sup>198</sup> This skirmish near Chimney Mountain took place during a rain shower and at some point in the scuffle the Confederates realized that some of their

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<sup>196</sup> Blunt, Report, 26 July 1863. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 77. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 116.

<sup>197</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 26 July 1863. and Frederick W. Schuarte, Report, 20 July 1863. and William T. Campbell, Report, 19 July 1863. and Edward A. Smith, Report, 19 July 1863. and Henry Hopkins, Report, 21 July 1863. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 116. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 273.

<sup>198</sup> W.T. Campbell, Report, 19 July 1863. and Blunt Report, 26 July 1863, 447. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 275.

gunpowder imported and brought in through Matamoros, Mexico, absorbed moisture, causing their weapons to misfire.<sup>199</sup>

Moving ahead, the federal force discovered the Confederates positioned in the timber north of Elk Creek. To get a better idea of Cooper's position, Blunt and some of his staff rode forward with one company of the 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry deployed as skirmishers and examined the Confederate line. The enemy front extended for one and a half miles with their center on the Texas Road.<sup>200</sup> After the inspection, Blunt rode back to the column. The Union troops had marched all night, and during the next two hours the soldiers took a much needed break and ate from their haversacks. Many of the soldiers to filled their canteens in depressions, full of muddy water from the recent rain showers.<sup>201</sup>

Around 10:00 a.m., General Blunt formed his men into two columns and moved forward in a column of companies to conceal his troop strength. A quarter mile of the Confederate position the federal soldiers deployed to the left and right of the road and within minutes, the Union force was in a line of battle covering the entire Confederate front.<sup>202</sup> Wishing to have white troops on the extreme flanks, Blunt placed the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored in the center of the Union line next to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Colorado. The 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Home Guard and the 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry comprised the left flank and the right flank was made up with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Home Guard and the 3<sup>rd</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 26 July 1863. and Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 12 August 1863, OR, ser. 1, vol. 22, part 1, 458. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 117. and Windham, "The Problem of Supply in the Trans-Mississippi Confederacy," 166.

<sup>200</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 26 July 1863, 447. and William T. Campbell, Report, 19 July 1863.

<sup>201</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 26 July 1863, and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 117. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 275.

<sup>202</sup> Fredrick W. Schaurte, Report, 20 July, 1863. and Blunt Report, 26 July 1863. and Edward A. Smith, Report, 19 July 1863.

Wisconsin Cavalry. The artillery under Captains Smith and Hopkins formed their batteries in the center of the federal front.<sup>203</sup> (See Map 6.)

The Confederates under General Cooper formed on both sides of the Texas Road in heavy timber along Elk Creek. The 20<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry, dismounted, and the 5<sup>th</sup> Texas Partisan Rangers formed the center. Cooper's right wing was composed of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Cherokee Regiments and his left the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Creek Regiments. The Choctaw and Chickasaw Regiment and two squadrons of Texas cavalry provided Cooper a reserve. These troops remained near Cooper's headquarters, two miles to the rear of the main battle line. The artillery formed in the front of the 20<sup>th</sup> Texas.<sup>204</sup> (See Map. 6)

General Blunt's soldiers advanced across the prairie until the Confederate artillery opened fire. Within seconds, the Union guns replied as the enemy cannon revealed their positions. For more than an hour, the artillery crews fired at each other without inflicting significant damage. The troops on both sides hunkered down and awaited the inevitable order to advance. While outnumbered two-to-one in men, Blunt's batteries severely out gunned the Confederate units. Cooper fielded three twelve-pound mountain howitzers and one experimental twelve pound bronze piece. The Federal artillery consisted of twelve field pieces; six of these were large twelve pound Napoleons, two iron six-pound guns, and four mountain howitzers. During the opening minutes of the engagement the Confederate guns concentrated their fire on

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<sup>203</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 26 July 1863. and John Bowles, Report, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 449450. and Frederick W. Schaurte, Report, 20 July 1863. and William T. Campbell, Report, 19 July 1863. and J. Nelson Smith, Report, 19 July 1863. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 79. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 118-119. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 276-278.

<sup>204</sup> Thorton B. Heisten, General Order No.25, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 22, part 1, 461-462. and Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 12 August 1863, 457-461. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 119 and Britton, *The Union Indian brigade in the Civil War*, 278.

the Union battery supported by the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry removing one Napoleon from action. The federal cannon fired upon the enemy with shot, canister, and shell, in turn dismounting an enemy gun. One shot from the experimental piece burst among the Union officers killing one of Blunt's aides.<sup>205</sup>

As soon as the artillery fell silent, the soldiers moved into action. General Blunt's cavalry on the right and left of the line dismounted to fight as infantry and moved forward to open fire on the Confederates in the timber. Cooper attempted to flank the Union line on the left so the 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry met, and repulsed them.<sup>206</sup> The Federal infantry moved forward within forty or fifty yards of the Confederate line hiding in the scrub brush along the creek. Blunt ordered Colonel Williams and the colored infantry to capture the four-gun artillery battery supporting the 20<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry Regiments, if feasible.<sup>207</sup>

Williams moved his men, with bayonets fixed and muskets loaded with buck and ball, to within forty paces of the Confederates and fired a devastating volley into their line. At the same time Colonel Charles DeMorse of the 29<sup>th</sup> Texas gave the order to fire. Williams fell wounded in the chest and face.<sup>208</sup> Both sides kept firing for some time while the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas loaded and shot from a prone position for

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<sup>205</sup> E.A. Smith, Report, 19 July 1863. and Henry Hopkins, Report, 21 July 1863. and James G. Blunt, Report, 26 July 1863. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 118-119.

<sup>206</sup> Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 120. and W.T. Campbell Report, 19 July 1873, 452-453

<sup>207</sup> John Bowles, Report, 20 July 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 450. and James M. Williams, Report, 30 July 1863, James M. Williams Collection, Military History Collection, Manuscript Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>208</sup> John Bowles, Report, 20 July 1863. and James M. Williams, Report, 30 July 1863. and Burke, *The Official Military History of Kansas Regiments During the War for the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, 412. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 279.

concealment. Lieutenant Colonel John Bowles assumed command of the colored regiment.<sup>209</sup>

Bowles was on the regiment's right when he noticed some of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Home Guard moving between the Union and Confederate lines. He immediately ordered the Indians to fall back.<sup>210</sup> The commander of the 29<sup>th</sup> Texas heard the instructions and mistook it for an order for the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas to retreat. Colonel DeMorse brought the Texas regiments up to within twenty-five yards of the colored regiment hoping to take advantage of their withdrawal. Just as the Texans came into line, the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas fired a volley into them killing and wounding a number of men including their color-bearer. The remainder fell back in quick haste.<sup>211</sup>

While the Colored infantry fired at the enemy, three companies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Colorado Infantry on the Union left came close to being cut off and captured. As the soldiers advanced through the brush and timber these three companies ventured as much as twenty paces in front of the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry and came upon an impassible gully. The troops filed to the left to come into line. A group of Confederates hidden down in the ditch rose up between them and the Union line cutting them off. In an effort to prevent disaster, Bowles ordered the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry to the oblique, marched to within fifty yards of the enemy and fired into them. Only a few yards from the Confederates, the men from the Colorado

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<sup>209</sup> John Bowles, Report, 20 July 1863. and James M. Williams, Report, 30 July 1863. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 279.

<sup>210</sup> John Bowles, Report, 20 July 1863.

<sup>211</sup> Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 102.

companies soon realized their situation and fired upon the enemy killing and wounding many of the soldiers.<sup>212</sup>

At the same time, on the left of the Union line, the 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Home Guard and the 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry entered the timber. They quickly forced the Indians and Texans under Watie across Elk Creek at a lower ford.<sup>213</sup> With the Confederate line crumbling, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Cavalry dismounted on the right of the Federal line to flank the enemy. They engaged the two Creek regiments and with the assistance of howitzers, forced the Confederate left to break upon their center.<sup>214</sup> At this point, General Cooper realized that he could no longer hold his position on the north side of Elk Creek and ordered his men and artillery to move south. An effort was made to defend the bridge crossing the creek, but the troops failed to make a stand as the federal infantry flooded into the area. With the help of Hopkins' Battery, the Union soldiers drove them from the vicinity.<sup>215</sup> Blunt's men continued to push the Confederate forces for three miles into the prairie towards Honey Springs Depot.<sup>216</sup>

As the Union troops advanced, the Confederate troops set fire to all buildings and supplies at the Honey Springs Depot.<sup>217</sup> One of the commissary buildings was captured before it could burn. The 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry inspected about 400

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<sup>212</sup> John Bowles, Report, 20 July 1863. and Stephen H. Wattles, Report, 19 July 1863. and Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 12 August 1863. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 121. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 102.

<sup>213</sup> William T. Campbell, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kansas*, Volume 1, (Kansas State Printing Office, 1896), 85-86. and William T. Campbell, Report, 19 July 1863. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 121-22. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 280-282.

<sup>214</sup> E.R. Stevens, Report, 19 July 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 453.

<sup>215</sup> Henry Hopkins, Report, 21 July 1863. and Stephen H. Wattles, Report, 18 July 1863. and James M. Williams, Report, 30 July 1863. and Frederick W. Schuarte, Report, 20 July 1863.

<sup>216</sup> John Gibson, Letter, no date, Grant Forman Collection, Box 11, Folder 2, Thomas Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

<sup>217</sup> W.K. Makesmon, Letter, 19 November 1910, Joseph B. Thoburn Collection, Box 9, Oklahoma Historical Society, Archives Division. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 282.



pair of handcuffs in one of the buildings. David Griffith, a black slave who waited on Confederate Major J.A. Carrol, later stated he “frequently heard the southern officers say that the handcuffs were brought up there to be put on colored soldiers they expected to capture.” He also said he “frequently heard the southern officers talking with each other say that they did not believe colored soldiers would fight and that all the southern troops would have to do was march up to the colored men and take them.”<sup>218</sup>

By 2:00 p.m. the battle was over. General Blunt’s men went into camp on the battlefield, collecting and burying the dead through the next evening. General Cooper and his defeated army moved east and linked up with General Cabell and his 3,000 soldiers on the march to reinforce him at about 4:00 p.m.<sup>219</sup> Blunt reported Union losses as seventeen men killed, sixty wounded, and that one hundred and fifty Confederates were buried on the field. The federals also took seventy-seven prisoners, one artillery piece, one stand of colors, and two hundred stands of arms.<sup>220</sup> Cooper reported his losses at one hundred thirty four killed and wounded and forty-seven Federals captured. Even with Cabell’s additional troops, Cooper’s demoralized soldiers could not return to active fighting. The combined force retired below the Canadian River and camped.<sup>221</sup>

General Blunt returned to Fort Gibson with more than a decisive victory; he successfully destroyed one of the Confederate’s advance supply depots just twenty miles from the Union base of operations. The boost to the federal morale was

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<sup>218</sup> Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 123. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 282-283.

<sup>219</sup> Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 12 August 1863, 460.

<sup>220</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 26 July 1863, 448.

<sup>221</sup> Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 12 August 1863, 460.

astounding. With Confederate troops moving south, the federals could easily bring supplies south, boosting the garrison's quartermaster stores. The loss of Honey Springs Depot forced Confederate soldiers to rely on the depots at Perryville and Skullyville for operations. The battle also placed the Confederates on the defensive and helped to secure the supply line from Fort Gibson to Fort Scott, allowing wagons full of supplies to move south.

Hearing of the General Cooper's defeat, General Steele immediately took to the field to take command of the Confederate forces within Indian Territory. On 22 July, Steele ordered Cooper and Cabell to advance above the Canadian to Prairie Springs, just fifteen miles southeast of Fort Gibson. General S. P. Bankhead was on his way north with an additional brigade of Texans. Steele intended the combined force stop additional federal supplies and reinforcements from reaching Fort Gibson. However, General Bankhead failed to arrive and Cooper and Cabell's armies disintegrated before their eyes as men deserted. During a single night, Cabell lost as many as 200 troops. General Steele again retreated to the south side of the Canadian and the safety of North Fork Town.<sup>222</sup> (See Map 5.)

General Blunt noticed the troop movement and decided to act. With the recent victory on his side, he wanted to move from Fort Gibson in search of his foe. On 21 August, Colonel William F. Cloud arrived at Fort Gibson with an additional 1,500 troops from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas Cavalry, bringing Blunt's force to more than 4,500. Blunt took his entire force, the largest the federal army would field in the Indian Territory for the duration of the war, south to defeat the Steele and the concentrating forces of Cooper, Cabell, and Watie. The army traveled sixty miles over the next

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<sup>222</sup> Britton, *Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 125.

two days and came within sight of the camp, only to find it abandoned. To Blunt's disappointment, Steele had divided his forces. Steele and Cooper proceeded south towards the supply depot at Perryville, Choctaw Nation, while General Cabell marched towards Fort Smith, and Colonel Chilly McIntosh and his Creeks moved west towards the headwaters of the Canadian.<sup>223</sup> (See Map 5.)

While still in the field, scouts advised General Blunt that Watie, Cooper, and Steele encamped about twenty-five miles south on the Texas Road with 5,000 men. Without delay, Blunt moved his army out at 3:00 a.m., placing cavalry and light artillery in the advance. After seven hours of continuous marching, the advance guard came across parts of Steele's rear and fired on a company of Choctaws. In the brief skirmish, the federal troops killed four and took their captain prisoner. From him, Blunt learned this company of Choctaws had just arrived in the field, part of an additional 800 man contingent. Throughout the remainder of the day, Blunt sought the main body of the Confederate force. When contact was made with any of Steele's troops, the Union cavalry would ride forward to attack the enemy, and eliminate it. Around 8:00 p.m., the federal troops approached the outskirts of Perryville. Advance skirmishers slowly made their way towards the town's structures, hidden by timber. Suddenly from the darkness two Confederate howitzers fired canister shot, wounding four of Blunt's troopers.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> William Steele, Report, 28 August 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 599-600. and James G. Blunt, Report, 27 August 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 597. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 83. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 73. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 32. and William F. Cloud, Report, 8 September 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 598-599. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 149-153.

<sup>224</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 27 August 1863. and William F. Cloud, Report, 27 August 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 598. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 153. and Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 28 August 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 599-600. and

At Perryville, the Confederate commanders deployed their forces for the fight. They constructed barricades to slow the Union advance and had placed a pair of howitzers to guard the road while soldiers removed munitions, food, and other supplies from the town. When the federal advance approached the Confederate guns opened fire. As darkness began to fall, General Blunt deployed the 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry on the right and left of the road as skirmishers and brought artillery up for support. As the cavalry pressed forward, Blunt's artillery unlimbered. Once the federal troopers were within 300 yards, the Union guns fired a dozen rounds, forcing the enemy from the fortifications.<sup>225</sup>

General Steele managed to slow the advance long enough to remove large quantities of supplies from Perryville. He moved his supply train several miles outside of town and slipped away in the darkness as Blunt occupied the town. After covering forty miles and with his troops completely exhausted, Blunt did not give chase.<sup>226</sup> General Blunt deemed the town a regular military post, with nearly every building containing military stores left behind by the fleeing Confederates. All of the supplies that could be transported were loaded into federal wagons and then Blunt issued the command to burn the whole place.<sup>227</sup>

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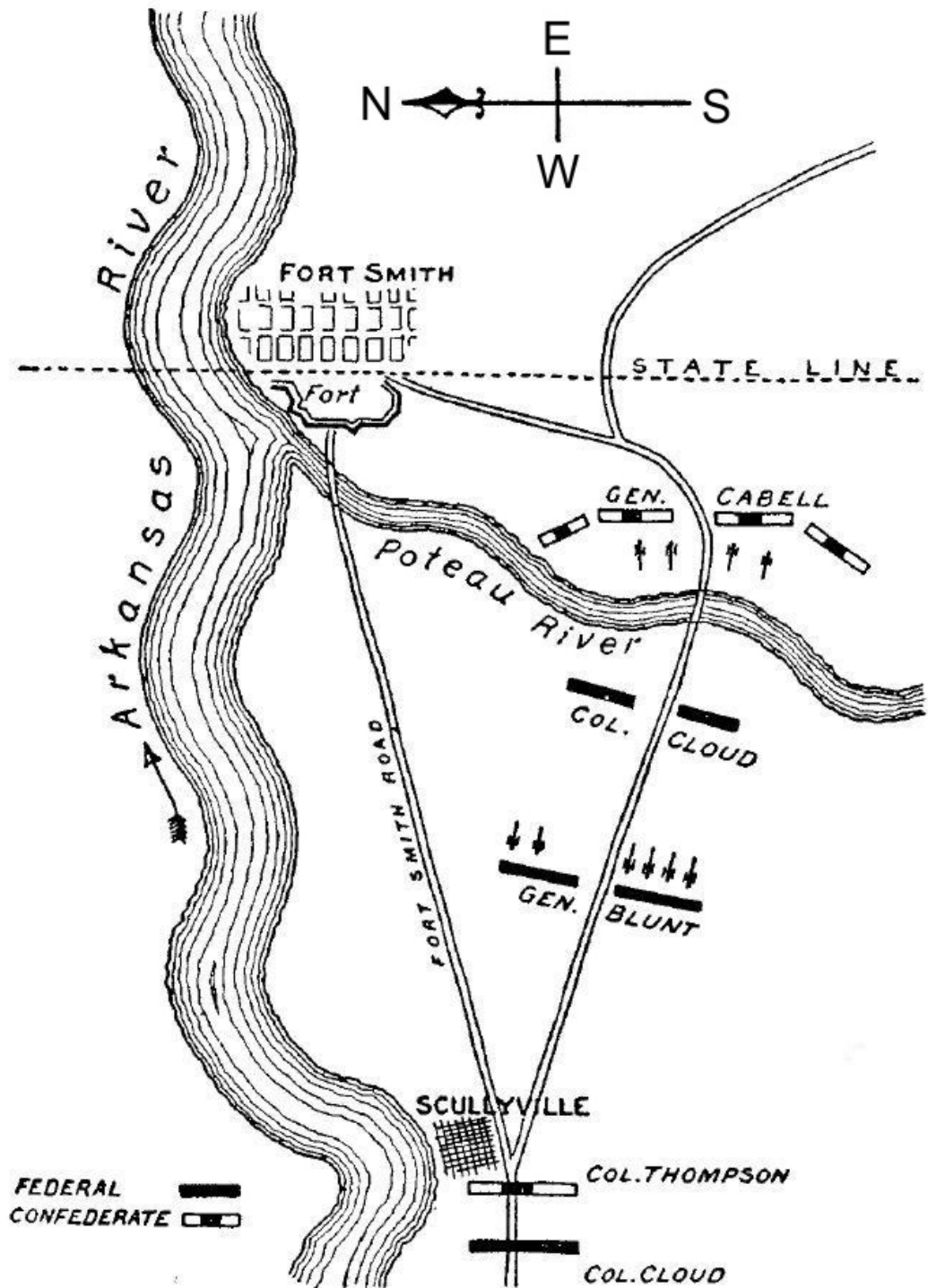
J.N. Smith, Report, August 1863, U.S. War Department, Record of Events, August 1863, *Supplement OR*, Volume 3, Part 2, 461. and Warren Day, Letter, 23 August 1863, Day Letters, M175, Manuscript Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 32-33.

<sup>225</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 27 August 1863. and William F. Cloud, Report, 27 August 1863. and J.N. Smith, Report, August 1863. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 153. and Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 28 August 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 599-600.

<sup>226</sup> William F. Cloud, Report, 27 August 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 598. and Blunt Report, 27 August 1863. and Steele Report, 28 August 1863.

<sup>227</sup> J.N. Smith, Report, 22 August 1863, *Supplement OR*, Volume 3, Part 2, 461. and Blunt Report, 27 August 1863. and William Steele, Report, 30 August 1863, *Supplement OR*, Volume 2, Part 1, 607-612. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 84. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 153-154. and Yeary, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865*, 43-44.

# Map 8: The Fort Smith Campaign



From Willey Britton's, *The Civil War on the Border Volume 2, 1863-1865.*

With Generals Steele and Cooper retreating towards Texas, General Blunt decided to move on Fort Smith. Before he marched towards the post, Blunt sent Colonel Judson with the 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Colorado, and 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry west to protect his flank from Colonel McIntosh's Confederate troops. As the federal troops tracked the Creeks, many of McIntosh's men deserted. By the time the Union cavalry broke off the pursuit, the enemy force had shrunk to just 150 men. Judson and his command retired to Fort Gibson without the loss of a single soldier.<sup>228</sup>

Blunt continued to march east towards Cabell at Fort Smith with Colonel Cloud's brigade of 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas Cavalry, 6<sup>th</sup> Missouri Cavalry, and two sections of Rabb's Artillery. Cabell moved into a defensive position on the Poteau River about nine miles outside of Fort Smith with 3,000 troops. He deployed pickets at the San Bois Mountains to provide early warning of Blunt's approach. In order to slow the federal advance, trees were cut to block roads and fords. To prevent the quartermaster supplies possible capture, Cabell ordered all of the provisions at Fort Smith loaded into wagons and moved to Waldron, Arkansas. (See Map 5.) All that remained was to wait for the Union forces to approach. Hoping to pinpoint Blunt's approach, Cabell ordered daily scouts sent out twenty-five miles, beyond the San Bois.<sup>229</sup>

On 30 August, General Blunt's advance guard met the Confederate scouts just west of the San Bois Mountains and gave chase. Colonel Cloud, leading the 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry, 6<sup>th</sup> Missouri Cavalry, and two sections of Rabb's Artillery aggressively pursued Cabell's men. The running fight brought the lead elements of

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<sup>228</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 27 August 1863. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 84.

<sup>229</sup> William L. Cabell, Report, 7 December 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 604-608.

the Union army to within four miles of Cabell's front before darkness forced the Union soldiers to halt for the night. With the return of daylight, the mounted troops again took up the chase hoping to locate the enemy force.

On August 31, Blunt camped three miles west of the ford on the Poteau River, just miles from the enemy. Cloud approached to within a quarter of a mile of the Confederate guns, but fell under artillery and musket fire. After a brief skirmish, the federal forces retired as night fell. Blunt's scouts brought word that Cabell was entrenched along the right bank of the Poteau. At daylight, the federal force again moved towards Cabell. As the Union troops approached, they discovered Cabell's men had slipped away under the cover of darkness. Blunt crossed the Poteau River in search of Cabell and prepared to move on Fort Smith.<sup>230</sup>

The following morning, Cloud moved his brigade to attack. However, once again Cabell retired during the night in the direction of Fort Smith. Colonel Cloud requested a number of cavalymen and two mountain howitzers pursue Cabell in an effort to capture his baggage train. At noon, he located the Confederate rear guard on the road to Jenny Lind and the enthusiastic federals gave chase. Captain Edward Line's Kansas troops finally overtook the Confederate rear guard and charged forward confidently, yelling and shouting as they rode. The Blue clad cavalry ran head long into an ambush at the base of the Devil's Backbone Mountain. (See Map 5.) Deadly fire dismounted fourteen men in the two in the front companies. The

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<sup>230</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 3 September 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 601-602. and William F. Cloud, Report, 20 September 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 602-604.

remainder of the party fell back and awaited the main body of troops to arrive before reengaging Cabell.<sup>231</sup>

Forced to make a stand, Cabell placed Monroe's Regiment at the foot of the mountain with the remaining troop's en echelon along the sides of the slope near the road. His artillery moved into a position overlooking the entire field. Colonel Cloud rode up in person and found Cabell's men spread throughout the timber supported by artillery. In an effort to force Cabell back, Cloud ordered the entire federal force into action. For over three hours the battle raged at Backbone Mountain. During a lull in the fighting, eight of the Confederate companies broke and ran, forcing Cabell to suddenly withdraw, leaving his dead and wounded.<sup>232</sup>

Colonel Cloud immediately occupied the field and posted pickets. He reported Union losses at fourteen with fifteen to twenty Confederate dead. General Cabell reported his losses as five killed and twelve wounded.<sup>233</sup> Cabell wrote of the Battle of Backbone Mountain, "there was nothing to make these regiments run, except the sound of cannon. Had they fought as troops fighting for liberty should, I would have captured the whole of the enemy's command, and gone back to Fort

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<sup>231</sup> William F. Cloud, Report, 20 September 1863. and William L. Cabell, Report, 7 December 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 1, 605-608. and Charles B. Lines, *Memorial of Edward C.D. Lines, Late Captain of Company C, Second Regiment, Kansas Cavalry*. (New Haven, Connecticut: Tuttle, Morehouse, and Taylor, 1867), 34.

<sup>232</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 3 September 1863. and William L. Cabell, Report, 7 December 1863. and William F. Cloud, Report, 20 September 1863. and Charles B. Lines, *Memorial of Edward C.D. Lines, Late Captain of Company C, Second Regiment, Kansas Cavalry*, 34. and U.S. War Department, Record of Events, September, 1863, *Supplement OR*, Volume 35, Part 2, 271, 548, 563.

<sup>233</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 3 September 1863. and William L. Cabell, Report, 7 December 1863. and William F. Cloud, Report, 20 September 1863. and Charles B. Lines, *Memorial of Edward C.D. Lines, Late Captain of Company C, Second Regiment, Kansas Cavalry*, 34. and U.S. War Department, Record of Events, September, 1863, *Supplement OR*, Volume 35, Part 2, 271, 548, 563.



Smith...’’<sup>234</sup> The exhausted condition of the federal cavalry prevented pursuit.

Having secured the field, Cloud moved towards Fort Smith the following morning.<sup>235</sup>

After detaching Cloud to pursue Cabell, General Blunt proceeded to march to Fort Smith. With his staff, body guard, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Arkansas Infantry (Union), he took possession of the fort and city without opposition. Shortly after arrival, Blunt fell ill. When Cloud returned from Backbone Mountain, Blunt turned over command and returned to Fort Scott and the comforts of his headquarters. The capture of Fort Smith on 1 September brought an end to the second federal invasion of Indian Territory allowing them to focus on maintaining their supply lines and pacifying the local population. Confederate forces retired below the Arkansas River. Union troops occupied Forts Gibson and Smith, and effectively reduced the ability of Confederate forces to concentrate in opposition. Despite the victories across Indian Territory, Union control of the area was still limited. Colonel William C. Quantrill’s raid on Lawrence, Kansas, on 21 August, spread fear throughout the Cherokee Nation. Desperate to restore confidence in civilian population, Union patrols deployed to hunt down the marauding guerrillas.

On 4 October, General Blunt received a dispatch from Fort Smith informing him that a large number of Confederates were gathering in the vicinity. Blunt prepared to move his headquarters from Fort Scott to Fort Smith to personally oversee operations. He gathered all of his staff records, papers, and property and created an escort from the few men at the post. With most troops in the field already, Blunt pulled men from Company I, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Cavalry and Company A, 14<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> William L. Cabell, Report, 7 December 1863.

<sup>235</sup> William F. Cloud, Report, 20 September 1863.

Kansas Cavalry. The escort, along with Blunt's personal staff and the regimental band totaled about 100 men. Blunt's little column left late in the afternoon on 4 October, marching only six miles the first day. After two full days march, the expedition approached Baxter Springs around noon on 6 October.<sup>236</sup>

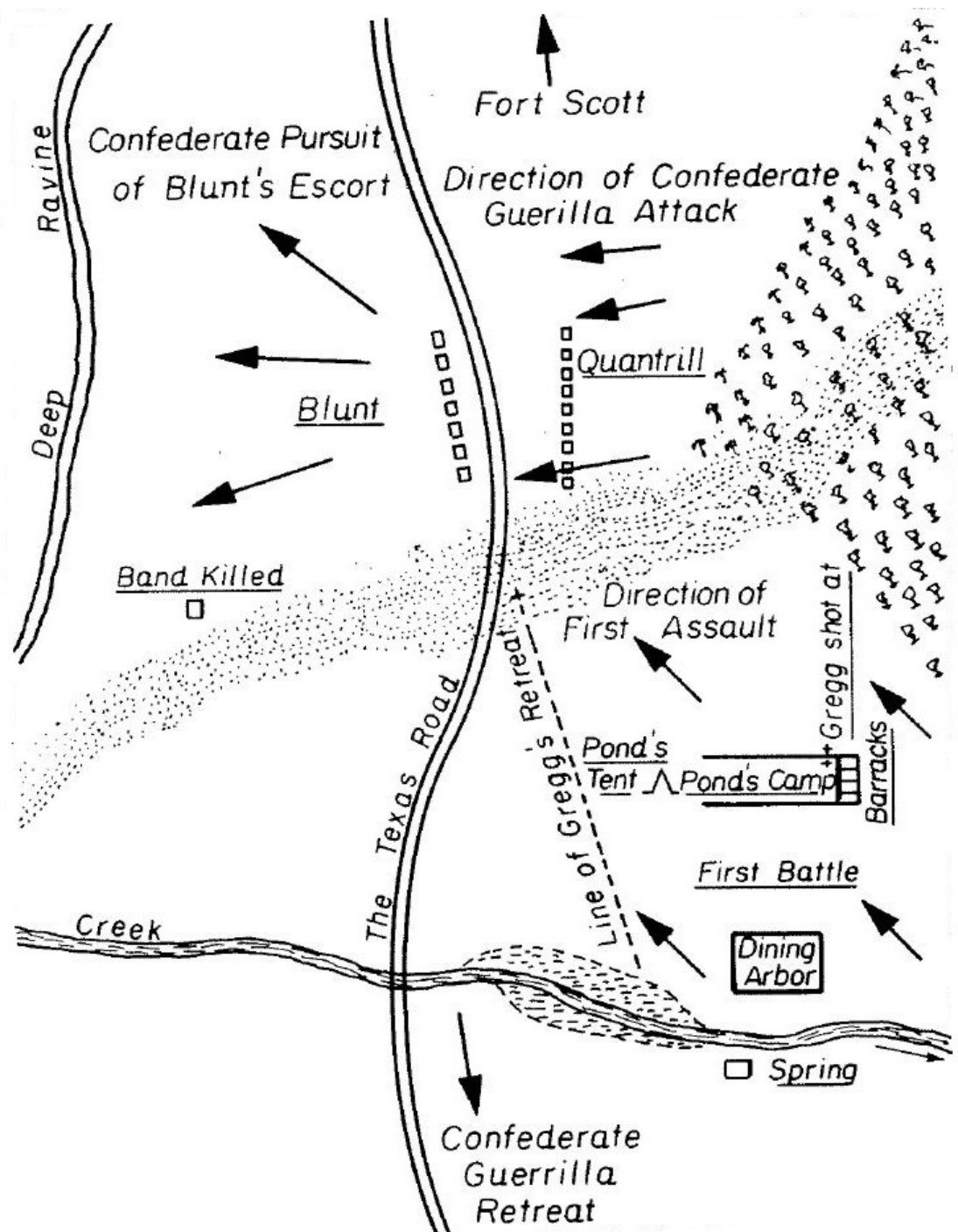
Blunt halted his column and wagons near the camp, allowing the band to catch up. The federal forces had transformed Baxter Spring into makeshift fort, halfway between Fort Scott and Fort Gibson, to serve as a resting point for the supply trains destined for Indian Territory. Lieutenant James B. Pond arrived in early October at Baxter Springs with additional troops from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Cavalry. The camp was not large enough to accommodate his command, forcing him to begin enlarging the fortifications. The old post consisted of four walls, made of logs and earth, about four feet high. The east wall housed barracks and ran about 100 feet in length. The north and south walls remained in place; however, the west end of the cantonment was open due to active construction. The mess area was located about 200 feet from the south side of the fort. Pond had a variety of troops under his command at Baxter Springs, including one company of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry, Company D from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Cavalry, and a portion of Company C, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Cavalry.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 19 October 1863, *OR*, Volume 22, Part 1, 688-690. and Charles W. Blair, Report, 15 October 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 690-693. and Benjamin S. Henning, Report, 7 October 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 693-698. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 213-214. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 38-39.

<sup>237</sup> James B. Pond, Report, 7 October 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 698-700. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 216. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 39.

## Map 9: Engagement at Baxter Springs



From Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*

General Blunt was not the only military column heading south on the Texas Road. Fleeing frequent patrols in Kansas following his raid on Lawrence, Colonel Quantrill left southwestern Missouri on 1 October for winter quarters in Texas. With him, over 400 mounted guerillas traveled south, unaware that a federal garrison lay in their path at Baxter Springs. Early on 6 October, Lieutenant Pond ordered a detail to forage for supplies north of Baxter Springs. All of the available wagons headed north with an escort of sixty cavalry troops. Along with searching for forage, the detachment was to patrol the area, offering some protection to the weakened garrison. Quantrill's scouts located the wagons moving north quite a distance from the safety of the cavalry. After overwhelming the wagons, Quantrill learned from the prisoners that Union troops were encamped at Baxter Springs; however, the men politely forgot to mention the fortifications. The guerilla leader quickly developed a plan to isolate the cavalry from the garrison and eliminate the two groups.<sup>238</sup>

Quantrill ordered his column to close ranks and move in fours towards the camp. In an instant, the thundering sound of hoof beats interrupted the federal soldiers as they relaxed for dinner. Completely surprised, Pond ordered his men to take cover and return fire. Quantrill's men attacked with such ferocity that they drove in everything before them, and soon took possession of the stockade. Having no infantry for support, the Confederates fell back and reformed for another assault unaware the majority of Pond's men were unarmed.<sup>239</sup> The federal soldiers forced their way through the mounted guerillas to reach their muskets, stacked neatly in the

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<sup>238</sup> William C. Quantrill, Report, 13 October 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 700-701. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 39-40.

<sup>239</sup> James B. Pond, Report, 7 October 1863. and Benjamin S. Henning, Report, 7 October 1864. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 222-224. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 43.

fortifications. Four federals were gunned down as they ran to their guns. Lieutenant Pond, dining in his tent about 200 yards west of the camp, rushed to rally his men. Along with a handful of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry, he positioned his one howitzer and opened fire on Quantrill's raiders. After the initial shock wore off, Pond organized his men. By the time the Confederates charged again, the federals presented strong defense, forcing the enemy to retreat outside of the range of the Union muskets.<sup>240</sup>

Just as Quantrill's men fell back to regroup, General Blunt's column arrived at Baxter Springs. Blunt halted his column about 400 yards from Baxter Springs, just out of sight of the post because of a high ridge. While his escort closed ranks, Blunt noticed a group of men advancing from the timber near the spring, some 500 yards to his left. When the mounted men came within 300 yards they halted. Dressed in federal uniforms, Blunt assumed the group was Pond's cavalry on drill. Weary of such large numbers, Blunt choose to ere on the side of caution, and ordered his escort in line to face them.<sup>241</sup>

While the Union line moved into position, William S. Tough, a civilian scout, rode forward to examine the large force in the prairie. Within minutes, he returned to the main line and informed Blunt that the cavalry to his front were Confederate irregulars. General Blunt then rode toward the cavalry, to determine exactly who they were. He moved forward about seventy-five yards when the soldiers commenced firing on his column. To Blunt's south, musket fire erupted at

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<sup>240</sup> James B. Pond, Report, 7 October 1863. and William C. Quantrill, Report, 13 October 1863. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 222-224. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 43.

<sup>241</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 19 October 1863. and Benjamin S. Henning, Report, 7 October 1863. and William C. Quantrill, Report, 13 October 1863.

the post. Blunt immediately turned towards his escort and gave the order to fire; however, his troops broke and ran at a full gallop across the prairie. As Blunt's men fled, Quantrill's guerillas charged with revolvers, followed by an additional 200 men from the timber cutting the Union general off from the safety of the fortifications. Along with Major H. Z. Curtis, Blunt managed to rally fifteen soldiers. After sending a lieutenant and six troopers to Fort Scott for reinforcements, Blunt and the nine remaining soldiers hid on the fringe of the action, harassing Quantrill as best they could.<sup>242</sup>

Major Benjamin Henning rode to the crest of the hill, hoping to ascertain the condition of the garrison at Baxter Springs. He found Pond's men nearly encircled, in heavy fighting. He soon came under fire as a small group of Confederates tried to pass by with three prisoners. Hoping to rescue the men, he called to Captain William S. Tough and Stephen Wheeler from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin. Wheeler and Henning rode forward firing on the guerillas, killing one and wounding another. In the fight, one of the prisoners was shot through the shoulder. The freed federals made their way to Pond and the safety of the post. Henning turned his horse and raced towards Blunt.<sup>243</sup>

Soon, the Confederate guerillas closed in on the federal troops fleeing across the prairie. The guerillas hunted the federal soldiers down individually, slaughtering most where they were found. Major Henning watched as the regimental band was murdered near their wagon. Along with the dead were James O'Neal, a special artist for Frank Leslie's pictorial paper and a twelve year old boy. Both were shot and

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<sup>242</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 19 October 1863. and Benjamin S. Henning, Report, 7 October 1863. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 216-218. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 46-48.

<sup>243</sup> Benjamin S. Henning, Report, 7 October 1863. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 218. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 47.

thrown under the wagon before it was torched. In addition, the drummer boy was shot and thrown under the wagon. When the fire reached his clothes he must have regained consciousness and crawled about thirty yards before finally succumbing to his injuries. He was found dead with all of his clothes burned off, except pieces between his back and the ground.<sup>244</sup>

By 4:00 p.m. the fighting ended. The federal garrison watched as Blunt's deserted wagons were searched while Quantrill's men looked for items of value. Quantrill reassembled his command on the prairie, but before moving south he sent two soldiers under a flag of truce to the federal fortifications demanding an exchange of prisoners. When Lieutenant Pond told the men he had no prisoners the two rode back to the main body of troops. After a few minutes Quantrill's raiders headed south along the military road. With them went nine wagons, each fully loaded, General Blunt's buggy, one ambulance, several stands of colors, and various camp equipment. Blunt personally lost his sword, official commission of rank, all of his personal papers and letters.<sup>245</sup>

Lieutenant Pond lost six men killed and ten wounded. Blunt's column bore the brunt of the casualties. When he examined the prairie around Baxter Springs, Blunt and the Union troopers found eighty men killed, all shot through the head and mutilated. Eight men survived, each shot at least six times each. Quantrill lists his losses as three killed and three wounded; however the federal reports list twenty to

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<sup>244</sup> Benjamin S. Henning, Report, 7 October 1863. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 218. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 47.

<sup>245</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 17 October 1863. and James B. Pond, Report, 7 October 1863. and Charles W. Blair, Report, 17 October 1863. and Benjamin S. Henning, Report, 7 October 1863. and William C. Quantrill, Report, 13 October 1863.

thirty Confederates dead buried.<sup>246</sup> Union reinforcements arrived on 8 October. Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Blair received word early on 7 October of the attack and moved south with about 100 men from the 12<sup>th</sup> Kansas Infantry and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry. After burying all of the dead, General Blunt returned to Fort Scott with Blair.<sup>247</sup> The engagement at Baxter Springs developed by chance as the Quantrill's men wandered into the federals. The engagement reminded federal troops and Blunt that Confederate forces still operated at will above Fort Gibson and Fort Smith.

The summer of 1863 brought a decisive blow to Confederate operations in Indian Territory. Federals controlled two of the enemy's most valued outposts, Fort Gibson and Fort Smith, and destroyed two additional depots at Honey Springs and Perryville. Completely demoralized, the Confederate forces remained south of the Canadian River, while Steele and Cabell attempted to devise a plan to retake the two posts. Late in the year, Colonel Richard M. Gano arrived with an additional 1,000 Texas troops; however, the Confederate command still could not muster the strength to mount an offensive. General Cooper could not mobilize his Indian troops and remained at Doaksville. A severe ice storm ended all hopes for the immediate recapture of Fort Smith. Without adequate clothing, Steele ordered the Confederate command to Boggy Depot, while Cooper remained with his forces along the Red River. Hoping to occupy the federals, Watie began a raid through the Cherokee Nation to relieve the pressure on the Confederate command and shift the war north.

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<sup>246</sup> James G. Blunt, Report, 17 October 1863. and Charles W. Blair, Report, 15 October 1863. and Benjamin S. Henning, Report, 7 October 1863. and James B Pond, Report, 7 October 1863. and William C. Quantrill, Report, 13 October 1863. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 50.

<sup>247</sup> Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 223-224.



In November, Watie moved north with 500 to 800 men to harass the federal troops and frighten Unionists in the area. He rode around Fort Gibson and attacked pro-Union Cherokees in Tahlequah, setting fire to everything in his wake.<sup>248</sup> At Park Hill he burned the home of Chief John Ross. While in Tahlequah, Watie broke up a council meeting as his cavalry moved up and down the streets shooting randomly into buildings. News of the attack reached Fort Gibson on 17 December and Colonel Phillips dispatched patrols in search of Watie's men. Captain Alexander C. Spilman left Fort Gibson late 17 December with 290 troops from the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Home Guard and one howitzer. Heading north along the Park Hill Road, Spilman reached the Illinois River at midnight and went into camp.<sup>249</sup>

Through local inhabitants, Spilman learned that Watie had raided the Murrell house, burned a number of slave quarters at the Ross plantation, and then moved towards the Illinois River bottom during the evening to camp. Just after 7:00 a.m. Spilman moved his command toward Barren Fork. En route he encountered two small groups of Confederates. As they approached they must have taken the Union soldiers for Watie's column. Soon, the discharge of muskets killed one and sent the remainder riding off in quick haste. Composed of infantry, Spilman's column lacked cavalry and offered no pursuit. The discovery of the Confederate patrols intensified the federal's hopes of finding Watie's main force.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 87.

<sup>249</sup> Alexander C. Spilman, Report, 23 December 1863, *OR*, Volume 22, Part 1, 781-783.

<sup>250</sup> Alexander C. Spilman, Report, 23 December 1863. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War on the Border*, 54-55. and Edwards, *The Prairie Was on Fire*, 87.

Not quite a mile past Sheldon's place along Barren Fork, the advance guard sighted the enemy force.<sup>251</sup> Captain Spilman moved forward to examine the Confederate position. Through the heavy underbrush he located them and formed in a ravine running from the road up a hill. Spilman brought the howitzer and ninety-five men from the 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Regiment up and placed them just to the right of the road under Captain Willets. He sent Lieutenant Luke F. Parsons with the remaining Cherokees further to the right, between the gun and the base of the hill. Before Parsons moved into position, the Confederates opened fire wounding Willets among others. The federal howitzer quickly went into action, causing the enemy line to break. With Captain Willets wounded, Parson's troops pushed forward a quarter of a mile with all of the available men. The Confederates formed again, only to be routed a second time. With the road now clear, Spilman called his men back and moved into position on higher ground where a few scattered log buildings offered the infantry some protection.<sup>252</sup>

Just as Spilman moved into his new position, the enemy attacked from the east. The rough terrain slowed their advance just long enough for the Union howitzer to load. With canister and shell, the Union gun forced them to seek refuge in the timber on an adjoining hill. Sheltering themselves behind trees and rocks, the Confederates opened fire on the federal troops. For more than two hours the two forces fired at each other, unable to push the other from the field. Finally, Spilman

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<sup>251</sup> The exact location of "Sheldon's Place is unknown. Captain Alexander C. Spilman's report on the skirmish states the skirmish took place near Sheldon's Place, Barren Fork, Cherokee Nation. Barren Fork is a creek running northeast from the Tahlequah area.

<sup>252</sup> Alexander C. Spilman, Report, 23 December 1863. and D.W. Kennedy, Report, U.S. War Department, Company Returns, Indian Home Guard, December 1863, Special Microfilm Collections, Roll IAD-5, Archived Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 55-56.

developed a plan to draw the Confederates from the trees. He ordered the command to the road, pretending to abandon his position. The ploy worked. The Confederates advanced and dismounted.<sup>253</sup>

Spilman ordered his men back into position at the double quick and quickly brought the howitzer up. As the federals fired, the enemy again broke and fled. The Union troops pursued, driving the enemy for more than a mile before halting from exhaustion. Captain Spilman reported his losses as two severely wounded and Captain Willets killed. In addition, two horses and two mules were lost. Twelve Confederates were killed along with a number of enemy horses killed and wounded. Captain Spilman resumed his march, headed towards Major Foreman at Rhea's Mill. Stand Watie and his men moved south, towards Fort Smith.<sup>254</sup> As the year drew to a close, Confederate troops remained active in the Fort Gibson vicinity, forcing locals to seek refuge at the post.

Frustrated by his experiences within Indian Territory General Steele, requested he be relieved of his command. On 11 December the general was dismissed and General Samuel B. Maxey, of Texas, assumed command of Indian Territory.<sup>255</sup> Infuriated that he was overlooked for the position, Cooper wrote directly to President Jefferson Davis, urging his own appointment to command. To pacify Cooper and ease the command transition, General Maxey proposed the division of the department into two brigades under Cooper and Watie. At the same time he decried

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<sup>253</sup> Alexander C. Spilman, Report, 23 December 1863. and D.W. Kennedy, Report, December 1863. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 57-58.

<sup>254</sup> Alexander C. Spilman, Report, 23 December 1863. and D.W. Kennedy, Report, December 1863. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 57-58.

<sup>255</sup> S.S. Anderson, Assistant Adjutant General, Special Order 214, 11 December 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 22, Part 2, 1094. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 87. and Edwards, *The Prairie Was on Fire*, 84-85.

the conditions of Indian Territory to his superiors, particularly the lack of supplies. General Maxey began reorganization of his command in preparation for spring offensives.<sup>256</sup>

Slowly winter returned to Indian Territory. Confederate troops were demoralized and lacked enough supplies to be considered effective soldiers and continued to mass south of the Canadian River. Raids became the prominent form of attack, most led by Colonel Watie and the Cherokee Mounted Rifles. Frequent raids led to open hostility between federal forces and the civilian population. As both armies requisitioned livestock and crops many families found themselves without food. As the year closed some 18,000 pro-southern Indians fled south into the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in search of help.<sup>257</sup> The flight of the Confederate refugees south showed the changing roles of the Union and Confederate armies in Indian Territory. Federal success on the battlefield throughout the war bogged down the enemy troops while the Confederate commanders used up vast stores of munitions, clothing, and food. In July, federal troops took Vicksburg and Port Hudson, along with control of the Mississippi River, separating the Trans-Mississippi Department from the rest of the South.

By late September, James Bell, an officer in Watie's command, wrote to his wife that out of 5,000 men about 1,000 were unarmed and without shoes and clothing. The destruction of the supply depots cost the Confederate troops valuable supplies.

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<sup>256</sup> Samuel B. Maxey to S.S. Anderson, 12 January 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 856-858. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 59.

<sup>257</sup> Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 85-87. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 59.

He went on to say the troops were neither discouraged nor whipped.<sup>258</sup> While the enemy troops remained south of the Arkansas River, federal troops hauled wagon loads of supplies south down the Texas Road.

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<sup>258</sup> James Bell quoted in Stephen B. Oates, "Supply for Confederate Cavalry in the Trans-Mississippi," *Military Affairs* 25 (Summer 1961): 99.

## Chapter 5: One Last Hurrah!

Confederate troops found themselves hard pressed for victories after the successful federal invasion into Indian Territory in 1863. Fort Gibson and Fort Smith were in Union hands and Blunt's troops had destroyed the depots at Honey Springs and Perryville. Confederate troops kept Phillips busy protecting his supply lines and constant escort duty prevented active federal campaigning during the fall of 1863. Following the Battle of Honey Springs, General Steele divided his army allowing General Blunt to engage and defeat his troops piecemeal. Federal troops began 1864 fully supplied and ready to engage the enemy. On the other hand, Confederate troops had suffered serious setbacks and fell under the command of a new leader. Throughout the year Confederate troops defended the territory and shifted to mobile cavalry raids to strike federal supply lines. These raids targeted communication, wagon trains, detached troops in hay camps or advanced bases, and lightly defended civilian populations and offered Generals Cooper and Maxey alternatives to direct confrontation.

General Steele's replacement, General Maxey, spent much of early 1864 reorganizing the units and command structure in the territory. Gano attached troops from the Creek and Seminole Nations to Stand Watie and his Cherokee troops to create the 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Cavalry Brigade. Colonel Tandy Walker commanded the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Cavalry Brigade, composed of all remaining Native American forces.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Troops of the Creek and Seminole Nations were brigaded with Stand Watie and his Cherokee troops and designated the 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Cavalry Brigade, commanded by Watie, and consisting of the following units: 1<sup>st</sup> Cherokee Regiment under Colonel Robert C. Parks. Within the 1<sup>st</sup> Cherokee Regiment was the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cherokee Regiment under Colonel William P. Adiar, the Cherokee Battalion

Maxey grumbled to his superior General E. Kirby Smith that his troops lacked competent leaders, leading to a lack of discipline. He found many of his command's muskets in deplorable condition while some soldiers lacked weapons at all. The ability of the federal troops to advance south, in the face of Confederate opposition, forced some tribal members to waiver in allegiance to the government in Richmond, especially after the annuity payments failed to arrive early in the year.<sup>260</sup> In addition, both the federal and Confederate commanders found themselves burdened by thousands of refugees, forced from their farms by the prospect of enemy raids and starvation.<sup>261</sup> Unlike the two previous years of conflict, 1864 would become the year of great raids.

Determined to clear out the small bands of Confederates still operating within the area, federal patrols from Fort Gibson and Fort Smith intensified. Detachments from Fort Gibson focused on the Cherokee and Creek Nations. Phillips established outposts at Hildebrand's Mill, Mackey's salt works, Cabin Creek, and Flat Rock to protect the supply lines and hay operations necessary for a continued Union presence in the territory.<sup>262</sup> As 1864 began, battles fought in Indian Territory would be over food, hay, and equipment rather than gaining territory. Increasing refugee problems caused both sides tremendous burdens. Growing desperate for supplies and

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under Colonel Daniel N. McIntosh, 2<sup>nd</sup> Creek Regiment under Colonel Chilly McIntosh, the Creek Squadron under Captain R. Kenard, the Osage Battalion under Major Broke Arm, and the Seminole Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel John Jumper.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Cavalry Brigade, composed of the remainder of all Native American Confederate forces, commanded by Colonel Tandy Walker, consisted of the 1<sup>st</sup> Chickasaw Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Lemuel M. Reynolds, 1<sup>st</sup> Choctaw Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Jackson McCurtain, 1<sup>st</sup> Choctaw and Chickasaw Regiment under Lieutenant Colonel James Riley, 2<sup>nd</sup> Choctaw Regiment under Colonel Simpson Folsom, and the Reserve Squadron (consisting of warriors from the Caddo Tribe) under Captain George Washington (a Caddo Chief).

<sup>260</sup> S.B. Maxey to E. Kirby Smith, Letter, 26 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 24, Part 2, 994-997.

<sup>261</sup> Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 85-87.

<sup>262</sup> Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 89.

ammunition, Confederate forces raided often. Poor crop production in the Cherokee and Creek Nations, along with inclement weather, forced the federals to use wagon trains to supply their troops within Indian Territory. The use of the supply trains was not new for the Union troops; however, the repeated use of the Texas Road removed much of the forage along the route. Decreased rainfall and the drop in water levels throughout the area greatly increased the number of fordable crossings and allowed the Confederate forces to move about the territory without alerting the federals.<sup>263</sup>

Following a successful year of active campaigning, Colonel Phillips determined to take the war deep into enemy territory and deliver a devastating blow to Confederate forces. Ordered south in late 1863, most of the Confederate troops remained deep inside the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations. In January 1864, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation to the Five Civilized Tribes offering pardons to any tribe willing to cease hostilities and support the federal government. Phillips sought to take the war to those still in rebellion in order to distribute the proclamation and to collect all the forage possible along the way. He included his own letters with that of the president, citing the futility of continuing the war. To the Chickasaws, Phillips wrote “you cannot fail to see the end coming...The great government of the United States will soon crush all enemies. Let me know if you want to be among them.”<sup>264</sup> In the face of recent defeats, Phillips pleaded in his

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<sup>263</sup> Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 97.

<sup>264</sup> William A. Phillips to Governor Colbert, Letter, 15 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 109-110. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 90.

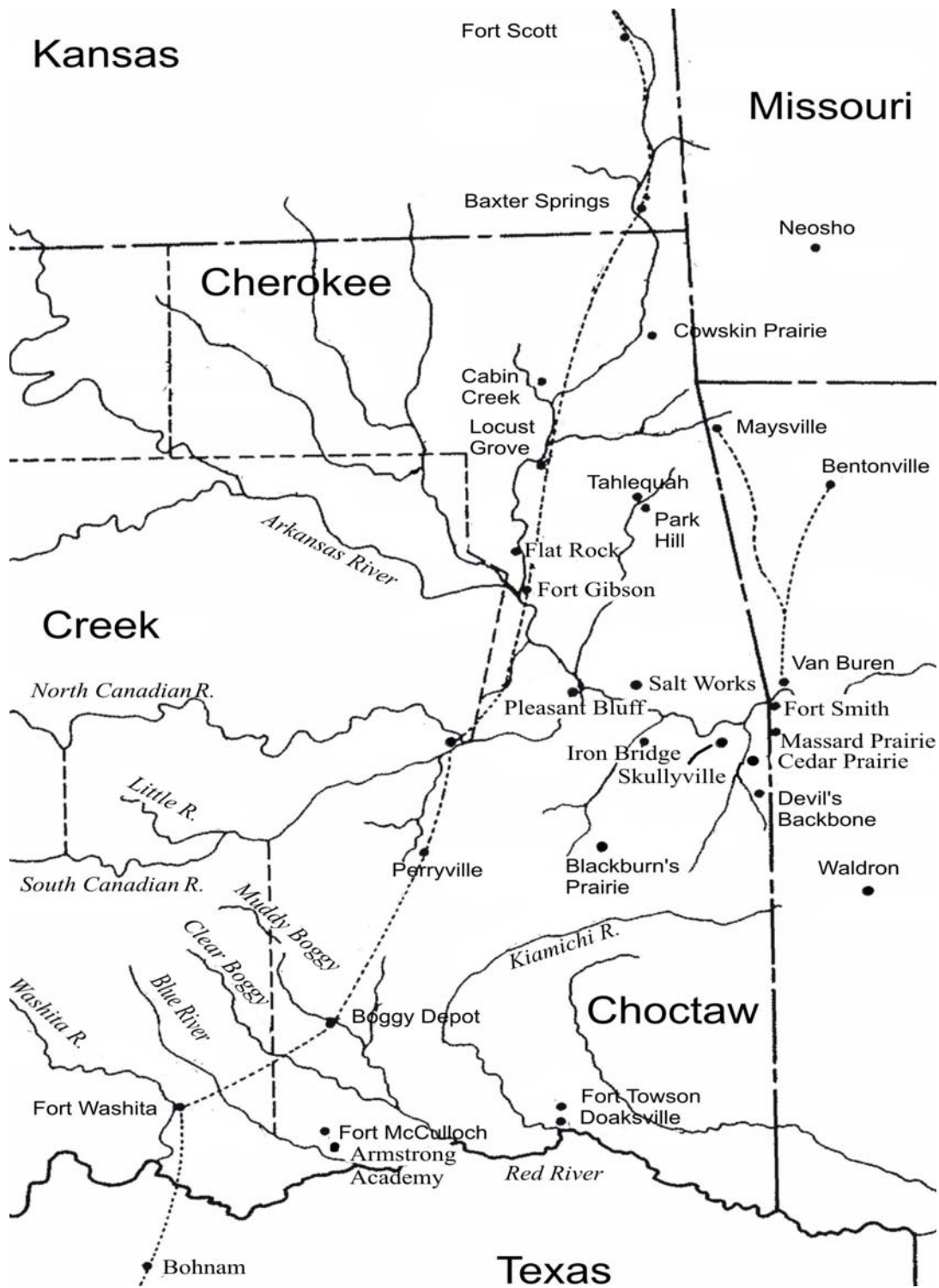


letter to Seminole Chief John Jumper, “accept it soon [defeat], you may be preserved; if you do not, you and your people will be blotted out in blood.”<sup>265</sup>

## **Map 10: Area of Operations, 1864**

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<sup>265</sup> William A. Phillips to Chief John Jumper, Letter, 15 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 24, part 1, 111. and Ernest I. Darling, “Lincoln’s Message to Indian Territory,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 63 (Fall, 1985): 186-192.



Adapted from Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*

With his supply lines secure, Phillips planned an expedition through the heart of enemy territory to shorten the war in the west. By mid January, Phillips began finalizing his plans. He gathered troops for the campaign and worked on securing additional supplies for the upcoming campaign. Union victories across the country boosted the soldier's morale as rumors spread through the fort about the upcoming move. On 27 January, a large forage detail left the post under Major Moses B.C. Wright, heading towards Rhea's Mill to gather flour and fodder for the upcoming mission. With provisions secured, the 150 men would rejoin the main federal column en route.<sup>266</sup>

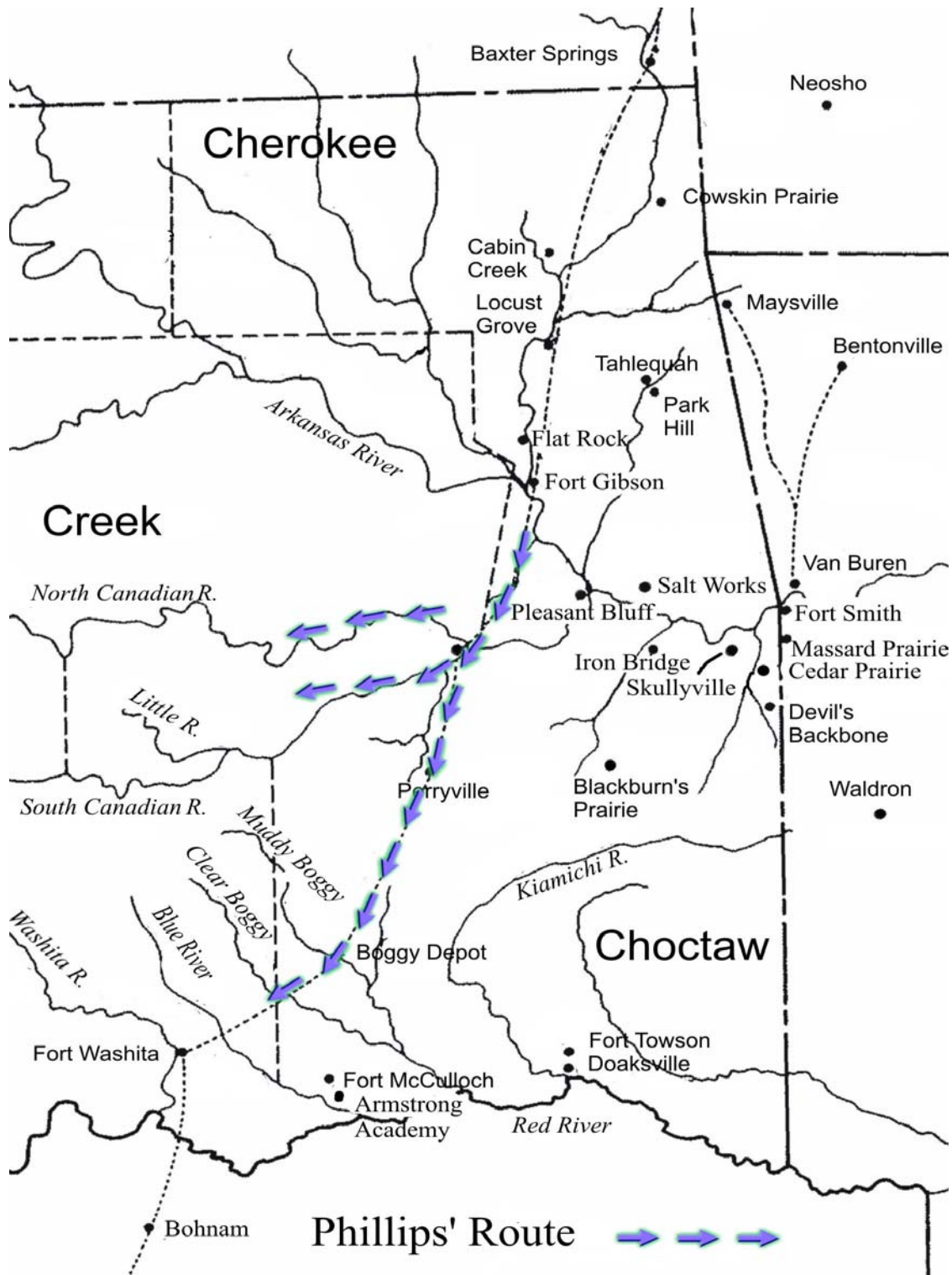
The garrison received a circular, issued by Phillips, on 31 January with directions for the upcoming campaign. Phillips was quite blunt in his instructions. At least three times daily, each regiment and company was to call roll and any man deserting would be arrested and shot. Phillips warned his soldiers to aim and shoot carefully; implying prisoners would slow the progress of the column. Phillips called on the troopers to unleash their vengeance and make their footsteps severe in an effort to crush the will of the civilian population to continue the war. Throughout the remainder of the year, numerous federal officers began similar offensives. Phillips' march preceded General William Tecumseh Sherman's infamous March to the Sea by three months.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Moses B.C. Wright, Report, 27 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 112-113. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 60-61.

<sup>267</sup> General Order No. 3, 31 January 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 191-192. and *Itinerary of the Indian Brigade*, No date, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 111-112. and Jacob Perryman, Letter, 3 March 1864, Alice Robertson Collection, Archived Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 61.

# Map 11: Phillips' Expedition, 1864



Adapted from Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*

Phillips gathered roughly 2,000 men for the invasion. The expedition was made up of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Regiments, elements of the 14<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry, and one section of howitzers. Phillips ordered Colonel Thomas Moonlight to join the column near Boggy Depot with the remainder of the 14<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry to provide a fresh reserve for his troops after their long march south.<sup>268</sup> Phillips thought his column strong enough to push into northern Texas and the arrival of Moonlight's fresh troops would allow him to operate freely along the border, convincing the rebellious tribes to renounce allegiance to the Confederacy.<sup>269</sup>

Early on 1 February, the companies formed and wagons moved into line. A large detachment of cavalry took the advance with the main body of the column composed of infantry, artillery, and wagons. The expedition moved south quickly, hoping to penetrate deep into Confederate held territory before a defense could be mounted. The column marched day and night, covering 105 miles in four days. From his camp on the North Fork of the Canadian, Phillips dispatched several patrols to scout the area. One force went up the Canadian River into the Seminole Nation. Another detachment traveled up the Little River. Each patrol's orders included provisions that all materials and buildings of military value be destroyed. Phillips left a small escort for Colonel Moonlight's approaching cavalry and headed further down the South Canadian. En route the expedition began to encounter occasional contact with small groups of Confederates, inflicting heavy losses on them before driving them from the column's path. In various skirmishes, the federal troops killed nearly

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<sup>268</sup> *Itinerary of the Indian Brigade*, No Date.

<sup>269</sup> William A. Phillips, Report, 16 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 106-108. and Jacob Perryman, Letter, 3 March 1864. and U.S. War Department, Company Returns, Indian Home Guard, February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 112.

one hundred Confederates and took twenty five prisoners, all without the loss of a single man.<sup>270</sup>

The Confederate forces fell back in front of the advancing Union invasion while Cooper relocated his headquarters from Fort Towson to Fort Washita. Fort Washita lay in the path of the federal onslaught, along the Texas Road. Slowly, Cooper began organizing his troops to halt the federal advance while urgent pleas went out for reinforcements. General Henry McCulloch ordered Quantrill's men north; however, he refused to move citing a lack of adequate weapons or supplies. Determined to curb the federal advance, Cooper sent orders for all troops within the Indian Territory to converge on Fort Washita. Writing to E.P. Turner, General McCulloch showed his disillusionment with the situation in Indian Territory, "I would not be surprised if they [the federals] take Boggy Depot and Fort Washita, with all the stores of both places. I will do the best I can...but with very few men and very few caps and fewer guns than men, I cannot do much."<sup>271</sup>

Phillips' column continued to advance slowly, without encountering substantial resistance. However, Colonel Moonlight failed to arrive with his reinforcements. Finally deciding not delay the campaign any longer, Phillips ordered the 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Regiment to advance towards Boggy Depot on 10 February while the

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<sup>270</sup> Samuel R. Curtis, Report, 9 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 281-282. and William A. Phillips to John M. Thayer, Letter, 8 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 272. and William A. Phillips, Report, 16 February 1864. and U.S. War Department, Company Returns, Indian Hone Guard, February 1864. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 64-65.

<sup>271</sup> *Itinerary of the Indian Brigade*, No Date. and R.T. Thompson, Letter, 5 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 249. and William A. Phillips to John .Thayer, Letter, 8 February 1864. and Samuel R. Curtis, Report, 9 February 1864. and D.H. Cooper to Henry E. McCulloch, Letter, 15 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 970. and Henry E. McCulloch to E.P. Turner, Letter, 15 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 969. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 65.

main column waited one additional day for Moonlight's arrival. The next day the columns reunited and continued the march the next morning. On 13 February, a scout reported a Confederate camp on the edge of a clearing near Middle Boggy Creek. With Phillips' cavalry in the advance, Major Charles Willets organized the 14<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry for an attack.<sup>272</sup> He formed his men opposite the enemy camp and within minutes, his cavalry charged from the timber. At a gallop, Willet's soldiers took the Confederates completely by surprise. Outnumbered four to one, they offered little resistance and scattered across the open prairie. The fighting ended almost as soon as it had started. Remembering Colonel Phillips' orders, no prisoners were taken. All of the dead were left on the field, with their throats cut from ear to ear. Willets reported forty nine Confederates killed without the loss of a single man.<sup>273</sup>

The following day, Phillips continued southwest towards Fort Washita, hoping to draw the enemy into a set battle. After marching twenty one miles he established camp near the Blue River, along the Texas Road. Without Moonlight's troops, Phillips knew he could not push south into Texas. However, he decided to make one final thrust towards Fort Washita and deliver a final blow before returning to Fort Gibson. Phillips sent Colonel Wattles north to the Little River with the wagon train, captured oxen, supplies, and infantry while he assembled all of the available mounted men. On 14 February, Phillips moved his fast moving column, composed of

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<sup>272</sup> *Itinerary of the Indian Brigade*, No Date. and Jacob Perryman, Letter, 3 March 1864. and John M. Thayer, Report, 24 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 108. and Warren Day, Letter, 23 February 1864, Day Letters, M175, Manuscript Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. and Hervey Buckner, Letter, 22 February 1864, Hervey Buckner Collection, Box 96.47, Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>273</sup> *Itinerary of the Indian Brigade*, No Date. and Jacob Perryman, Letter, 3 March 1864. and John M. Thayer, Report, 24 February 1864. and Warren Day, Letter, 23 February 1864. and Hervey Buckner, Letter 22 February 1864. and William A. Phillips, Report, 16 February 1864. and Samuel B. Maxey, Letter, 26 February 1864. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 66.

450 troopers from the 14<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry, 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Regiments, and one howitzer, towards Fort Washita. For the next three days his column met increased resistance as Cooper's men mobilized. Reevaluating his situation, Phillips decided to retire towards Fort Gibson without further incident. The column reached the post on 29 February.<sup>274</sup>

Phillips' march lasted nearly a month, covered roughly 400 miles, and reportedly killed 250 enemy combatants without the loss of a single man. Though Phillips failed to strike across the border into Texas, his troops had penetrated 165 miles into enemy territory. During the expedition "he burned every house and crop, confiscated or destroyed every viable food source, and captured women, children, slaves, and livestock," and shipped the spoils north.<sup>275</sup> However, Phillips failed to shatter defiance to federal authority in the territory and nearly eliminated his cavalry's serviceable mounts. The death and destruction that was left in his wake only served to reinforce the resolve of the southern sympathizers. The Confederate commanders claimed Phillip's column retreated in the face of Confederate forces. General Maxey reported the Union expedition only added to the determination of the tribes to continue the fight.<sup>276</sup>

In late February, a council composed of Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole representatives met at Armstrong Academy. General Maxey joined the tribal leaders and promised victory in the coming year. Following the lead of the Choctaws, the tribes continued their loyalty to the Confederate government. To help relieve fears

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<sup>274</sup> William A. Phillips, Report, 16 February 1864. and *Itinerary of the Indian Brigade*, No Date.

<sup>275</sup> Edwards, *The Prairie Was on Fire*, 92.

<sup>276</sup> John M. Thayer, Report, 24 February 1864. and Samuel B. Maxey, letter, 26 February 1864. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 92. and Cottrell, *Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 89-90.



amongst the Indians, President Jefferson Davis personally wrote to the tribes in late February. “The welfare of the citizens and soldiers you represent are identical with those of the Confederate States...”<sup>277</sup> Davis promised the government would honor all treaty stipulations and designate the Indian Territory a separate military department under the command of General Cooper.<sup>278</sup> Davis addressed the issue of supplying the territory firearms bluntly, “arrangements have been made with Major Le Flore to have a certain number of arms delivered...for the Indians.”<sup>279</sup>

Despite the council meeting and Davis’s letter, some tribal members remained unconvinced of the Confederate government’s ability to protect them. In late February, representatives from the Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminoles met at Armstrong Academy. General Maxey addressed the council, meeting many of the representatives for the first time. Maxey and Cooper promised victory in the coming year and ensured the tribal representatives that the government in Richmond would honor all of the treaty obligations. Following the lead of the Choctaws, the council reaffirmed their loyalty to the Confederacy.<sup>280</sup>

During March, the two opposing forces collected supplies and forage, trained their troops, and stepped up patrols. On 12 March, the Union army began its campaign up the Red River from Shreveport, Louisiana. While expedition quickly bogged down and became ineffective, the move occupied General Maxey’s attention

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<sup>277</sup> Jefferson Davis to Israel Folsom, Letter, Dated 22 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 3, 824-825.

<sup>278</sup> Special Order No. 171 was issued 21 July 1864 declaring Indian Territory west of Arkansas constituted a separate district of the Trans-Mississippi Department, under the command of Brigadier General Douglas Cooper, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 2, 1019.

<sup>279</sup> Samuel B. Maxey, letter, 26 February 1864. and Jefferson Davis, Letter, 22 February 1864.

<sup>280</sup> Samuel B. Maxey to E. Kirby Smith, Letter, 26 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 994-997. and Douglas H. Cooper to Samuel B. Maxey, Letter, February xx, 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 24, Part 2, 959. and Moty Konard to Samuel B. Maxey, Letter, 6 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 950. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 68.

and kept Confederate troops in reserve in the southeastern corner of Indian Territory until mid April. Supplying the garrisons at Fort Gibson and Fort Smith became the immediate concern for the Union army in the west while enemy troops remained south of the Arkansas River. Colonel Phillips reported transportation for supplies as completely inadequate. To gather wheat in early March, Phillips used every means available. In a letter to General Curtis on 7 March, Phillips declared, “The supplies I have been getting from the border of Arkansas are being drained, and will not last me much more than a month longer.”<sup>281</sup>

In an effort to receive provisions, Phillips ordered several mule teams, along with nearly 200 head of oxen, to Fort Scott. He requested quartermaster stores including pantaloons, socks, and shoes as well as condensed food, sugar, coffee, molasses, and desiccated potatoes. Mules became so scarce in the vicinity of Fort Gibson that Phillips urged the employment of ox trains. He located about 600 steers for confiscation at Roley McIntosh’s, a “rebel man,” and 500 to 1,000 among the loyal Creeks that could be bought for \$20 to \$40 per pair. At Fort Smith, Blunt faced a similar situation. He reported to Curtis that he needed 500 mules to hitch up all of the wagons. Desperate for the animals, he sent Captain Durbin to purchase about 200 animals at up to \$175 per head.<sup>282</sup>

In a separate letter, Phillips outlined plans for reorganizing the Indian troops. To increase discipline, Phillips believed one regiment of white soldiers should be stationed with them. Also, each company should have at least two white officers.

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<sup>281</sup> William A. Phillips to Samuel R. Curtis, Letter, 7 March 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 524-527.

<sup>282</sup> William A. Phillips, Letter, 7 March 1864. and James G. Blunt to Samuel R. Curtis, Letter, 30 March 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 791-792.

“Although nearly all the Indian officers are useless...they have in some cases influence that no white men have. As a recruiting expense, even the Indian officers are worth the money.”<sup>283</sup> Phillips urged his commanded to ship adequate food and clothing for his troops. In addition, he also reported 200 to 300 deserters scattered in the hills. During the lull in fighting, these fugitives began attacking loyal Indians. To curb the problem, Phillips sought permission to arrest them and set them to work improving the fortifications at Fort Gibson under ball and chain.<sup>284</sup> At Fort Smith General Blunt reported similar problems. Arriving on 8 March, Blunt found the garrison stripped of all supplies.<sup>285</sup> General Curtis sought to provide the needed goods and ordered a train with ammunition from Fort Scott and supplies shipped up the Arkansas River by boat. He reminded Phillips that “the fate of our nation depends on the events of this year’s campaign, and every officer should feel the importance of great efforts and endurance.”<sup>286</sup>

While the federals took advantage of the pause in combat Confederate leaders waited anxiously to head north. From Fort Smith, Watie reported two regiments of cavalry headed to Fort Scott to escort a train south.<sup>287</sup> By March, Confederate quartermaster stores slowly began to empty. At Boggy Depot, just over 1,000 pounds of flour, between 9,000 and 10,000 pounds of meal, and 100 bushels of corn

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<sup>283</sup> William A. Phillips to Samuel R. Curtis, Letter, 7 March 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 525.

<sup>284</sup> William A. Phillips to Samuel R. Curtis, Letter, 7 March 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 525-527.

<sup>285</sup> James G. Blunt to Samuel R. Curtis, Letter, 9 March 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 537.

<sup>286</sup> Samuel R. Curtis to William A. Phillips, Letter, 9 March 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 538-539.

<sup>287</sup> Stand Watie to T.B. Heiston, Letter, 20 March 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 1071-1072. and Samuel B. Maxey to S.S. Anderson, Letter, 22 March 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 1070-1071.

remained. The lack of forage in the area worried Cooper. Wagons sent to Texas depots frequently had to search the countryside to find corn and other goods.<sup>288</sup>

In a move that would have infuriated his predecessor, Albert Pike, a number of the Indian troops under Maxey's command moved across the border into Arkansas in early April to reinforce General Sterling Price. Maxey commanded two brigades. Gano's Texas brigade, under Colonel Charles DeMorse, was composed of the 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, and 31<sup>st</sup> Texas, Welch's Texas Company, and one battery under Captain Butler Krumbhaar. The second brigade, under Colonel Tandy Walker, included the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Regiments.<sup>289</sup> After arriving in Arkansas, Maxey learned that a large supply train set lightly guarded as federal troops gathered hay and fodder at Prairie D'Ane, while the bulk of the Union force remained at Camden with General Frederick Steele. The large federal force under Steele was part of the larger Union plan to capture the depot at Shreveport, Louisiana.<sup>290</sup>

Early on 18 April, Gano moved his brigades forward, and as senior officer took command of the Confederate troops gathering to assault the train. About 9:00 a.m., General John S. Marmaduke and General Cabell also moved into position to attack the unsuspecting federal troops. Maxey deployed Marmaduke's division on

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<sup>288</sup> Douglas H. Cooper to S.S. Anderson, Letter, 22 March 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 1070-1074.

<sup>289</sup> The 29<sup>th</sup> Texas was under the command of Major J.A. Carroll, 30<sup>th</sup> Texas under Colonel N.W. Battle, the 31<sup>st</sup> under Major Michael Looscan, and Welch's Company under Lieutenant Frank M. Gano. The second brigade under Tandy Walker was composed of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel James Riley and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment under Colonel Sampson W. Folsom. See Organization of Confederate Forces in Arkansas, General E. Kirby Smith commanding, April 20, 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 784-785.

<sup>290</sup> W.R. Boggs to Samuel B. Maxey, Letter, 2 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 725. and W.R. Boggs to Samuel B. Maxey, Letter, 7 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 728-729. and W.R. Boggs to Samuel B. Maxey, Letter, 12 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 745-746. and S.B. Maxey to S.S. Anderson, Letter, 12 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, 761-762. and Sterling Price, Report, May 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 779-784. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 344-145.

the right, and his own troops and artillery on the left. General Cabell's men filled the center, supporting the artillery. The Union soldiers held higher ground with the train closed up on the road behind troops. With the Confederate line formed, Maxey's division moved forward to the left of the field, just out of sight of the enemy as the artillery opened fire. As the Confederates advanced, volleys erupted across the line. The Choctaw troops charged several times, finally driving the federal troops from the train into a heavily wooded ravine. Colonel Tandy Walker moved his troops forward to attack. As muskets blazed along the Confederate line, the Union troops again fell back. Once again, the Choctaws charged forward, forcing the federal troops to flee towards Camden and the safety of General Steele's main force. After pushing them for more than two miles, the victorious soldiers returned to the wagon train. Confederates found about thirty of the wagons damaged and burned them on the field. About 170 wagons, still hitched to teams and filled with corn, bacon, clothing, hogs, geese, and "unscrupulous plunder" were theirs for the taking. In addition, Maxey's men captured a four gun federal battery. At the Battle of Poison Springs, the federals lost nearly 500 killed and 100 captured. General Maxey's two brigades suffered seventeen dead and eighty five wounded. In all, Confederate losses at Poison Springs were sixteen killed and eighty eight wounded. On 28 April General Price released Maxey's troops and they returned to the Indian Territory well supplied with a substantial victory on their side.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Samuel B. Maxey, Report, 23 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 841-845. and Sterling Price, Report, May 1864. and Charles DeMorse, Report, 21 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 846-848. and George Williamson to Samuel B. Maxey, Letter, 28 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 845. and Tandy Walker, Report, 19 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 849. and Special Order No. 1, 28 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 845. and Return of Casualties in the Confederate Forces in the engagement at Poison Springs, Arkansas, 18 April 1864,

After returning to Indian Territory, Maxey knew the federal troops would not remain passive for long. Rather than wait for the Union troops to move south, he choose to take the war to them while the victory in Arkansas remained fresh in the minds of his troops. Maxey sought to avoid contact with the main federal army. Instead, he sought to strike at vulnerable logistical objectives and withdraw, shifting the balance of power in Indian Territory. In early April, Colonel Adair received orders to move north with 500 men in two regiments. General McCulloch requested that Quantrill also head toward Kansas. Adair's soldiers headed out on 17 April while Quantrill took about 150 irregulars in a separate column. Heavy rains and federal outposts limited the movement of both groups. Quantrill's men tried to cross the Arkansas River above Fort Gibson but a federal guard at the ford forced them back. Alerted to the increased activity, Colonel Phillips could do little. He possessed no cavalry to offer pursuit. As Quantrill's force attempted to cross the Arkansas, Adair's troops ran into federals while fording the Illinois River near Tahlequah. Without cavalry to hunt the enemy, Phillips reluctantly dispatched two regiments of infantry to chase down the Confederates, knowing they could not keep pace with the well mounted enemy. Colonel Adair turned east towards Arkansas. Fearing his troops would become trapped as the rains continued to fall; Quantrill crossed the Verdigris River and moved below Fort Gibson. Phillips reported enemy movements to General Curtis and placed federal troops at all of the fords in the vicinity of Fort Gibson. By early May, Quantrill and Adair returned south without causing

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*OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 786. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 72-73.

significant damage; however, they showed Phillips and the local inhabitants that raids could still be mounted and succeeded in placing federal troops on the defensive.<sup>292</sup>

The Confederate advance in April showed one of the developing weaknesses in the federal garrisons. The lack of cavalry could prove disastrous if Maxey mounted a full campaign. He wrote to General Steele, desiring instructions to procure horses for his Indian regiments. These regiments entered service mounted on their own horses, but several years of action rendered the animals worthless. Phillips estimated he needed 1,000 ponies to mount his men. The situation grew so desperate that he had to borrow or hire horses for scouting. General John M. Thayer, commander at Fort Smith, objected to the request stating “it is exceedingly difficult to obtain horses, even for the regularly organized cavalry; forage is scarce and grain could not be furnished; [and] the term of service of these regiments is drawing to its close.”<sup>293</sup> Not alone in his opinion, Thayer estimated the cost of providing horses for Phillips at \$160,000. All of the federal commanders endured a shortage of cavalry units. In July, the 1<sup>st</sup> Arkansas Cavalry (Union) reported about 100 mounts available for some 840 troopers and early the next month the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wisconsin Cavalry could mount only a dozen men. Finally, Phillips concern reached all the way to General Ulysses S. Grant. Grant wrote to Major Halleck from Culpeper Court House,

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<sup>292</sup> Charles W. Blair to G.S. Hampton, Letter, 27 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 3, 313. and Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 2 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 3, 746-747. and Samuel R. Curtis to H.W. Halleck, Letter, 25 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 3, 288. and Samuel R. Curtis to E.D. Townsend, Letter, 25 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 3, 288-289. Samuel R. Curtis to Thomas J. McKean, Letter, 25 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 3, 289-290. and John B. Sanborn to M. Burch, Letter, 26 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 3, 302. and Samuel R. Curtis to H.W. Halleck, Letter, 26 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 3, 302. and W.P. Adair to Stand Watie, Letter, 17 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 3, 776-777. and John B. Sanborn to Harrison, Letter, 4 May 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 3, 443. Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 380-382. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 73-74. and Dwyer, “Raiding Strategy: As Applied by the Western Confederate Cavalry in the American Civil War,” 267.

<sup>293</sup> John M. Thayer, Endorsement, 17 July 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 2, 234.

Virginia, with approval of Phillips' plan. Phillips brought in all of the ponies available from locals and purchased a small herd from the Osage tribe; however, he failed to mount most of his command. Serviceable mounts were just not available in the area.<sup>294</sup>

During the summer of 1864, the Union commanders in the west attempted to remove some of the burden of supplying Fort Gibson overland by dispatching a stern-wheel steamer up the Arkansas River. The garrison at Fort Smith routinely received shipments of goods via the river and General Curtis planned to use the Arkansas as a means to liberate Fort Gibson from the Texas Road. In late February, Curtis wrote to Captain M.H. Insley, Quartermaster at Fort Scott, with plans for the use of shallow draft boats to run from Little Rock to Fort Gibson. He understood that weather would limit navigation the Arkansas to a few weeks a year, but the prospect of quickly carrying large amounts of stores in a relatively short time period prompted an attempt.<sup>295</sup> In June, heavy rainfall filled the Arkansas River to the point that a steamer could reach the post. The *J.R. Williams*, a troop ferry at Fort Smith, was selected for the trip. Cloth, cotton, blankets, harnesses, boots, 1,000 barrels of flour, and fifteen tons of bacon filled the steamer. Twenty four men under Lieutenant A.B.

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<sup>294</sup> William A. Phillips to Frederick Steele, Letter, 11 July 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 2, 123-134. and W.D. Green, Endorsement, 25 July 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 2, 124. and H.W. Halleck to Ulysses S. Grant, Letter, 27 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 3, 312. and Ulysses S. Grant to H.W. Halleck, 27 April 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 3, 313. and John M. Thayer to W.D. Green, 8 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 3, 105. and S.B. Maxey to G.R. Boggs, 31 August 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 2, 1096. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 381-382. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 75. Franzman, "The Final Campaign, The Confederate Offensive of 1864," 270. No records indicate exactly how many horses Phillips acquired; however, throughout the year lack of mounts hindered operations.

<sup>295</sup> Samuel R. Curtis to M.H. Insley, Letter, 29 February 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 468. and John M. Thayer, Report, 22 June 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 4, 503. and Henry Strong, *Diary of Henry Strong*, 15 June 1864, Manuscript Division, Fort Scott National Historic Park, Fort Scott, Kansas. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 85.



Cook assembled to escort the vessel along its route. Lieutenant George W. Huston, from the 14<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry, received orders to accompany the vessel and insure it stores were properly unloaded and the ship returned with salt and lime.<sup>296</sup>

The departure of the *J.R. Williams* was no secret in Fort Smith. Operating in the area, Stand Watie quickly learned of the voyage. He moved with 300 men and three pieces of artillery to Pleasant Bluff along the Arkansas River, five miles below the mouth of the Canadian, and set up an ambush. Watie's troops used the timber along the river to conceal their positions and waited patiently for the ship to steam into sight. Around 4:00 p.m., the *J.R. Williams* steamed within range and Captain George W. Grayson fired a warning shot across its bow, hoping to convince the steamer to stop. When the ship refused to stop the Confederate troops opened fire on the vessel with the three howitzers and small arms. The artillery quickly disabled the *J.R. Williams*, forcing the pilot to run the boat aground on a sandbar near the north shore of the river. The federal troops took shelter behind the freight and returned fire but within minutes the Confederate artillery drove the defenders from the ship. The Union soldiers jumped overboard into water waist deep and made their way to the shore and took shelter several hundred yards away in the timber. With the ship on their side of the river, Lieutenant Cook decided to hold his position until

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<sup>296</sup> Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 17 June 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 1011-1012. and Warren Day, Letter, 18 June 1864, Day Letters, M175, Manuscript Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. and John M. Thayer, Report, 22 June 1864. and Stand Watie, Report, 17 June 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 1012. and Stand Watie, Report, 27 June 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 1013. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 237. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 400-401. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 93-95. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 115. and George W. Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy: The Autobiography of Chief G.W. Grayson*, ed. W. David Baird (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 83-84. and James D. Morrison, "Capture of the *J.R. Williams*," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 41 (Summer 1964), 107-108. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 85-86. and Steele and Cottrell, *Civil War in the Ozarks*, 89-90.

reinforcements arrived. To his horror, the captain of the boat and Lieutenant Hudson emerged from the *J.R. Williams* as the enemy fire ceased and started across the river in a yawl. Knowing Watie's troops could now cross the Arkansas, Lieutenant Cook ordered his men to retreat towards Fort Smith abandoning the provisions.<sup>297</sup>

Watie used the yawl to ferry soldiers over and secure the *J.R. Williams*. His men found four federals dead. Using ropes, the Confederates pulled the ship across the river and began to unpack its plunder. As Watie's men unloaded their bounty, a large portion of his Creeks and Seminoles laden with supplies left the camp and headed home. Left with a few men, Watie continued to unload the cargo throughout the night while waiting for wagons to transport the goods. About noon on 16 June, federal forces returned to the vessel. As soon word of the attack reached him, Colonel John Ritchie marched from Mackey's Salt Works, about ten miles from the *J.R. Williams*, with 200 men. Upon his arrival, he found Watie's troops still at the steamer and opened fire. Neither Ritchie nor Watie could muster the strength to drive the other from the field. Finally, Watie ordered the ship and supplies burned, fearing they would fall back into Union hands. Even though a majority of the supplies aboard the *J.R. Williams* were destroyed, Watie's shocking attack on the steamer exhilarated southern sympathizers in the region and forced the federal garrison to receive supplies from Fort Scott via the Texas Road.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 17 June 1864. and Warren Day, Letter, 18 June 1864. and Henry Strong, *Diary*, 15 June 1864. and John M. Thayer, Report, 22 June 1864. and Stand Watie, Report, 17 and 27 June 1864. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 400-404. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 93-95. and James D. Morrison, "Capture of the *J.R. Williams*," 107. and Ramppp and Ramppp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 84-85.

<sup>298</sup> Stand Watie, Report, 17 and 27 June 1864. and *Diary of Henry Strong*, 15 June 1864, Fort Scott National Historic Park, Manuscript Division, Fort Scott, Kansas. and John M. Thayer, Report, 22 June 1864. *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 1037. and Britton, *Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 237. and Cottrell, *Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 93-95. and George W.

As Watie's small party waited, he received word of a large federal detachment approaching up the south bank of the Arkansas. He fell back twelve miles and met Lieutenant Thomas. C. Reynolds' Chickasaw Regiment. To slow the Union advance, Watie ordered 150 men under Major J.K.P. Campbell to Iron Bridge on the San Bois River while he took the remainder of the command to Limestone Prairie. (See Map 10.) Campbell reached the bridge just after dawn and began building fortifications. The federal force under Colonel S. J. Crawford advanced cautiously, not knowing what lay ahead. With 700 troops from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry and the 11<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Infantry, and a section of artillery, Crawford severely outnumbered his foe. Upon reaching the river his men found the bridge flooring ripped up and crude breastworks assembled on the opposite bank. The Confederates opened fire on the advancing federals. The Union soldiers quickly formed a line and returned fire. In an effort to force the enemy from its entrenchments, Crawford moved his howitzers forward and began shelling the enemy. After firing a few shots, the gun crews got their bearings and began dismantling the fortifications causing the Confederates to break and run. Exhausted by the march, Crawford chose not to pursue the routed enemy.<sup>299</sup>

With a string of victories on their side, Confederate activity intensified in July. While encamped on James Creek in the Choctaw Nation, Cooper learned that General Thayer had established a permanent cavalry base near Caldwell's with additional troops at Massard Prairie, just five miles from Fort Smith. On 26 July, General Gano

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Grayson. G. W. Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, 83-84. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 88-89.

<sup>299</sup> Stand Watie, Report, 27 June 1864. and Edwards, *The Prairie Was on Fire*, 100-101. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 88-89.

gathered 500 men from his brigade, detachments from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Brigade under Colonel Folsom, and Wells' battalion for to strike the federal troops. Together the force exceeded 1,500 mounted men. Cooper, Watie, and Gano developed a plan to trap the federal cavalry and ordered Colonel McCurtain to Backbone Mountain southwest of Fort Smith. Folsom and the Choctaws were to attack the federal camp at Caldwell's and destroy it. Gano ordered Folsom to fall back along the Fort Towson Road under the watchful eye of McCurtain and his troops on Backbone Mountain if pursued by the Union cavalry at Massard Prairie or Fort Smith. Gano's brigade would follow the federals and then attack their rear while Folsom and McCurtain held them at mountain.<sup>300</sup>

General Cooper arranged for the various units to meet on the Poteau River, but before the entire troop arrived Folsom began his march north to arrive at Caldwell's before dawn. As evening approached the remaining commands met. Finding the force smaller than anticipated, General Gano personally took charge to lead the attack. Hoping to strike at daylight, the cavalry moved in two columns along roads leading to Massard Prairie.<sup>301</sup> General Gano struck just as the sun began to break the horizon. Advancing on two fronts, mounted troopers quickly overwhelmed the federal pickets. The attack caught most of the enemy troops still sleeping, with their mounts grazing about half a mile from the camp. Major David Mefford heard the gunfire erupt from his pickets and ordered the federal horses secured. The Union

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<sup>300</sup> Samuel B. Maxey, Report, 30 July 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 39. and Samuel B. Maxey, Report, 6 August 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 29-30. and General Orders No. 53, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 30. and Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 10 August 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 31-36. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 414-427. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 90-91.

<sup>301</sup> Samuel B. Maxey, Reports, 30 July and 6 August 1864. and Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 10 August 1864. and General Order No. 53. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 424-427. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 90-91.

troops formed between the advancing Confederates and their mounts. Before the ponies could be brought up, the Confederates charged the disorganized federal line and stampeded the Union herd. Lieutenant Jacob Morehead formed his men on the right of the camp, while the remainder of the 6<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry fell in on his left. As the troops moved into position, heavy musket fire erupted throughout their ranks temporarily halting the Confederate advance.<sup>302</sup>

Forced to fight dismounted, the Union line began to fall back on the open prairie towards Fort Smith. The federal cavalry again established a line and repulsed three enemy charges before being outflanked by overwhelming numbers. With their line crumbling, the remaining federals fled to a house on the prairie while the Confederates captured stragglers. As they reached the house, Mefford's men again tried to reform. The mounted Confederates encircled the structure, forcing Mefford to surrender his command before it was destroyed. Some of the federal troops managed to escape the enemy onslaught by hiding in the thick brush.<sup>303</sup>

Confederate troops pillaged Mefford's camp, taking what they wanted and destroying the rest as they fell back. As the enemy approached, Lieutenant William M. Burgoyne placed the regimental records and flag into a wagon and started it to Fort Smith. Quickly overtaken, the Confederates took the pens, ink, and paper before

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<sup>302</sup> William M. Burgoyne, Report, 29 July 1864, *Supplement OR*, Series 1, Volume 53, Supplement, 481. and Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 10 August 1864. and Samuel B. Maxey, Report, 30 July and 6 August, 1864. and U.S. War Department, Records of Events, July and August 1864, *Supplement OR*, Volume 21, Part 2, 298. and Robert C. Horn, *The Annals of Elder Horn, Early Life in the Southwest*, ed. John W. Bower and Claude H. Thurman, (New York: R.R. Smith Inc, 1930), 47-48. and Burke, *Official Military History of Kansas Regiments in the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, 88-89. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 91. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 92-93.

<sup>303</sup> Burke, *Official Military History of Kansas Regiments in the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, 88-89. and William M. Burgoyne, Report, 29 July 1864. and Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 10 August 1864. and Edward Folsom, *Reminiscences of Edward Folsom*, no date. and Samuel B. Maxey, Report, 30 July 1864. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 92-93.

destroying what they could not carry. “It was payday...I saw a man throw an armful of money in the fire. I asked what did he do that for. He said it was no good, but other boys held what they got”<sup>304</sup> After quickly gathering prisoners and supplies, Gano retreated south and crossed the Arkansas River before a relief column could arrive. Gano reported enemy losses at fifty killed and wounded and 127 taken prisoner including Major Mefford. In addition the Confederate soldiers captured some 200 Sharps carbines, 400 revolvers, camp equipment, and a number of horses. Gano lost only seven killed and twenty six wounded.<sup>305</sup>

The Confederate attack at Massard Prairie was a tremendous success. The battle boosted morale and forced the federals on the defensive. Following the engagement, General Gano and his columns fell back to Backbone Mountain and on 28 July, Watie received orders to hand pick 200 men and officers for a raid across the Arkansas River to break up a hay operation on Blackburn’s Prairie. By mid-summer, large numbers of federal troops were assigned to the massive haying operations needed to maintain the Union presence at Fort Gibson and Fort Smith. Watie’s troopers rode in surprising the federal soldiers. They quickly went to work burning the hay while they disabled the mowing machine. Rather than engage the Union troops in a set battle the raiders quickly retired from the field.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> William M. Burgoyne, Report, 29 July 1864. and Edward Folsom, *Reminiscences of Edward Folsom*, no date. and U.S. War Department, *Records of Events, July and August 1864, Supplement OR*, Volume 21, Part 2, 298. and Burke, *Official Military History of Kansas Regiments in the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, 88-89.

<sup>305</sup> William M. Burgoyne, Report, 29 July 1864. and Samuel B. Maxey, Report, 30 July 1864. and Burke, *Official Military History of Kansas Regiments in the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, 88-89. and Robert C. Horn, *The Annals of Elder Horn, Early Life in the Southwest*, 48. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 92-93.

<sup>306</sup> Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 10 August 1864. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 93.

With morale high from recent victories, General Cooper planned to assault on Fort Smith. On 29 July, Cooper directed Colonel McCurtain to move to Double Spring and rendezvous with Gano. After the two commands united, they marched on to James' Fork near Wall's Mill. Watie and his Indians moved to Skullyville Prairie and combined with Colonel Folsom's Choctaws, Wells' battalion, and a section of Howell's battery. At sunrise on 30 July, both columns marched east. Gano and McCurtain moved towards Massard Prairie while Cooper personally took Watie's and Folsom's regiments, Wells' battalion, and Howell's section and advanced up the main road to Fort Smith.<sup>307</sup>

Using his Indian troops to lead the attack, Cooper ordered Watie forward to drive in the federal pickets. While Watie's troops advanced to engage them, the Choctaw Brigade, First Creek Regiment, and Wells' battalion formed on a hill to the north of Fort Smith with the artillery. Watie separated his column en route, ordering Colonel Bell and the 1<sup>st</sup> Cherokee Regiment to attack up the main road while Colonel Adair and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cherokee Regiment moved left and charged up the Line Road. Suddenly, the federal guards found hundreds of enemy troops charging their camp as they prepared dinner. At the first rifle crack, Lieutenant Levi F. Stewart mounted his thirty five cavalry soldiers and started towards the rifle fire. Within minutes, he ran into one of his pickets with a number of Cherokees in chase. Stewart quickly formed a line, but after several shots the Confederates overwhelmed his small detachment, forcing him to retire towards Fort Smith. Following the brief engagement, Watie's

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<sup>307</sup> Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 10 August 1864. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 93.

men returned to the federal camp and dined on the abandoned dinner while the ragged troops took all of the supplies they could use.<sup>308</sup>

Soon, the shock wore off from the surprise attack and General Thayer's garrison began mounting a defense. Federal troops filled the roads leading from the post, resulting in heavy skirmishing. Watie reported the enemy advancing in force so Cooper ordered Wells' battalion to the Line Road to cover Watie as his troops moved into a new position near the fork in the road at Mill Creek. General Gano, still at Massard Prairie, received orders to cross the prairie and form on Watie. Quickly, Cooper brought up his artillery under Captain John T. Humphrey. The Confederate guns moved into position and opened fire on the enemy at 600 yards. As Gano's men arrived, a section was thrown forward as flankers. Supported by the Cherokees, they drove the federal troops back under the protection of Fort Smith's artillery. As the Union troops retreated, Captain Humphreys followed with his light battery and fired on the enemy cavalry with devastating accuracy. Confederate shells rained down on the federal troops, killing a number of men and horses. Finally, Union artillery arrived under Captain J.W. Rabb and returned fire. The federal shells passed harmlessly overhead as Humphrey's men limbered the guns. Before he could retire, one shell exploded among the battery horses, killing three and ripping the leg off one of the men. Another round decapitated one of Gano's troops. Quickly cutting the dead horses loose, the Confederate battery fell back without additional losses.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>308</sup> Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 10 August 1864. and Levi F. Stewart, Report, 2 August 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 25-26. and John M. Thayer, Report, 3 August 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 2, 538-539. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 427. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 93.

<sup>309</sup> Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 10 August 1864. and Levi F. Stewart, Report, 2 August 1864. and John M. Thayer, Report, 3 August 1864. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 427. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 94-95.



As the sun began to set, Cooper faced a dilemma. Thick timber screened the nearby Union infantry and prevented him from using his cavalry. Numerous roads crisscrossed the area, allowing the federal troops to flank the Confederate line. Convinced his position was too precarious to maintain and his soldiers could not drive the federals from the post he ordered his forces to fall back on his reserve with General Gano's troops taking up the rear. Gano's men were directed to burn the federal picket camp as they fell back, while the main force under Cooper moved to Cedar Prairie, nine miles southwest of Fort Smith, and encamped. The federal troops retired to the safety of Fort Smith, unaware that the enemy had slipped away in the darkness. Despite heavy fighting, casualties remained light. General Thayer reported Union losses as one killed while Cooper listed one dead and five wounded. Early on 1 August, Cooper's army mounted up and continued their march into Indian Territory. Watie moved towards Skullyville while the remainder of Cooper's men retired to Buck Creek. Soon after beginning their march, heavy artillery fire erupted in their rear. Captain Gunter and a few Cherokee amused themselves by firing at the federals across the Poteau River. As soon as the Union guns returned fire, the little party moved into a new position, hidden by the brush. Once the enemy tired and the guns went quiet, Gunter would begin again. For most of the day, Cooper's troops could hear the barrages at Buck Creek, twenty five miles away.<sup>310</sup>

On his return, Captain Gunter reported the federals crossing to the north side of the Arkansas River. Cooper dismissed the report until Watie sent word that he heard drums at tattoo, but not reveille. To investigate, Cooper ordered Watie back to Poteau Bottom and sent Gano to Massard Prairie. Contrary to his own opinion,

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<sup>310</sup> Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 10 August 1864.

several witnesses told Cooper that the federals were evacuating Fort Smith. Just in case the rumors turned out to be true, he ordered his supply train up. By evening, scouts advised him that Union refugee families moving into Fort Smith had caused the commotion. Satisfied that the federals remained determined to hold the post, Cooper ordered his troops west. The attack on Fort Smith forced many of the pro-Union citizens in the area to flee to federal troops for safety. Even though his men fought remarkably well, Cooper remained convinced that he could not force the federals out of the post in a set fight without enduring tremendous losses. His exhausted and hungry men fell back across the Arkansas River to rest and reorganize.<sup>311</sup>

In mid-August Cooper's Confederates returned to raiding federal outposts and haying operations. By striking at such logistical operations, a limited number of Confederate troopers could tie up large numbers of federal troops and remove the forage necessary for maintaining the garrison at Fort Gibson. On 24 August, 500 of Watie's men struck a large hay operation at Gunter's Prairie, southwest of Fort Smith at daybreak. About 350 men from the 11<sup>th</sup> U.S. Colored Infantry were detailed to put up hay on the prairie under the watchful eye of some seventy cavalry soldiers. The Confederate troops quickly overwhelmed the pickets and moved on the colored infantry. In the confusion that ensued, some of Watie's men managed to set the hay on fire. With the fires burning, Watie's troops retired from the field. In all, twenty

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<sup>311</sup> Douglas H. Cooper, Report, 10 August 1864.

federals lay dead on the prairie. Losing one soldier in the fight, the Confederate troops made off with about 150 horses and mules and fourteen white prisoners.<sup>312</sup>

As Watie's men attacked the federals at Gunter's Prairie, Captain W.H. Shannon gathered 100 men and moved to intercept a refugee train on Lee's Creek, west of the Wire Road. Shannon began his journey on 16 August under orders to move into Missouri and locate horses. He scoured the southwest corner of the state looking for mounts. On his return home, he located a refugee train and decided to strike. Shannon divided his men, using all of the soldiers with rifles as infantry and all of the troops with revolvers as cavalry. As the train approached, the infantry fired on the advanced skirmishers, rapidly driving the surprised federals into his cavalry troops. Shannon pressed forward with his infantry to set fire to the wagons. As his mounted troops passed, one of his men got excited and ordered the infantry to their horses, leaving Shannon with just twelve men. As the federal soldiers moved into a defensive position, the Confederates withdrew leaving ten Union soldiers dead.<sup>313</sup>

Moving south down the Wire Road, Shannon discovered a mail party with several wagons had just passed with about sixty federal cavalry. The next morning Shannon overtook the company six miles south of Lee's Creek. Dividing his troops in two, Shannon took half the men and circled around in front of the federals while

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<sup>312</sup> Warren Day, Letter, 2 September 1864, Day Letters, M175, Manuscript Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. and James L. Lynch, Letter, 31 August 1864, E.E. Dale Collection, Box 112, F13, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma. and Samuel B. Maxey, Report, 3 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 279. and Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, 89-92. and Henry Strong, *Diary of Henry Strong*, 24 August 1864. and U.S. War Department, Record of Events, September and October 1864, *Supplement OR*, Volume 21, Part 2, 462. and Dwyer, "Raiding Strategy: As Applied by the Western Confederate Cavalry in the American Civil War," 267.

<sup>313</sup> William H. Shannon to Douglas H. Cooper, Letter, 26 August 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 2, 1086-1087. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 112-113. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 98.

Captain Adair moved in behind the wagons. With his men dismounted, Shannon waited for the Union troops to approach. Seeing the small Confederate force to their front, the federal cavalry formed to fight, cursing and yelling. They warned Shannon they had him right where they wanted and began the attack. The federal cavalry charged three times, but failed to route Shannon's men. Then, to their surprise, Captain Adair charged their rear. In the chaos that ensued, only seven men escaped. The Confederate Indians captured two wagons, loaded with mail, tobacco, and various weapons.<sup>314</sup>

Union troops continued their massive hay operations in late summer in order to provide forage for the cavalry horses and other livestock during the coming winter. In Kansas, troops prepared massive stores of supplies for the journey south to feed the Union army and supply the growing refugee population surrounding Fort Gibson during the coming winter. Because of difficulties providing adequate supplies, Federal troops had subsisted on half rations over the previous winter and spring. The repeated progression of wagon trains down the Texas Road consumed most of the available forage, making each journey more difficult. Lack of rainfall dropped water levels across the territory, allowing Confederate raiders to move through the area without detection. These combined factors convinced the enemy commanders to believe they were on an equal footing with the federal troops.<sup>315</sup>

Watie and Adair approached Maxey with a plan to raid north of Fort Gibson in September and again place pressure on the federal supply line. For several months

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<sup>314</sup> William H. Shannon to Douglas H. Cooper, Letter, 26 August 1864. and Thomas M. Bowen to John M. Thayer, Letter, 12 August 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 2, 666. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 99.

<sup>315</sup> Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 97.

Cooper urged Maxey to let his troop's move north of the Arkansas and strike at the federal hay operations and supply trains. In light of their recent success, Maxey wrote to General Kirby Smith for permission to turn the mounted men loose, robbing the federal troops of the supplies necessary to remain at Fort Gibson. The plan was approved in late August, just as Confederate scouts alerted General Douglas H. Cooper that one of the largest U.S. supply trains ever to be sent to Fort Gibson prepared to move south from Fort Scott, Kansas. Such an opportunity could not be overlooked. In mid August, Maxey wrote to General Smith that his troops were ragged, barefoot, and lacked clothing necessary for decency. The Confederate commanders saw their chance for a campaign to raid the hay fields and capture the large Union train meant to supply Fort Gibson and the refugees in the surrounding area. Despite formation of a field transportation department in the Trans-Mississippi in 1863, Indian Territory found itself short of wagons to transport supplies. Confederate held regions lacked the workshops to manufacture and repair wagons, forcing Maxey to depend on facilities in Arkansas and Texas. By August, the territory relied on about seventy ox drawn wagons to transport provisions for the troops and thousands of refugee Indians from north Texas. Each trip took between twenty and thirty days to transport nine days worth of goods.<sup>316</sup>

Hoping to put pressure on the federal garrison, Gano ordered a large Confederate cavalry force up the Grand River above Fort Gibson in September.

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<sup>316</sup> Samuel B. Maxey to E. Kirby Smith, Letter, 18 August 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 2, 1072. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 428-429. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 97. and Jay Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border 1854-1865*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984. Reprinted from the original edition, Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1955), 307. and Windham, "The Problem of Supply in the Trans-Mississippi Confederacy," 156-157.

Watie took 800 men from the 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Cavalry Brigade and 1,200 men from Gano's Texas Brigade for the task. Outflanking the Union troops on their move north, the Confederate army thundered into the Grand River Valley about fifteen miles north of Fort Gibson with 2,000 soldiers supported by six artillery pieces placing Fort Gibson at risk.<sup>317</sup>

At Flat Rock, two miles from the Grand River, lay the Federals largest hay operation. Flat Rock Creek was a small tributary of the Grand River that branched out onto the open prairie. There were numerous pools connected by thin threads of water along the creek. The lagoons, lined with undersized willows and brush, provided cool refuge for the men working in the hay fields. One hundred twenty-five men, mostly black troops from the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry, and a detachment of the 2nd Kansas Cavalry were stationed at the camp under Captain Edgar Barker. Barker kept small cavalry patrols out around the clock near his camp to alert his men to any danger.<sup>318</sup>

Late in the afternoon of 16 September, one of Barker's cavalry patrols came racing into camp with the horrifying news that hundreds of enemy cavalry were riding straight for Flat Rock. Barker immediately ordered his men in from the hay

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<sup>317</sup> R.M. Gano, Report, 23 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 788-791. and Samuel B. Maxey, Report, 16 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 777. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 98. and Steele and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Ozarks*, 90-91. and Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, 94-85. and Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border*, 307-308.

<sup>318</sup> Edgar A. Barker, Report, 20 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part I, 771-772. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 437-438. and R.M. Gano, Report, 23 September 1864. and John K. Graton, Letter, 29 September 1864, John K. Graton Correspondence, MS913.02, Microfilm Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. and James M. Williams, Letter, 16 September 1864, James M. Williams Collection, Military History Collection, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. and Records of Troops Movements, M594, Roll 213, Microfilm Division, National Archives. and Britton, *Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 244. and Cottrell, *Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 98. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 153.

fields. The soldiers gathered their muskets and deployed along a ravine in a defensive position. Captain Barker and a small escort rode out to a high ridge to observe the approaching enemy and spotted the 2,000 enemy troops advancing towards him. The party quickly rode back to Flat Rock, closely pursued by Confederate cavalry. By the time Barker and his troop dismounted and ran to the cover of the ravine, the enemy had approached to within 200 yards.<sup>319</sup>

Watie's men attacked the Union troops in the ravine from five different directions. Over the course of the next half hour, the severely outnumbered federals repulsed charge after charge. However, it became evident to Captain Barker and his command that they would soon be overrun. As a result, he made a desperate decision. All of the cavalry that could locate their horses were soon gathered. Barker planned to lead them in a desperate charge against the Confederate line, hoping to break through and ride to Fort Gibson for reinforcements. The colored troops and the dismounted cavalymen would be left behind and hopefully they would be able to fight their way to the Grand River and the safety of its timber. In a desperate gamble Barker and forty mounted men charged headlong into Watie's line. Barker along with fifteen men escaped through the chaos and immediately set out for Fort Gibson.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Edgar A. Barker, Report 20 September 1864. and Thomas W. Daugherty, Letter, 29 September 1864, Twenty-Ninth Texas Collection, Harold B. Simpson Research Center, Hillsboro, Texas. and R.M. Gano, Report, 23 September 1864 *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part I, 788. and John K. Graton, Letter, 29 September 1864. and James M. Williams, Letter, 16 September 1864. and Yeary, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865*, 46, 733. and Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, 95. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 244-245. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 438. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 98. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 153.

<sup>320</sup> Edgar A. Barker, Report, 20 September 1864. and Thomas W. Daugherty, Letter, 29 September 1864. and R.M. Gano, Report, 23 September 1864. and Britton, *The Civil War in the Ozarks*, 245-246. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 439. and Cottrell, *The Civil*

Back in the ravine the soldiers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry rallied under Lieutenant Thomas B. Sutherland, knowing that no quarter would be given for the colored troops. They prepared to make their stand, each knowing the chances of escaping were slim. The troops determined to make the enemy to take their position at a heavy cost. Putting up tremendous resistance, the Confederates continued to repeatedly charge the federals in an attempt to dislodge the defenders. With each attack, the Union casualty list climbed and their supplies dwindled. With their munitions exhausted after two hours of intense fighting, Sutherland gave one last order for men to save themselves. The remaining troops dashed from the ravine and ran in every direction as the Confederate artillery opened fire with grapeshot. Almost immediately the slaughter commenced. “Some of our men discovered a negro [sic] hiding in the weeds near the creek and shot and killed him. At another point one was found hid in the weeds, the men proceeded to hunt them out much as sportsmen do quail.”<sup>321</sup> All across the prairie, Confederate troops searched for the routed troops.

Many of the federals that escaped hid in the shallow lagoons amidst the brush and lilies with their noses barely emerging from the water. “Some of the negroes [sic] finding they were about to be discovered, would spring up from the brush and

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*War in the Indian Territory*, 98-99. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 154. and Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865*, 307-308. and Steele and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Ozarks*, 91. and Yeary, *Reminiscence of the Boys in Gray 1861-1865*, 46, 733.

<sup>321</sup> Edgar A. Barker, Report, 20 September 1864. and Thomas W. Daugherty, Letter, 29 September 1864. and R.M. Gano, Report, 23 September 1864. and John K. Graton, Letter, 29 September 1864. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 99. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 245-246. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 439-440. and Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, 95-96. and Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border*, 307-308. and Steele and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Ozarks*, 91. and Yeary, *Reminiscence of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865*, 46, 733.



cry out, Oh master spare me... and were shot down without mercy.”<sup>322</sup> The Confederates hunted down every man possible and set fire to an estimated three thousand tons of hay as well as a government hay-mowing machine.<sup>323</sup> In the wake of their destruction, the Confederate cavalry moved north from Flat Rock along the Texas Road to intercept the approaching Union supply train, the ultimate goal of their expedition. The convoy consisted of 300 wagons full of supplies valued at over one and a half million dollars. To protect the provisions, Major Henry Hopkins commanded a guard of 260 troopers from the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> Kansas Cavalry and 100 troops from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Home Guard.<sup>324</sup>

While encamped on Horse Creek, Hopkins received a dispatch from Fort Gibson informing him that 1500 Confederates were advancing to the north to attack the train. On 17 September, Hopkins moved the supplies and wagons to Cabin Creek where a federal stockade had been constructed. At the post, 310 men from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Home Guard waited.<sup>325</sup> Hopkins arrived at Cabin Creek at noon on 18

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<sup>322</sup> Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 440. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 154. and Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, 96. and Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border*, 308.

<sup>323</sup> Edgar A. Barker, Report, 20 September 1864. and Thomas W. Daugherty, Letter, 29 September 1864. and R.M. Gano, Report, 23 September 1864. and John K. Graton, Letter, 29 September 1864. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 246-247. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 440. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 154. and Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, 96. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 99. and Steele and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Ozarks*, 91. and Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border*, 308. and Yeary, *Reminiscence of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865*, 46, 733.

<sup>324</sup> Samuel R. Curtis, Report, 20 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 764. and R.M. Gano, Report, 23 September 1864. and Henry Hopkins, Report, 22 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 766-771. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 440. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 248. and Burke, *Official Military History of Kansas Regiments During the War for the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, 60, 103, 146, 376. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 99-102. and Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, 99. and Steele and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Ozarks*, 89-90. and Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border*, 308.

<sup>325</sup> 170 Cherokee troops from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Home Guard manned the post under Lieutenant Palmer. The Cherokee troops had built the stockade as well as a hospital at Cabin Creek. An

September. His effective fighting force now totaled 600 soldiers. The troops set about moving cotton bales into defensive positions around the stockade. After his arrival Hopkins and twenty-five men from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas set out to scout the train's route south. Almost immediately, the party discovered a portion of General Gano's force occupying the ravines two miles below the post. Hopkins fell back to the post and quickly ordered the wagons assembled in close order to the rear of the stockade. He then strengthened his picket line and formed his men for the ensuing action. At the time Hopkins believed the enemy lacked artillery and numbered less than 800 men.<sup>326</sup>

By midnight, Watie arrived with the remainder of the troops and artillery. Watie and Gano decided to use the light of the night's full moon to advance on the federal position. Once their troops moved to within a half mile of the Union post, they deployed for battle with Gano's soldiers on the right and Watie's men on the left. The Confederate artillery formed in the center. At 1:00 a.m., the rebels advanced. The federals allowed the enemy to approach within 300 yards before unleashing their first volley in the night's air. The Confederates returned fire and their increased numbers became apparent by the numerous muzzle flashes in the darkness. Then, to Hopkin's horror the six Confederate cannons thundered to life from the center of the enemy line. "Hundreds of iron balls from the artillery canister rounds tore through

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additional 140 troops from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Home Guard under Lieutenant Whitlow had been dispatched as reinforcements to help secure the train from the approaching Confederate army.

<sup>326</sup> Henry Hopkins, Report, 22 September 1864. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 247-249. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 440-442. and Burke, *Official Military History of Kansas Regiments During the War for the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, 104, 146, 376. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 102. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 154-155. and Steele and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Ozarks*, 90-91.

the camp tents, timber, and wagons like giant shotgun blasts.”<sup>327</sup> Artillery shells were sent screaming into the stockade, their explosions causing hundreds of animals to stampede and plunge over the 150-foot bluff at the creek, often taking wagons with them. Many of the teamsters and wagon master cut their mules loose and escaped north towards Fort Scott, Kansas. Unrelenting artillery and gunfire continued throughout the night, causing many of the federal troops to retreat from the engagement, disappearing into the pre-dawn darkness.<sup>328</sup>

As the sun rose, the Confederates moved closer, encircling the remaining Union forces and creating a damaging crossfire. Finally, severely outnumbered and subjected to tremendous fire from the Confederate lines, the surviving federal force withdrew from the battlefield towards Fort Gibson. The Confederates burned the damaged wagons and slaughtered the injured mules. Over 130 wagons loaded with \$1,500,000 worth of clothing, food, ammunition, and accouterments were theirs for the taking. The victorious soldiers also claimed 740 mules. This one battle took a

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<sup>327</sup> Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 442. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 102-103. and Steele and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Ozarks*, 91-92. and Yeary, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865*, 46, 118, 351-353, 684, 724.

<sup>328</sup> T.S. Bell, Letter, 30 September 1864, Section X.T.S., Bell Letters, Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society. and John A. Foreman, Report, 20 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 766. and Samuel R. Curtis, Report, 20 September 1864. and R.M. Gano, Report, 23 September 1864. and Henry Hopkins, Report, 22 September 1864. and Charles R. Jennison, Report, 22 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 772- 774. and Richard L. Martin, Letter, September 1864, Richard L. Martin Collection, F3, University of Oklahoma, Western History Collection. James McCombs *Reminiscence of James McCombs*, No Date, Section X, Biographies, Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society. and Stand Watie, Report, 21 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 783-84. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 249-251. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 442-444. and Burke, *Official Military History of Kansas Regiments During the War for the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, 60, 104-105, 146, 376. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 103. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 154-156. and Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, 101. and Steele and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Ozarks*, 91-92. and Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border*, 308-309. and Yeary, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1864*, 46, 118, 351-353, 684, 724, 830-832.

ragged and half-starved army and transformed it into a well fed, well equipped, and virtually uniformed command.<sup>329</sup>

The newly energized Confederates moved south in two columns with their spoils. Gano knew federal reinforcements from Fort Gibson would soon approach. That evening at Pryor Creek, they ran headlong into a strong force of federal infantry, under Colonel James M. Williams, making a forced march to reinforce Hopkins at Cabin Creek. William's column consisted of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Kansas Colored Infantry, the 11<sup>th</sup> U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment, and one battery of Parrot Rifles. Gano left a guard at the train and deployed in a line of battle to meet the federals. Outnumbered two to one, Williams fell back to a strong defensive position. As soon as the approaching enemy came within range, he unleashed his highly accurate artillery pieces. Soon, the Confederate advance fell back. Gano and Watie responded with their own artillery, starting a duel that lasted until dusk fell. In the darkness, Gano deployed his force in a battle line on a high ridge in the open prairie in full view of Williams and the federal force. Under the cover of the night Gano's men emptied 100 of the wagons and drove them over the prairie convincing Williams the train was

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<sup>329</sup> T.S. Bell Letter, 30 September 1864. and Samuel R. Curtis, Report, 20 September 1864. and R.M. Gano, Report, 23 September 1864. and J. N. Hilderbrand, Report, 26 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 779. and Henry Hopkins, Report, 22 September 1864. and Charles R. Jennison, Report, 22 September 1864. and Richard C. Martin, Letter, September 1864. and S. B. Maxey, Report, 1 October 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 779-780. and McCombs, *Reminiscence of James McCombs*. and L. H. Oliver, Report, 25 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part, 1, 778. and Stand Watie, Reports, 21 September 1864. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 251. and Burke, *Official Military History of Kansas Regiments During the War for the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, 106. and Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, 101-104. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 103. and Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border*, 309-320. and Steele and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Ozarks*, 92. and Yeary, *Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865*, 46, 118, 351-353, 684, 724, 830-832.

being parked to the rear of the Confederate line while the remainder of the captured wagons rushed southwest towards the Verdigris River.<sup>330</sup>

The Confederates built fires along the ridge in the open prairie to give the impression they had encamped in force while they slowly disappeared into the obscurity of the night. As dawn broke the next morning, Colonel Williams discovered the enemy had slipped away. In less than two days, his infantry had advanced eighty miles and were in no condition to pursue an enemy force that outnumbered him two to one. Gano and Watie crossed the Verdigris River near Claremore Mound and headed south. On 28 September, they arrived at Camp Bragg on the south side of the Canadian River. They had ridden over 400 miles in 14 days and crushed the federal army in one of the worst defeats in Indian Territory.

This engagement, known as the Second Battle of Cabin Creek changed perceptions of the war on both sides. The Confederate army in Indian Territory was not a weak, defeated mix of broken troops; instead the force was still a threat to the unionist in the area and the federal army. Despite the staggering artillery fire and intense musketry during the battle, casualties were generally light. The federal force made use of the bluffs near the creek while the Confederates moved along ravines and used fallen logs as cover. Gano's Texans suffered eight dead and thirty-seven wounded. Watie did not give a complete list of his losses, instead reporting one

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<sup>330</sup> T.S. Bell, Letter, 30 September 1864. and R.M. Gano, Report, 23 September 1864. and John K. Graton, Letter, 29 September 1864. and Richard L. Martin, Letter, September 1864. and McCombs, *Reminiscence of James McCombs*. and Stand Watie, Report, 21 September 1864. and James M. Williams, Report, 20 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part, 1, 765. and Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, 104-105. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 444-445. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 105. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 156-157. and Steele and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Ozarks*, 251-252. and Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border*, 310. and Yearly, *Reminiscence of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865*, 46, 118, 351-353, 684, 724, 830-32.

officer killed, four officers wounded. Union casualties were reported as seven killed, six wounded, with twenty-four missing. Losses among the civilian teamsters are unknown.<sup>331</sup> Following their victory at Cabin Creek, Watie sent several messages to Cooper advising him of the success. Cooper ordered Colonel McIntosh north with some 400 Creeks to help escort the wagons to Fishertown. Cooper personally met the column as they arrived.<sup>332</sup>

The defeat at Cabin Creek left the federal commanders in awe. At Fort Smith, General Thayer spent the rest of September ordering various troops back and forth between the two federal posts, confident the enemy planned to attack him. On 22 September, he wrote to General Halleck, “the enemy in my front numbers 8,000 or 10,000, from 5,000 to 6,000 well mounted, while I have not 200 effective mounted men.”<sup>333</sup> The repeated request for reinforcements convinced his superiors the garrison was about to be overrun. Thayer became so paranoid that he ordered a halt to all supply trains from Fort Scott, fearing a repeat of Cabin Creek, robbing the federal troops in Indian Territory of desperately needed supplies. In late September, Thayer ordered Colonel Wattles to send every available wagon loaded with corn from

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<sup>331</sup> R.M. Gano, Report, 23 September 1864. and R.M. Gano, Report, 23 September 1864. and John K. Graton, Letter, 29 September 1864. and Henry Hopkins, Report, 22 September 1864. and Stand Watie, Report, 21 September 1864. and James M. Williams, Report, 20 September 1864. and Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II, 1863-1865*, 252. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 445-446. and Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 105-106. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie’s Confederate Indians*, 157. and Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, 104-105. and Yearly, *Reminiscence of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865*, 643, 830-832.

<sup>332</sup> Douglas H. Cooper to T.M. Scott, Letter, 24 September 1864. and S.H. Hildebrand to D.H. Cooper, Letter, 26 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 779. and R.M. Gano, Report, 23 September 1864. and Samuel B Maxey to W.R. Boggs, Letter, 1 October 1861. and Samuel B. Maxey to W.R. Boggs, Letter, 7 October 1864.

<sup>333</sup> John M. Thayer to Henry W. Halleck, Letter, 22 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 3, 300.

Fort Gibson to Fort Smith. Thayer proved more than willing to reduce the garrison at Fort Gibson, or abandon it, to save the federal post at Fort Smith.<sup>334</sup>

General Sterling Price's raid into southwestern Missouri only added to Thayer's concerns. He set to work improving the fortifications at both posts while Price rode Missouri with thousands of Confederate cavalry on a large raid. During late September and October, Confederate forces in Indian Territory moved south and began preparing for winter. Even though the Confederate's attack at Cabin Creek secured numerous wagons full of supplies, the troops did not have the guns, ammunition, or horses needed to mount a successful campaign that fall. Unaware of the enemy's condition, Thayer believed Indian Territory was nearing a state of emergency. He wrote to Wattles at Fort Gibson, "It is my intention to hold Fort Smith...even if necessary to abandon every other point in the district." Thayer went on to warn Wattles to keep enough transportation available to move his ammunition and commissary stores and authorized conscription of all private teams to move the wagons. Once again federal troops at Fort Gibson prepared to move.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> John M. Thayer to Henry W. Halleck, Letter, 22 September 1864. and John M. Thayer to James M. Williams, Letter, 22 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 3, 300. and John M. Thayer to Stephen H. Wattles, Letter, 22 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 3, 301. and John M. Thayer to C.W. Adams, Letter, 22 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 3, 301. and John M. Thayer to Frederick Steele, Letter, 24 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 3, 341. and C.W. Adams to Samuel R. Curtis, Letter, 22 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 3, 314. and Henry W. Halleck to John M. Thayer, Letter, 24 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 3, 341. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 452-453. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 117.

<sup>335</sup> Samuel R. Curtis to James G. Blunt, Letter, 22 September 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 1, 314-315. and John M. Thayer to Frederick Steele, Letter, 4 October 1864, *OR*, Series 1, volume 41, part 1, 608-609. and John M. Thayer to Stephen H. Wattles, Letter, 18 October 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 4, 74-75. and Charles M. Crebs to Stephen H. Wattles, Letter, 19 October 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 4, 107-108. and William Gallaher to James M. Williams, Letter, 20 October 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 4, 130. and John M. Thayer to Stephen H. Wattles, Letter, 20 October 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 4, 130-131.

In mid October, federal forces in Missouri began pushing Price south. Halleck attempted to ease Thayer's concerns, notifying him that Price would be closely pursued. Halleck also sent word that Little Rock would provide supplies to the garrison. Until their arrival, he directed Thayer "collect all supplies you can from the surrounding country, taking them from the rebel inhabitants." To increase Fort Gibson's stores, Thayer ordered Wattles to obtain all of the local supplies he could. He advised Wattles, "I don't mind what price you pay for it, or what inducements you offer to Indians to bring in cattle or corn. Secure all you can." By the end of October, Thayer's constant worries began to ease. He wrote to Wattles instructing him "I have concluded not to have you leave Gibson... You will therefore remain and occupy it."<sup>336</sup>

Slowly, relative quiet spread across Indian Territory as Union and Confederate troops settled into defensive positions for winter. In early November, Maxey met with the Grand Council of the Allied Tribes. For three hours he reviewed the highlights and successes of his administration during the previous months of the war. By resolution the council continued to fully endorse Maxey's administration. From there, Maxey traveled to Fort Washita and inspected the post and found the garrison in good spirits and well supplied. In a letter, Maxey went on to advise that lack of forage would hamper troop movements within the territory. Indian Territory remained calm until early November.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Henry W. Halleck to John M. Thayer, Letter, 24 October 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 4, 218. and John M. Thayer to Stephen H. Wattles, Letter, 24 October 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 4, 218. and John M. Thayer to Stephen H. Wattles, 27 October 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 4, 272.

<sup>337</sup> Samuel B. Maxey to E. Kirby Smith, Letter, 8 November 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 4, 1035-1036.



Federal forces under Curtis, Blunt, and Rosecrans defeated Price in Missouri at the Battle of Big Blue on 21 October and then again at Westport on 23 October. Price turned south to avoid complete destruction. General Price crossed into Indian Territory on 7 November As federal troops pushed him south. His soldiers entered Indian Territory near starvation with their supplies and provisions depleted. Price headed to Boggy Depot to re-supply before continuing his march to Texas. Cooper tried to supply the men as best he could before they continued their march. Despite their great victories throughout the year, the ragged, starving, and defeated soldiers reminded the Cooper and Maxey that the federals remained in control in the north. Price crossed the Red River, reaching Bonham, Texas, on 2 December.<sup>338</sup>

Despite the successful Confederate resurgence in Indian Territory, defeat was inevitable. Sterling Price's army moved south of the Red River following their devastating defeat in Missouri, Robert E. Lee's troops were under siege at Petersburg, William Tecumseh Sherman had marched to the sea and taken Savannah, and John Bell Hood's army had been destroyed at Nashville.<sup>339</sup> In early 1865, both the Union and Confederates reorganized their commands. Thayer was transferred from Fort Smith, replaced by Cyrus Bussey, and General Steele relinquished command of the department to General J.J. Reynolds. Colonel Phillips returned to command troops at

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<sup>338</sup> Samuel B. Maxey to W.R. Boggs, Letter, 20 November 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 4, 1067. and J.B. Marauder to Samuel B. Maxey, Letter, 15 November 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 4, 1050-1051. and T.M. Scott to Maclean, Letter, 18 November 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 41, Part 4, 1063. and Samuel B. Maxey to E. Kirby Smith, 8 November 1864. and Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 452. and Edwards, *The Prairie Was on Fire*, 127-128. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 117. For a more detailed account of Price's raid, and the battles between Union and Confederate forces within Missouri, see Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II, 1863-1865*, 469-518.

<sup>339</sup> Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 129.

Fort Gibson. To the south, General Maxey was transferred to Texas, finally placing Cooper in command of the district of Indian Territory.<sup>340</sup>

Watie replaced Cooper as division commander and moved the Indian troops to Boggy Depot, where they remained until mustered out of service after the end of the war. Throughout the spring Confederate forces deserted in droves all over the Trans-Mississippi. All across the region commanders reported their troops would not fight. In May, Cooper asked his officers for assistance to help prevent mayhem stating, “there is more danger of anarchy from lawless bands of armed men in case the war is stopped than there is now from the public enemy.” He requested the civil authorities give assistance by advising the warriors “to stand to their colors, obey orders, refrain from plunder and protect their country until the storm is over...” For Cooper, the war was over. He began concentrating troops at Boggy Depot. Once again he called upon his superiors to send white troops to Indian Territory; however, now he sought the troops to protect public property and enable him to preserve order.<sup>341</sup>

In late May, Cooper recommended the leaders of the Confederate Indians call a meeting of the Grand Council. He recognized each tribe should seek terms of surrender as independent entities. When E. Kirby Smith surrendered the Trans-Mississippi Department on 26 May, Cooper relinquished his white troops. On 10 June, the tribal leaders met and agreed to surrender to the United States government.

Colonel Asa C. Matthews and Adjutant William H. Vance arrived at Doaksville,

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<sup>340</sup> Special Order No. 4, 11 January 1865, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 48, Part 1, 516-518. and General Order No. 7, 21 February 1865, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 48, Part 1, 1403. and Samuel B. Maxey, General Order No 411, Samuel B. Maxey Papers, Archives, Thomas Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma. and Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 130-131.

<sup>341</sup> Douglas H. Cooper to T.M. Scott, Letter, 17 May 1865, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 48, Part 2, 1310-1312. and J.B. Magruder to E. Kirby Smith, Letter, 16 May 1865, *OR*, Series 1, volume 48, Part 2, 1308. and Douglas H. Cooper to H.E. McCulloch, Letter, 18 May 1865, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 48, Part 2, 1312-1313.

Choctaw Nation, to receive the surrender of the Indian Tribes. The Choctaw tribe capitulated on 19 June, followed by Watie and his Cherokees on 23 June, ending the Civil War in the Indian Territory. The end came quietly as officers waited their turn to surrender and moved to nearby federal garrisons to be paroled. From there, the troops returned home to begin their life after four years of war.<sup>342</sup>

Unlike the two previous years of conflict, 1864 became the year of great raids. In February, Union troops marched into the heart of the Choctaw Nation; however, Phillips was unable to deliver a decisive blow and fell back in the face of mounting resistance. The death and destruction that was left in his wake reinforced the resolve of the southern sympathizers and cost him the majority of serviceable cavalry mounts. In addition, both the sides found themselves burdened by thousands of refugees, forced from their farms by the prospect of enemy raids and starvation. Later in the year Confederate raids targeted communication, wagon trains, detached troops in hay camps, and lightly defended civilian populations and offered Generals Cooper and Maxey alternatives to direct confrontation. In September, Confederate forces seized a federal supply train valued at more than \$1,500,000 and transformed their army into a well fed and well equipped army.

The Confederate offensive during the summer and fall 1864 may have failed to recapture Fort Gibson and Fort Smith but it did succeed in holding the garrisons in check. The campaign inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy, denied military resources to the federal commanders, and diverted Union attention sufficiently to

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<sup>342</sup> Douglas H. Cooper to S.S. Anderson, Letter, 25 May 1865, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 48, Part 2, 1319. and S.B. Buchanan to Douglas H. Cooper, Letter, 6 June 1865, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 48, Part 2, 1322-1323. and C.T. Christensen, General Order No. 61, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 48, Part 2, 604-606. and Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 196-198. and Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 120-121.

prevent large scale operation into the Choctaw or Chickasaw nations after Phillips' incursion in February. Confederate activities destroyed Phillips' and Thayer's ability to maintain effective cavalry troops. Slowly, relative quiet spread across the Indian Territory as Union and Confederate troops settled into defensive positions for the upcoming winter. In spite of the successful Confederate resurgence in Indian Territory, defeat was inevitable. Throughout spring 1865, Confederate forces deserted in droves across the Trans-Mississippi and commanders reported their troops would not fight. Finally, the Trans-Mississippi Department surrendered on 26 May followed by the Choctaws and Cherokees in June.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

For four years, the Civil War devastated Indian Territory while tribes suffered significant losses for their part in America's war. At the outset of hostilities, federal troops abandoned Indian Territory leaving the various tribes without their promised government protection. Bloodshed began in 1861 as Confederate troops drove pro-Union Indians north to Kansas. For the next four years, armies crossed the territory, particularly the Cherokee Nation, in an effort to dominate the region. The war stripped the land of livestock while farms went untended. By the end of hostilities, thirty three percent of the population was widowed, sixteen percent of the children were fatherless, and fourteen percent of children were orphans. Many depended on the generosity of others for mere survival.<sup>343</sup> By the end of the war, the Confederacy used over 10,000 Native Americans in their army while federal forces recruited some 5,000.<sup>344</sup>

When warfare broke out across the nation in 1861, the United States withdrew federal forces from Indian Territory, citing the inability to supply such garrisons. Hoping to use the area as a buffer between pro-Union Kansas and supply stores in Texas and Arkansas the Confederacy sought to establish alliances with these tribes citing cultural, economic, and geographic ties to the Indian Nations. The growth and development throughout Indian Territory mimicked that of the South, with farming, livestock production, and slave-driven agriculture. Many of the progressive Indians

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<sup>343</sup> Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 132. & Johnston, "The Panther's Cream is Often Heard" Cherokee Women in Indian Territory during the Civil War," 84.

<sup>344</sup> Franzman, "Peculiarly situated between rebellion and loyalty" *Civilized Tribes, Savagery, and the American Civil War*," 148.

within the territory imitated southern aristocracy. Abandoned by the Union forces and refused annuity payments, the Choctaw Nation led the way in establishing treaties with the new government in Richmond and the Confederate victory at Wilson's Creek, Missouri, in August 1861, inspired tribal governments to repudiate alliances with the United States. However, the Confederate cause was not unanimous, leaving many loyal natives with little choice but to flee to Kansas. Devastated en route by veteran Texas cavalry, Opothleyaholo and his band of Unionists eventually crossed the border into Kansas destitute and near starvation, prompting attention from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Despite battlefield success during the first year of the war the Confederate Trans-Mississippi region suffered several drawbacks. The region was almost entirely agrarian with limited industrial infrastructure. Compared to the rest of the south the area lacked any semblance of a substantial transportation network forcing the Trans-Mississippi Department to rely on river systems and wagons to move the bulk of its goods.<sup>345</sup> When Confederate states occupied federal arsenals at the outbreak of the war they confiscated all equipment and weapons; however, a majority of these firearms proved obsolete and the state governments located few serviceable, outdated, cannon. By the end of the year the Ordnance Bureau began shipping field pieces west and in February several guns arrived in Indian Territory for the upcoming spring offensive; however, federal troops would maintain superiority in artillery throughout the conflict.<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> Windham, "The Problem of Supply in the Trans-Mississippi Confederacy," 150.

<sup>346</sup> Alwyn Barr, "Confederate Artillery in the Trans-Mississippi," *Military Affairs* 27 (Summer 1963): 77.

During spring 1862, both sides increased military activity. Once in Kansas, the destitute natives overwhelmed the Southern Superintendency and military quartermasters at Fort Scott with demands for provisions prompting an expedition to return the refugees. The plan called for a military invasion and occupation of Fort Gibson, to be supplied from the quartermaster department at Fort Scott. Once in Indian Territory, federal troops would receive supplies from Fort Scott and gather additional commissary goods from the recently returned civilians as they put in crops. From the beginning, the Indian Expedition, under the command of Colonel William Weer, moved rapidly and Union battlefield victories destabilized Confederate alliances with the tribes in Indian Territory, particularly the Cherokee. However, the failure to supply the troops, and weaknesses in the federal command, culminated in a mutiny and Weer's arrest, reassuring pro-Confederate tribal governments that Union troops could not support themselves within the borders of Indian Territory.

The year 1863 proved to be a turning point for the Civil War in the Indian Territory. Colonel William A. Phillips successfully invaded Indian Territory and opened the door for General James G. Blunt's occupation of Fort Smith. Despite numerous Confederate attempts, the supply line from Fort Scott remained open, providing the garrison's with provisions. However, failure to stabilize the area surrounding the post increased the refugee population, adding to the burden of providing adequate supply. Confederate losses throughout the year used up valuable and irreplaceable supplies. In July, federal troops took Vicksburg and Port Hudson, along with control of the Mississippi River, isolating the Trans-Mississippi Department from the rest of the Confederacy. Late in the year, an overwhelming

defeat at Baxter Springs reminded federal soldiers that enemy troops could successfully attack above the Arkansas River. Frustrated by his experience with other officers and the poor condition of troops in Indian Territory, Confederate General Frederick Steele requested he be relieved of his command. On 11 December he was dismissed and General Samuel B. Maxey assumed command of Indian Territory. Maxey decried the conditions of Indian Territory to his superiors, particularly the lack of supplies, and began reorganizing his army in preparation for spring offensives. Military provisions brought into the Trans-Mississippi were not evenly distributed throughout the department and the majority of goods that made it through the blockade, or arrived via Mexico, were distributed to the army in Texas.<sup>347</sup>

Slowly, winter returned to Indian Territory. Demoralized Confederate troops lacked enough equipment to be considered effective soldiers and remained south of the Arkansas River. Raids became the prominent form of attack, most led by Colonel Stand Watie and the Cherokee Mounted Rifles. Frequent incursions resulted in open hostility between federal forces and the civilian population as both army's requisitioned livestock and crops from local inhabitants. Many families found themselves without food as the year closed. By the end 1863, some 18,000 pro-southern Indians fled south into the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in search of assistance. General Maxey spent much of early 1864 reorganizing the units and command structure in the territory and constantly grumbled to his superior General E. Kirby Smith that his troops lacked competent leaders, suffered from a lack of discipline, and were without even basic military supplies.

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<sup>347</sup> Windham, "The Problem of Supply in the Trans-Mississippi Confederacy," 167.



Unlike the two previous years of conflict, 1864 became the year of great raids. In February, Union troops marched into the heart of the Choctaw Nation. The ability of enemy troops to advance in the face of Confederate opposition forced some tribal members to waiver in allegiance to the government in Richmond especially after the annuity payments failed to arrive early in the year. However, Phillips was unable to deliver a decisive blow, and fell back in the face of mounting resistance. The death and destruction that was left in his wake only served to reinforce the resolve of the southern sympathizers and cost him the majority of serviceable cavalry mounts.

In addition, both the sides found themselves burdened by thousands of refugees, forced from their farms by the prospect of enemy raids and starvation. Soon supply shortages began to affect Union troops as well. Mules became so scarce in the vicinity of Fort Gibson that Phillips urged the employment of ox trains. Blunt became so desperate for the animals that he authorized payment of \$175 for each mule. Desperate for the materials necessary to continue the war, Union forces turned to oxen to carry supplies south from Fort Scott.

Later in the year Confederate raids targeted communication, wagon trains, detached troops in hay camps or advanced bases, and lightly defended civilian populations and offered Generals Cooper and Maxey alternatives to direct confrontation. The Confederate advance showed one of the developing weaknesses in the federal garrisons; Phillips' command lacked horses to mount his men. He estimated he needed 1,000 ponies for his troops. The situation grew so desperate that Phillips had to borrow or hire horses for scouting while he dispatched infantry to hunt down the mounted Confederate raiders.

In September, Confederate forces seized a federal supply train valued at more than \$1,500,000 in one of their greatest victories. The triumphant soldiers also claimed 740 mules, impeding the federal's ability to transport materials to Fort Gibson. This one battle took the ragged and half-starved Confederates and transformed it into a well fed, well equipped, and virtually uniformed army. The defeat also left the federal commanders in awe. At Fort Smith, General John M. Thayer spent the rest of September ordering various troops back and forth between the two federal posts, confident he the enemy planned to attack him. He eventually became so paranoid he ordered a halt to all wagon trains, robbing the federal troops in Indian Territory of desperately needed supplies.

The Confederate offensive during the summer and fall 1864 may have failed to recapture Fort Gibson and Fort Smith but it did succeed in holding the garrisons in check. The campaign inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy, denied military resources to the federal commanders, and diverted Union attention sufficiently to prevent large scale operation into the Choctaw or Chickasaw nations after Phillips' incursion in February. Confederate activities destroyed Phillips' and Thayer's ability to maintain effective cavalry troops.

Slowly, relative quiet spread across the Indian Territory as Union and Confederate troops settled into defensive positions for the upcoming winter. In spite of the successful Confederate resurgence in Indian Territory, defeat was inevitable. In early 1865, both the Union and Confederate commands were again reorganized. Throughout the spring, Confederate forces deserted in droves across the Trans-Mississippi and commanders reported their troops would not fight.

Finally, General Edmund Kirby Smith ordered the Trans-Mississippi Department to lay down arms on 26 May. On 10 June, the tribal governments agreed to surrender to the United States. The Choctaws capitulated on 19 June followed by Watie and his Cherokees on 23 June, ending the Civil War in Indian Territory. The end came quietly as officers moved to nearby federal garrisons and waited their turn to surrender. From there, the troops returned home to begin their life again.

Despite Confederate efforts throughout the war, federal troops continued to receive supplies from Fort Scott down the Texas Road, ensuring their occupation at Fort Gibson and Fort Smith would hold firm. Confederate forces continued to fight until all hope was lost. Other than Phillips' expedition into the Choctaw Nation in 1864, federal troops remained north of the Arkansas River, occupied with supplying themselves. All along the Red River Valley and North Texas, farmers continued to provide some subsistence to the Confederate troops; however, a lack of military supplies kept commanders from driving the federals from Indian Territory.

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