ADMINISTERING HISTORY: THE OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND THE CIVIL WAR IN INDIAN TERRITORY

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Acknowledgements reflect the views of the author and are not endorsed by committee members or Oklahoma State University.

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Abstract: The American Civil War is one of the most studied periods in American history, with over 60,000 books detailing numerous topics from the political saga leading to war to social history exploring the lives of civilians, enslaved, and soldiers in the field. More recently, historians have turned their attention to history for the public and the preservation of the war in an organizational setting. This study expands that literature by exploring the legacy of the Civil War through the evolution of institutional interpretation and memorialization of the Civil War and its aftermath by the Oklahoma Historical Society over the last 125 years.

Across the South, public spaces supported the evolving Lost Cause tradition while asserting power and authority over public memory by creating memorials to the perceived fight for independence from the Union. Historical memory is often linked to intentionally selected people, places, and objects. Over time, public interpretation shifted to explore new themes including the civilian's Civil War, the suffering of refugees, the lives of the enslaved people, the experience of African Americans as soldiers, the homefront, and the war's effect on the Native American population of Indian Territory and beyond.

It is within this larger framework of administrative preservation and continued interpretive change that this study examines the institutional memorialization of the Civil War in Oklahoma by the state historical society through its museums and sites, historical markers, and memorials. Over time, the OHS transformed their analyses of this seminal event to recognize greater diversity in the narrative of the war beyond the Lost Cause by recognizing the war was a multifaceted and transformative event in the development of Indian Territory and later the state of Oklahoma. Throughout its history, the OHS worked to protect historical resources and developed ever changing constructs of the war and Reconstruction for the public. The early conciliatory view, fully adopted by the 1910s, was maintained until significant changes were made in the last decades of the twentieth century to include new voices and legacies in the society's interpretation across the state. The efforts to memorialize the Civil War in Indian Territory culminated with the creation of the Honey Springs Battlefield and established a blueprint for future preservation efforts moving forward.

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INTRODUCTION

> *"I would like to live a short time in peace just to see how it would be. I would like to feel free once in life again and feel no dread of war or of any other trouble."*
>
> *– Stand Watie*

In the searing July heat in eastern Oklahoma, thousands of Civil War reenactors marched across the dry prairie for the 130th anniversary of the Battle of Honey Springs in 1993. The drum beat a regular cadence as horse drawn artillery moved into position across the horizon before letting out a thunderous roar that filled the air with billowing white smoke, occasionally igniting the dead vegetation on fire. As men clad in blue wool advanced shoulder to shoulder across the field to engage the enemy, the crack of musket fire erupted as pickets, placed ahead of the main battle line, encountered the advancing foe. Along Elk Creek, thousands of Confederate reenactors waited patiently before releasing volley after volley into the approaching Union soldiers. At this event reenactors recreated their own personal version of the Civil War as scores of spectators looked on.

After a long fascination with history, that experience solidified my journey towards a career as a public historian and set-in motion my love of historical interpretation that continues to this day. The previous fall, staff from the Oklahoma Historical Society (hereafter OHS) provided a living history program at my high school campus. Living history, a form of educational programming offered by many museums and historic sites across the country, is one method of public engagement meant to bring historical events and individuals to life for audiences.[1] This program, focusing on the Civil War in Indian Territory, would be my first personally transformative experience with history in the public sphere.

You could say that I came of age in the era of the "pretenders" just as reenacting as a hobby was exploding across the nation. An article in *Oklahoma Today* said it best, noting that "reenactors make history their playground" as they highlighted the story of reenactment as a hobby across Oklahoma. According to this piece, fifteen thousand spectators had attended the Civil War reenactment at Honey Springs just a year before.[2] Popular with audiences and individuals alike, Civil War reenactments found new life in the late 1980s. Those events and many others that followed shaped my personal

[1] There are countless resources regarding living history in the public history world. See David Allison, *Living History: Effective Costumed Interpretation and Enactment at Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016); Jay Anderson, *A Living History Reader* (Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History, 1991); William K. Kay and the United States National Park Service, *Keep it Alive!: Tips on Living History Demonstrations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, 1970); Scott Magelssen, *Living History Museums: Undoing History through Performances* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2007); Scott Magelssen and Rhona Justice-Malloy, *Enacting History* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011); Laura Peers, *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007); Victor Danilov, *Living History Museums and Historic Sites in the United States* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2010); Gordon L. Jones, "Gut History: Civil War Reenacting and the Making of an American Past" (PhD diss, Emory University, 2007); Christopher Bates, "What They Fight For: The Men and Women of Civil War Reenactment" (PhD diss, UCLA, 2016).
[2] Maura McDermott, "The Pretenders," *Oklahoma Today* 42, no. 5, (September/October 1992): 38.

perspective and how I have approached researching Oklahoma's Civil War in public memory. At the time, I was unaware that I was participating in a resurgence of Civil War popularity and shifting historical interpretations, which were expanding to include new narratives that moved beyond the politics, military leaders, and the war in the east and recognized the contributions of the individual, included the enslaved people, and acknowledged the war and its aftermath for Native Americans.

The American Civil War is one of the most studied periods in American history, with over 60,000 works detailing numerous topics from the political saga leading to the conflict to studies of the lives of civilians, the enslaved people, and soldiers in the field. This study expands that literature by exploring the legacy of the Civil War through the evolution of institutional interpretation and memorialization of the Civil War and its aftermath by the Oklahoma Historical Society over the last 125 years. The majority of battles are documented, researched, and often revisited and now include new perspectives such as placing the West within the narrative of Civil War history, exploring the contested memory of America's conflict, and examining an ever-expanding voice of what the war meant for individuals of all backgrounds across the nation.

As historians broadened social history in the 1970s and 1980s, new avenues for historical exploration began to focus on the question of commemoration, memory, and interpretation in the public sphere. Several strands of historiography have influenced this work including memory studies, scholarly works on the Civil War, museum visitor identity, and interpretation at historical museums and sites. Scholarship on preservation and interpretation across the nation at Civil War sites has witnessed new growth in the last decade. This can be partially attributed to the transition of professionally trained staff

at museums and historic sites that exploded in the 1970s as public history emerged as a field. It can also be partially attributed to the realization that memory reflects current social and political relationships at the time of its creation and can give insight into the evolution of historical thinking and attachment to local heritage. As social history expanded, so too did the narrative of interpretation at historical sites and museums. The evolution of this interpretation over the last 100 to 150 years is well documented in the organizational records, newsletters, journals, and print materials created by institutions but has not been widely discussed.

A point of clarity is prudent at this point. During the conflict, the Indian Territory was a distinct military district of operations for both United States and Confederate forces. The idea of what "Indian Territory" is has evolved dramatically over time. In the late eighteenth century, it referred to the area west of the Appalachian Mountains. As white settlement displaced Native American tribes following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, President Thomas Jefferson, and those who followed, envisioned the creation of a permanent Indian frontier west of the Mississippi River. While the idea of "Indian Removal" is most closely associated with President Andrew Jackson and the Indian Removal Act of 1830 the idea of removing tribes to the West predated both. For years, the Federal government worked to displace tribes in the East. Escalating tensions in Georgia manifested by land hungry whites and the discovery of gold in 1828 led to demands for the removal of Indians from the state setting in motion one of the largest forced migrations in the United States.

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 provided President Jackson with $500,000 to establish an Indian district west of the Mississippi River, trade lands within that district

for property in the east, compensate Indian tribes for the cost of removal, and provide for subsistence once relocated to the West. Though the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations resisted, their forced removal to the West was imminent. By the time of the Civil War, Indian Territory was reduced to the area south of Kansas, west of Arkansas, and north of Texas. Though the area was designated "Indian Territory," it was never established as a territory through a Congressional organic act. What is now considered the Oklahoma Panhandle was added to Oklahoma Territory via the Organic Act of 1890 that officially established Oklahoma Territory and encompassed the western half of what is now the state of Oklahoma. Efforts to keep the remaining "Indian Territory" separate failed and in 1907 the two territories were joined to form the state of Oklahoma. For the purpose of this study, Indian Territory at the time of the Civil War encompassed the majority of what would become the state of Oklahoma. As such, the two terms will be used interchangeably.[3]

Over 150 years have passed since the end of America's Civil War. But the war still carries different and varying meanings for many. The 1990s were a boon for historical sites as visitation exploded, public programing grew, and many sites began developing museum education or interpretative programming for a growing public hungry for history. The drive for public consumption of history sustained historical sites and museums across the country and led to a proliferation of local, regional, statewide,

[3] U.S. Congress, *U.S. Statutes at Large, Volume 4-1835, 19th through 23rd Congress,* United States, -1835, Periodical, 411-412, https://www.loc.gov/item/llsl-v4/; U.S. Congress, *U.S. Statutes at Large, Volume 26-1891, 51st Congress,* United States, - 1891, 1890, Periodical, 81, https://www.loc.gov/item/llsl-v26/. Charles R. Goins and Danny Gobble, *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 52-75.

and national historical groups and societies.[4] But there is a distinct difference between history and heritage. For the public, heritage denotes powerful sentiment. And for many, the Civil War still stirs emotions as the defining moment in their cultural identity driving them to be protective of the idea of heritage.

The idea of heritage, the highly selective perception of the past, often deliberately overlooks conflicting narratives. The way we remember and connect personally to the past is a powerful element of our own identity. Maurice Halbwach's theories on memory can help us understand these public perceptions. Considering autobiographical memory, an individual's own memory of events that are personally experienced, helps readers understand the first generation of literature produced by those who fought in the Civil War as they sought to make sense of their own struggles. Collective memory, also referred to as historical memory, refers to an understanding of an event common to a group and exists within the framework of the social context in which it is created.[5]

Since this study examines the evolution of the historical interpretation of the Civil War through the administration of an institutional perspective, it is important to note that preservation began firmly entrenched in the autobiographical memory of the veterans' organizations, who established the first national battlefields, and their descendants, who adopted the reconciliationists perspective. It connects those who came after creating state historical sites and museums, eventually expanding the narrative to include more than just the "valiant soldiers" who sacrificed and the "great" political and military leaders

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[4] For detailed annual museum and library institutional numbers see the Institute of Museum and Library Services data catalog at https://www.imls.gov/research-tools/data-collection. Survey data is available since FY 1996.

[5] Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy, eds., *The Collective Memory Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 18-19.

who led the nation through the bloody war and Reconstruction. In the last decade, a new focus has brought how we remember the war in the institutional setting to the foreground. This study seeks to chronicle Oklahoma's century long history of preservation, interpretation, and memorialization of the Civil War at the state level.

It is within the larger framework of memory, preservation, and continued change in interpretation that this dissertation examines the administrative history of the Civil War in Oklahoma by the state historical society and its historic sites. For this study, it is important to define "Oklahoma's Civil War." Oklahoma did not receive territorial status until 1889 or statehood until 1907. Prior to 1889, the area that is now Oklahoma was recognized as Indian Territory. Generally, the distinct region that encompasses the area that became "Oklahoma" evades a cohesive label; it was neither Union nor Confederate, nor was it a border state. It was composed of independent, sovereign American Indian Nations that maintained treaty ties to the United States. Both the United States and Confederacy considered it a distinct military district in the Trans-Mississippi and the Confederacy actively sought treaty alliances with the tribes in an effort to extend their sphere of influence west towards the Pacific Coast. In 1890, Wiley Britton labeled the area "the border" when he published his wartime memoir of operations in Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, and Indian Territory.[6] Britton and many of his contemporaries referred to Indian Territory as the "border region" because of its distinctiveness from the surrounding states and its location on the western frontier.

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[6] Wiley Britton, *The Civil War on the Border*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1890).

During the Civil War and Reconstruction, what is now Oklahoma was comprised of an increasing number of forcibly removed Indian Tribes including the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations, among others. Each actively engaged in the American Civil War by providing troops to both the United States and the Confederate States and were considered in open rebellion against the federal government by leadership in Washington, D.C. At the outbreak of hostilities, some seventy thousand individuals lived within the territory. By the time the war ended, thirty three percent of the population were widowed, sixteen percent of the children were fatherless, fourteen percent of children were orphans and, over seven thousand enslaved were emancipated and without status. Many of the residents across the territory depended on the generosity of others for mere survival as they began to rebuild. By the end of the war, the Confederacy placed over ten thousand Native Americans under arms while the United States recruited some five thousand troops from the various tribes.[7] For these tribes, the war was especially harsh and led to large scale territorial loss, additional loss of sovereignty, and enrollment of former slaves into the tribes as citizens creating controversies that have lasted until today. As a result of these varied experiences there is no singular perspective describing the events and hardships in Indian Territory during the war and after.

In the context of evolving historiography and advancing interpretive narratives, this dissertation will examine the administration of preservation, memorialization, and

[7] Whit Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire,* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2001):132. Carolyn Johnston, "The Panther's Scream is Often Heard" Cherokee Women in Indian Territory during the Civil War," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 78 (Spring 2000): 84; Donald A. Grindle, Jr., "Red vs Black: Conflict and Accommodation in the Post Civil War Indian Territory, 1865-1907," *American Indian Quarterly* (Summer 1984): 212; Tom Franzmann, "Peculiarly situated between rebellion and loyalty': Civilized Tribes, Savagery, and the American Civil War," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 76 (Summer 1998): 145-148.

commemoration of the Civil War in Oklahoma by the Oklahoma Historical Society and its affiliated historical sites. The Oklahoma Historical Society, organized in 1893, serves as the state's official historic preservation agency and manages countless historic properties across Oklahoma including several Civil War related sites. The mission of the OHS is to "collect, preserve, and share the history and culture of the state of Oklahoma and its people."[8] For over one hundred and twenty-five years, the Society has evolved, professionalized, and expanded its interpretation from 1893 through today. The Society, born in the tumultuous upheavals of the late Gilded Age and the rise of the preservation mentality of the 1890s and early 1900s, has moved from celebrating a reconciliationist past to engaging the hardships of the Civil War and its aftermath in the Indian Territory.

Building upon the existing literature on the Civil War in Indian Territory and in the administration of public preservation efforts across the United States, this project examines the mechanisms of interpretation under the administration of the Oklahoma Historical Society at its museums, historical sites, and through its historical markers and memorials. In particular, I will show how the OHS transformed its interpretations of this seminal event to recognize greater diversity in the narrative of the war and moved beyond the Lost Cause. Throughout its history, the OHS has protected historical resources and developed ever changing interpretations of the war and Reconstruction. The early conciliatory view associated with the Lost Cause was quickly adopted and maintained until significant efforts were made in the 1990s to include new voices and legacies in their interpretation across the society.

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[8] "About the Oklahoma Historical Society," Oklahoma Historical Society, accessed October 13, 2021, https://www.okhistory.org/about/index.

Chapter one provides a review of the literature that shaped both this dissertation and the development of interpretation at the OHS relating to the Civil War. It will explore relevant Civil War memory studies, institutional histories, and pertinent literature relating to the Civil War in Indian Territory. While not exhaustive, the review highlights the vast material that has fundamentally shaped the Civil War for the public within the state. Chapter two, "From War of the Rebellion to National Preservation," provides an overview of the Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory and establishes the development and growth of national battlefield preservation movement as a model for Oklahoma's interpretation, preservation, and memorialization.

Chapter three, "Finding History: The Development of the Preservation Movement in Oklahoma," will explore the establishment of the OHS and the context in which it was created. It will chronicle the society's growth as a historic preservation organization through the territorial period and early statehood before the agency finally established "the Temple of History" as a memorial to Oklahoma's past in the late 1920s. This early period was dominated with an imposed outsider's perspective as migrants across the nation brought their conceptions of historical value to the developing territory and immigrants from across the South sought to connect the Civil War in Indian Territory to the Lost Cause.

Chapter Four, "State Memory, The Temples of History, and Beyond," will continue the administrative history of the society as the facilitator of public memory and the authoritative voice of Oklahoma and its past through professionalization. The chapter will explore the continued creation of the society as we know it today and the expansion of its vision beyond the "temple of history" to historical sites across the state. This

expanding preservation and interpretation at historical sites including Fort Gibson, Fort Towson, Fort Washita (now a Chickasaw Nation historical site), and Hunter's Home (formerly known as the George Murrell Home) contributed to the overall established state defined memories of the Civil War for the public. Each site played a unique and significant role in the war and Reconstruction and now helps move the narrative beyond the Lost Cause and the common soldier addressing the complexities of the Civil War in Indian Territory.

Fort Gibson, a National Historic Landmark and part of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail served as a major political, social, and economic center in Indian Territory. Renamed Fort Blunt during the Civil War, the site served as the primary base of operations for federal troops from 1863 through the close of the war and remained active through Reconstruction. Fort Gibson is one of the state's earliest historic sites and includes a Works Progress Administration replica of the post that was reconstructed in 1937. Fort Towson, established in 1824, served as the headquarters for Confederate forces operating in Indian Territory and was adjacent to the Choctaw community of Doaksville, the site of General Stand Watie's surrender in June 1865. Fort Washita, partially restored by the historical society in 1962, is designated a National Historic Landmark. Now managed by the Chickasaw Nation, Fort Washita played an important role in Oklahoma's preservation efforts during the Civil War Centennial. Hunter's Home is the antebellum residence of George M. Murrell and his wife Minerva Ross. Ross, a member of the wealthy and influential Cherokee Ross Family, was niece to principal chief John Ross. The home, now a National Historic Landmark and part of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail is the only remaining pre-Civil War plantation home in

Oklahoma. Lastly, this chapter will examine how the OHS developed and implemented new Civil War related exhibits and programs across Oklahoma and at the Oklahoma History Center completed in 2005.

Chapter five, "Markers, Monuments, and Oklahoma's Roadside Civil War," will examine the historical society's attempt to document and present interpretation at Civil War sites across the state and provide the context in which this narrative was created. The chapter will examine all Civil War related markers currently known to exist and present how the program may be updated to be more representative of current interpretive trends. The marker program, launched following World War II, is a private-public collaborative effort to promote local history and serves as the primary public interpretation for many Civil War related topics in the state. Unfortunately, the state legislature has never authorized funds for its maintenance. In the mid-1980s, a $1.2 million-dollar federal highway grant helped replace, repair, and improve existing markers; however, the program remains a privately funded interpretive project centered on local history. By its very nature, the marker program is based on the idea of preservation of history at the local level. Twice yearly, the society continues to review and approve privately funded markers that commemorate people, places, and events of local, state, and national significance.

Chapter six, "Hallowed Ground: Honey Springs Battlefield," examines the state's preservation efforts at Honey Springs, a National Historic Landmark including over 1,000 acres of the historic battlefield. The state first began acquisition of battle ground property in 1964 during the preservation push of the Civil War Centennial. In the 1980s, the continued procurement of acreage through eminent domain for the expansion and

preservation of the battlefield site led to open tension with the local community. By the 1990s, the agency moved towards a collaborative model of development including community members. This effort finally led to the successful construction of a visitors' center modeled after NPS-related Civil War sites in Arkansas and Missouri. The development of Honey Springs Battlefield now provides a model for the undeveloped Cabin Creek Battlefield site, currently an OHS property. The Cabin Creek site preserves the heart of the battlefield with monuments and outdoor interpretive signage narrating the story of Cabin Creek's importance during the war but remains unstaffed and without a dedicated visitors' center.

CHAPTER I

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"It is said that this cruel war is over, that the rebels have repented their folly…That we should forget and forgive the past."

– Frederick Douglass

With over 60,000 books in print, the Civil War is well documented. In the years following the Civil War, competing views of rationalizing the war evolved as distinct conflicting visions of memory. These narratives sought to reconcile the unprecedented death and destruction that the nation experienced and fundamentally shaped how we remember and interpret the Civil War in a public setting. Several strands of historiography have directly affected the preservation of the war in the public setting. These monographs mold and shape historical thinking influencing exhibits, public programming, and analyze public perception of history and place. This chapter provides an overview of some key historiographical works that influenced this work as well as the historians and staff who shaped historical interpretation of the Civil War in the public setting by the OHS in Oklahoma.

Public understanding of the Civil War across the United States is a product of elementary and secondary education, visitation to museums and historical sites, popular culture, and individual exploration. In *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*, Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen argue that the majority of Americans feel disconnected from history during their school years but connected deeply when the story of the past involves family, formal activities such as visiting museums, and a focus on everyday history. Rosenzweig and Thelen repeatedly show how individuals use the past to inspire themselves, assist in solving questions or dilemmas, and in creating personal narratives for the passing of family knowledge and morals on to the next generations. Sometimes, however, those interpretations conflict and provide different meaning. For some, they grow and change over time as the individual, or public, is exposed to and consumes expanded stories and interpretations. For others, they are fixed events.

In 1997, Diane Britton argued that "Americans are in LOVE with their pasts."[9] According to Britton, American's value "bravery" and routinely interpret military struggles in terms of victory and gallantry rather than seeking to understand the victims and sacrifices. A prime example according to Britton was Frederick Douglass's efforts to perpetuate the social justice reforms of the formerly enslaved as a memory of the Civil War. In his 1894 Decoration Day speech in Rochester, New York, Frederick Douglas described two very conflicting memories of the war proclaiming, "It is said that this cruel war is over, that the rebels have repented their folly…That we should forget and forgive the past" while the other maintains "that the rebellion is suppressed but not conquered;

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[9] Diane F. Britton, "Public History and Public Memory," *The Public Historian* 19 (Summer 1997): 11.

that its spirit is still abroad and only waits the chance to reassert itself in act of flagrant disloyalty." Douglass would go on to say, "I shall never forget the difference between those who fought for liberty and those who fought for slavery; between those who fought to save the Republic and those who fought to destroy it."[10]

But Douglass, and others, were overshadowed by the movement to honor the courage and conviction of both Union and Confederate soldiers in an effort to achieve reconciliation while newly won civil rights for freedmen were stripped away. Britton goes on to explore American perceptions of compassion, progressivism, our notion of classlessness, and more in relation to our own ideals of self-interpretation in the public sphere, noting that "What we choose to touch from the past invokes the memory of how we see ourselves as a society."[11] This self-selection of interpretation at the institutional level for museums and historic sites is the driving factor for the development of this study.

While museums and historical sites across the nation interpreted the war for the public for decades, in the fall of 1990, Ken Burns' PBS documentary *The Civil War* captured the nation's attention and brought the American conflict into the living rooms of millions. While viewers watched the eleven-hour series chronicling the grueling war in vivid detail, many believed they were learning the true "history" of the events. For many, Burns helped bridge the gap between historical sites and the masses and made the Civil War accessible. But even in eleven hours, Burns *The Civil War,* much like every

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[10] Douglass, Frederick. "Decoration Day. A Verbatim Report of the Address of Frederick Douglass at Franklin Square, Rochester, N.Y."6-7, 10, Manuscript/Mixed Material. https://www.loc.gov/item/mfd.27003/.

[11] Britton, "Public History and Public Memory," 20.

scholarly work and museum exhibit, was only capable of scratching the surface. Burns captivated audiences as he utilized photographs, newspapers accounts, lithographs, paintings, and more to tell a visual story of the divided nation, secession, conflict, slavery, and more. His use of music, narration, images, and historical film brought firsthand accounts to life for an entire generation of Americans.

Burns documentary was also the gateway to the carnage of the Civil War. Although popular with the public, historians were critical of Burn's portrayal of the war because of the complexities it left out. The war in film has received attention from other scholars as well. In "The Civil War in the Movies," Melvin Stokes explores the Hollywood's portrayal of the Civil War in films such as *Birth of a Nation, Gone with the Wind*, and *Red Badge of Courage*. More recently Gary Gallagher discusses the Civil War in film in *Causes Lost Won and Forgotten: How Hollywood and Popular Art Shape What We Know About The Civil War*.[12]

For this study, it is important to consider the interpretation and preservation in the institutional setting and the idea of organizational commemoration, especially as it relates to the Civil War. In the 1980s historians revitalized analysis of myth, symbols, and tradition. Historians viewed myth and tradition as contested ground in the battle for national identity and hegemony. Edward Linenthal's *Sacred Ground: Americans and their Battlefields* and John Bodnar's, *Remaking America: Public Memory,*

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[12] For an analysis on Ken Burn's *The Civil War* see Robert B. Toplin, ed. *Ken Burn's The Civil War: Historians Respond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Melvyn Stokes, "The Civil War in the Movies," in *Legacy of Disunion: The Enduring Significance of the American Civil War*, ed. Susan-Mary Grant and Peter Parish (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003); Gary Gallagher *Causes Lost Won and Forgotten: How Hollywood and Popular Art Shape What We Know About The Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2008).

Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century both explored how patriotic meaning has been communicated through commemoration. Linenthal's *Sacred Ground* explores five historic battlefields including Lexington and Concord, the Alamo, Gettysburg, Little Big Horn, and Pearl Harbor and argues these battlefields inspire admiration as "sacred centers" of power, the most important symbolism of the nation and its patriotic faith. According to Linenthal, part of the power of these sites is their ability to hold different meanings for different people over time, while simultaneously emphasizing their importance in dissemination of a narrative of national identity. G. Kurt Piehler's *Remembering War the American Way* focuses on the organizational means that surround the creation and construction of monuments and national holidays and argues that the "memory of war remains central to the creation of national identity."[13] Piehler credits Civil War commemoration as a transformative moment in how Americans remember and commemorate military conflicts.

To expand on the idea of memory, memory making and commemoration, Bodnar's *Remaking America* argues that late-nineteenth century commemorations were shaped by business groups as celebrations of "progress." Bodner also explores the National Park Service's role in shaping memory where the expanding nation-state decisively shaped historical memory for the public. For Bodnar, the park service is an agent imposing a white quasi-hegemonic middle-class view of history on the nation's citizens. This process was replicated in Oklahoma for decades as the OHS focused on the white history of the state. Early preservation efforts centered on collecting contemporary

[13] G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995): 8.

newspapers and documents during the formative years of Oklahoma and emphasized history from the outside in as recent migrants acted to apply their perspective in interpreting the former territory and developing the historical past for future generations. These created memorials to the past are places where we celebrate national unity and mourn the dead of war. According to the author, patriotism is central because it encompasses the "vernacular loyalties to local and familiar places and official loyalties to national and imagined structures."[14] Several studies have specifically examined the commemoration of war and the building of national identity. James M. Mayo's *War Memorials as Political Landscapes* explores the way in which war is remembered in society including memorials, monuments, museums, and more and is organized by type of war. He joins other scholars in concluding that meaning and symbolism are not static but change over time.[15]

But how does memorialization and the political landscape shape the growing interpretation of history for the general public, particularly history created by state historical societies who function under the mandate of legislatures and state authority? It can be complicated. Michael Kammen asks, and attempts to answer, "when and how did the United States become a land of the past, a culture with a discernable memory or with a configuration of recognized pasts"? In *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* he explores the relationship between "collective memory" and "national identity" and argues that "although there have been a great many

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[14] John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 15.
[15] James M. Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape: The American Experience and Beyond* (New York: Praeger Publishers: 1988).

political conflicts concerning American traditions, ultimately there is a powerful tendency in the United States to depoliticize traditions for the sake of 'reconciliationists.' Consequently, the politics of culture in this country follows a process of contestation and with the subsequent quest for reconciliation."[16] As a result, Kammen focused on the motives that shape reconstructions of the past since 1870 and illustrated the great diversity in American forms of historical consciousness.

Historically, the Society's preservation efforts in Oklahoma were directly linked to both politics and the direction of those with power. Early leadership at the OHS relied heavily on transplanted perspectives of the past. These non-Indian Oklahoma migrants to Oklahoma developed a sense of memory based on "pioneering spirit" and the common conquest of the prairie. There was no attempt to integrate or preserve the memory of those who were displaced, slaves, or free African Americans. By the 1920s, the importance of preserving the memory of Oklahoma's indigenous people and those relocated by forced removal materialized into largescale projects. The Native story was incorporated into the narrative of Oklahoma history and their material culture made available to the public. But that memory was still an "imposed" memory by the majority on the minority. It would not be until the 1970s that Oklahoma began to integrate African Americans perspectives into the history in an institutional setting.

In the years following the Civil War, competing views rationalizing and reconciling the conflict evolved. David Blight laid the groundwork in early Civil War memory studies and identified three distinct sets of competing visions of American

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[16] Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Traditions in American Culture* (New York: Knopf Press, 1991), 7, 13.

memory relating to the conflict: reconciliationist, white supremacist, and emancipationists. Understanding how the veterans, and the rest of the nation, decided to resolve competing reflections of the past and create a shared experience is complicated. But it is the base for preservation efforts and laid the groundwork for interpretation and memorialization for decades. For Blight, the reconciliationists' vision of the war took shape during the conflict itself, especially as a means of dealing with its unprecedented death and destruction. According to Blight, this perception of memory is meant to help both individuals and nation put themselves back together. As veterans began to reconcile their own memories of participation in the nation's bloodiest war, the majority sought common ground to reconcile their shared experiences looking past the political and moral issues that tore the nation apart.

Blight's second form of understanding Civil War memory is that of white supremacy which took on a new form early during the terror and violence of the Ku Klux Klan and Reconstruction. According to Blight, these two forms of memory – reconciliationist and white supremacist – eventually intersected and created the racially segregated memory that reconciled the heavy toll of the war and the Confederacy's various losses with the quest for white social and political dominance. It did so at the cost of embracing the causes of emancipation and the freedoms won by African Americans. Whatever moral indignation against slavery that existed during the war dissolved to preserve the solidarity of white society as the nation sought reunion.

The third form of memory Blight identified embodied by African Americans and rooted in the politics of Reconstruction is emancipationist memory, which is constantly competing with the others and often neglected in interpretative stories because of rampant

racism. Following the war, the practical struggles against segregation, racism, and lynching took precedent over the ideological battle for developing Civil War memory.[17] These three distinct sets of competing visions of Civil War memory were augmented by the Lost Cause ideology and the attempts of the nation to build thousands of monuments to reconcile the war and the suffering of the nation.[18] Ultimately, Blight concludes the prevailing view of the war was, and still remains, the reconciliationist view where white northerners and southerners reconciled their losses at the expense of African Americans. As competing views emerged, the Lost Cause construct became a leading ideology portraying the Confederacy and its "valiant" soldiers as heroic predecessors of the American Revolution while marginalizing slavery in favor of states' rights. As the Lost Cause tradition evolved, so too did the romanticized version of the antebellum South and the notion of paternalistic slavery.[19] While Blight laid the groundwork for Civil War memory, many since argued how we remember the Civil War is much more complicated.

Commemoration of the Civil War followed the end of hostilities as families mourned their dead, celebrated the preservation of the Union, and embraced newly won civil rights with emancipation. In *Cities of the Dead: Contesting Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914*, William A. Blair examines the politics of commemoration centered on the "cities of the dead," the contemporary name describing burial places of fallen soldiers, by observing how both white and Black political leaders used the rituals

[17] David Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Pres, 2002), 134.
[18] David Blight, *Race and Reunion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 2-3.
[19] W. Stuart Towns, *Enduring Legacy: Rhetoric and Ritual of the Lost Cause* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 2012), x-xi. See also Gary W. Gallagher, "Shaping Public Memory of the Civil War: Robert E. Lee, Jubal A. Early, and Douglas Southall Freeman" in *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*, ed. Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

of mourning and memorialization to further their political agendas.[20] To do so, Blair focuses on how white and Black southerners remembered the struggle of war through the celebration of Memorial Day and Emancipation Day. While whites used the Confederate dead as symbols of resistance to Reconstruction, African Americans commemorated their new freedom and allegiance to the federal government. Blair cites the erection of the Confederate monument in Arlington National Cemetery in 1914 as the symbolic reconciliation of the white North and South fundamentally ending African American's own interpretation of the war. This, paired with disenfranchisement, minimized the commemoration of the emancipationist perspective as the local and federal governments began to marginalize the role of Black soldiers and the end of slavery. The end of Reconstruction did not diminish the efforts of African Americans to commemorate the war, it simply began the process of eliminating their white allies.

John R. Neff argues that "remembering the dead proved to be an impediment to national healing" following the war and an obstruction to reconciliation.[21] He maintains that the "Cause Victorious," that is the Union equivalent of the Lost Cause, shaped the commemorative landscape and northern interpretation of the war. Neff directly challenges the reconciliation narrative asserting that grieving, commemoration, and the honoring the dead created obstacles to the process of reconciliation and perpetuated sectionalism. The death of northern and southern sons and husbands never lost their

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[20] William A. Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
[21] John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2005).

symbolic value. Neff's "Cause Victorious" led to the myth of American nationalism long before reconciliation was achieved by the Spanish-American War.

Caroline E. Janney argues "reconciliation never was, nor has it ever been, the predominant memory of the war."[22] In *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation*, Janney contends that the development of Confederate memory is a direct response to the rise of a growing Union memory of the war and that the Civil War remained contentious well beyond Blight's timeframe for reconciliation. She maintains that veterans were tenacious in their descriptions of the enemy as cruel, evil, and violent. According to the author, there was little interest in appeasement or healing from the wartime wounds. Janney credits women with the rise of commemoration in the twentieth century where they played a critical role in fundraising, mobilizing communities, and planning memorials and dedications.

Although the United States reconciled politically as a nation, the Lost Cause tradition allowed the South to minimalize defeat and the rapidly changing social dynamics of the region.[23] Blight maintained that by the 1880s, veterans wanted public recognition for their bravery as nostalgia for the war manifested into two predominate patriotic visions. Union veterans viewed themselves as the saviors of the nation whose sacrifices deserved gratitude from the republic they had protected. Confederate veterans denied having fought for slavery or being engaged in rebellion. Instead, overwhelming

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[22] Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 311.
[23] The historiography for the Lost Cause ideology is extensive. Two of the most respected works in the field are Gaines Foster's *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Charles R. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983).

federal resources and numbers robbed them of their independence.[24] By late in the nineteenth century a combination of factors aligned that dramatically affected the ideas of memorialization and the interpretation of the Civil War in the United States. Preservation efforts to save battlefields, a rise in the notion of southern nationalism, increasingly public recognition of sacrifice through monuments and memorials, and the rise of descendent groups such as the Daughters of the Confederacy helped proliferate the Lost Cause ideology and the reconciliationist view. And these factors would all directly shape the creation and development of the Oklahoma Historical Society and its role in preservation within the state.

Karen L. Cox's *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* argues that women won the war for the South. The UDC, formed in the 1890s to assist with the aging widow and veteran generation, quickly took on memorialization as a way to vindicate their loved ones.[25] While doing so, they reached new political and public heights in society. This second generation of Confederate women undertook widespread monument creation and promotion of pro-Confederate interpretations of the war as way to vindicate their parent's wartime experience and ensure younger southerners understood the significance of their cause. Cox demonstrates how the UDC influenced later generations of white southerners by shaping a new tradition and ensuring pro-Confederate interpretations in textbooks rooted

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[24] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 189.
[25] Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida 2003).

in states' rights and benevolent slavery ultimately gaining reconciliation on southern terms with a Jim Crow South deeply rooted in the Lost Cause legacy.

Across the South, public spaces were flooded with the evolving Lost Cause tradition asserting power and authority over public memory and the accepted narrative of the past while creating memorials to the fight for independence from the Union. But they went beyond memorialization. They served as visual reminders for African Americans of their second-class status and inequality.[26] While the North enjoyed victory, preserved the union, and abolished slavery, all Americans did not uniformly feel victory. Efforts to achieve social and political equality through Reconstruction failed, and African Americans were routinely and deliberately denied space in preservation, commemoration, and the new body of politics.[27] Union veterans and veteran organizations initially objected to the rise of the Lost Cause ideology but eventually accepted reconciliationist meaning of the brotherhood of war, common suffering, and sacrifice that emerged as the common ground for memory where "heroic myths and romance glazed over the war's grim realities."[28] While veterans found common ground in military service, African Americans lacked such a meeting place for their brothers in arms or for the previously enslaved and Southern owners where no reconciliation was imaginable.[29]

The devastating grief and tremendous loss of life resulting from the Civil War provided a common experience despite differing meanings behind them. While the

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[26] W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 6; Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Twentieth Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 4-6.
[27] James McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 605-606.
[28] McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 488.
[29] Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield*, 172.

South's Lost Cause ideology salvaged their reputation from military defeat and imposed a paternalistic view of slavery and a loss of the romanticized antebellum lifestyle, the North solidified salvation of the Union and slavery's abolition. Both growing interpretations of regional identity and memory came at the loss of the sacrifice of freedmen who fought for and endured alongside their Union comrades in the very war that led to their emancipation. And neither represented the identity of those within Indian Territory or their experiences. This tangled relationship of experiences led to concepts of healing and justice in the atmosphere of selective amnesia focused on heroic notions at the expense of divisive social and political issues. Ultimately the South lost the war without accepting defeat in an era where the autobiographical memory of those who experienced the conflict shifted the historical memory into this reconciliationist view.[30]

The Indian Territory has its own unique place in the war. And preservation of the meaning of war for later generations largely excluded Native American memory for decades. Instead, it was an applied narrative that drove interpretation much Anne E. Marshall's analysis of the Kentucky in the postwar years. In *Creating A Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State*, Marshall examines how Kentucky, a boarder state that provided some 70,000 men for the Union Army, embraced the Lost Cause narrative with just 25,000 – 40,000 Confederate veterans. Marshall argues that "the emancipationist narrative was never a viable contention for white memory" in Kentucky and other southern border states.[31] Marshall's work supports David Blight's reconciliation based on white supremacy and shows large numbers of pro-

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[30] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 2-5, 23.
[31] Anne E. Marshall, *Creating A Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 6.

Union loyalists never supported emancipation. Emancipation and the enlistment of Blacks into the Union army was seen as a betrayal by Kentuckians causing many to abandon their pro-Union sentiment. Once freed, the formerly enslaved people threatened the racial order in Kentucky leading residents to come together to reject the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments and unite in violence. The Lost Cause quickly developed as the state's culture of memorialization. Through the erection of monuments, memorial services, and veteran association meetings in the postbellum era, Kentucky created an identity as a Confederate state. According to Marshall white women and groups such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy became the "curators of public memory" ensuring Confederate sympathizers dominated public remembrance. In Oklahoma, the non-Indian migrants quickly became curators of public memory shaping the interpretation of the war in Indian Territory to fit their own ideals.

In *Americans Remember Their Civil War*, Barbara A. Gannon argues the war created to distinct collective memories including the South's Lost Cause and the North's victorious Union Cause. The author differentiates between the memory of those who experienced the horrors of war first-hand and the later generation that had no distinct personal memory of the conflict and evaluates the growth of memory of the war over time. Gannon credits elite white women and men with the construction of the South's struggle as a fight for states' rights and cites Union veterans as the dominant force in early memory creation in the North connected with preservation of the Union and emancipation despite their lack of support for expanded African American civil rights due to their own inherent racism. The proactive work of southern women, especially among the elite, provided an opportunity to gain a public role in society as they erected

monuments and ensured textbooks provided a true history of the South. Ultimately, the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s led to a shift in historical memory when the demands for a more inclusive narrative of the conflict acknowledging the role of Blacks in the wartime experience finally started to erode the Lost Cause. Gannon concludes "Civil War memory has little to do with the war; instead, it is about now…reinterpreted by each generation to address their [own] needs."[32]

In *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913,* Gaines Foster chronicles how Southerners came to terms with the Confederate memory that ultimately laid the groundwork for how the Civil War was initially interpreted at historical institutions such as the OHS. For Foster, the Lost Cause generation involved in erecting memorials for the Confederate dead, celebrating traditional values, and emphasizing reconciliation was primarily a cultural and social movement that "helped explain to late nineteenth-century southerners how and why they had lost the war that marked the end of the Old South" and "served to ease their adjustment to the New South and to provide social unity during the crucial period of transition."[33]

Charles Reagan Wilson's *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920*, argues the Lost Cause became a "civil religion" in the New South while offering cultural redemption. For Wilson, southerner's "made religion out of their history" with post-war rituals, memorials, and ceremonies to reinforce the significance of

[32] Barbara A. Gannon, *Americans Remember Their Civil War* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2017), 130.
[33] Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy,* 8.

the war.[34] New migrants brought these post-war rituals to Oklahoma building the newly formed cultural identity as a southern state and further tying preservation and administration of history to the heritage of the south in institutions such as the historical society as they developed.

Historical memory is often linked to people, places, and objects. In Oklahoma, new migrants quickly identified local substitutes for memorialization such as Cherokee Stand Watie and battlefields such as Honey Springs and Cabin Creek. For the public, historical sites and museums provide the primary access point for this memory. The process of learning shared memory is personal and is based on individual experience and exposure to a number of contributing factors including primary and secondary education, free will learning, leisure-based exposure to cultural institution, and popular culture. While academic history documents, interprets, and advances knowledge it is not necessarily accessed by the masses. A much broader audience is reached through public history, museums, and historic sites and their interpretation of individuals and events. The idea of heritage and its personal nature increases relevance and connection to the personal past in a "sense of history."[35] Within the memory of the Civil War there are still sectional differences connected to our sense of identity and they are passed along to new generations through a variety of mechanisms including public places, localized symbols, historical sites, and regional heritage.

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[34] Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 36.
[35] David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 6.

Even as scholarship moved well beyond the traditional historiography, some historical sites and museums remained locked in dated interpretations including a continued reliance on the Lost Cause legacy for engaging visitors. In many ways, the public perpetuates this philosophy because of their resistance to challenges to their nostalgic understanding of the past. Until the last few decades, the role of race in the Civil War has been avoided. Slavery, integral to secession and the conflict, remained absent from most historic sites while the war maintained the narrative of proud and courageous soldiers who fought for liberty and union.

In 1992, the major motion picture *Glory,* chronicling the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, introduced the public to the service and personal experiences of African Americans during the war. At the same time, some individual historical sites and museums began to present a more inclusive history of the Civil War. No singular institution proved more important, and sometimes controversial, than the National Park Service (hereafter NPS) in leading this transition. The NPS shift from quiet places of reflection began in 2000 with the park service conference "Rally on the High Grounds" and the release of a new master interpretive plan *Holding the High Ground* in response to the Congressional mandate to recognize the role of slavery in causing the Civil War and its interpretation, if any, at individual sites. The new plan sought to "challenge people with ideas, challenge them to not just understand the nature and horrid expanse of the bloodshed, but the reason for it, and the consequences of its aftermath" including topics such as slavery, race, and emancipation.[36]

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[36] For more information on *Rally on the High Ground* see Robert K. Sutton, ed. *Rally on the High Ground: The National Park Service Symposium on the Civil War* (Washington, D.C.: Eastern National, 2001).

The historiography of slavery in American culture is extensive; however, the issue of slavery in public interpretation at historic sites is less developed.[37] *Slavery and Public History: the Tough Stuff of American Memory,* a collection of essays tackling discussions of slavery in public and the difficulty public historians face in dealing with it, demonstrated how the public presentation of American history traditionally minimized the role of African Americans and slavery. A number of essays address the efforts of federal and state agencies, historic sites, and historians to provide a more accurate history of slavery. Dwight T. Ptcaithley, former NPS Chief Historian explores the implications and evolution of interpretation because of the Congressional mandate to the NPS to include discussions of slavery at their sites.[38]

Another dramatic shift in scholarship occurred in the 1990s with a marked move away from politics, strategy, and tactics to the larger questions of commemoration, memorialization, and memory as social history made its way into interpretation in the public setting. An early work that addressed the complex issues of Civil War memory is Nina Silber's *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900,* analyzed evolving images of the South in northern literature. At the heart of Silber's notion of romance was a gendered myth of southern honor. As hardline stances mellowed into a

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"Rally on the High Ground contributor featured a number of leading historians including Ira Berlin, David Blight, Drew Faust, Eric Foner, James Horton, Edward Linenthal, James McPherson, and Robert Sutton. Dwight T. Pitcaithley, "A Cosmic Threat': The National Park Service Addresses the Causes of the American Civil War," in *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory,* eds. James O. Horton and Louis E. Horton (New York: The New York Press, 2006), 169-186; Kevin M. Levin, ed., *Interpreting the Civil War at Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

[37] For a broad overview of slavery in American culture see Elkins, *Slavery*; Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy of the Slave South*; William Fogel and Stanley Engerman, *Time on the Cross*; Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery*; William Dusinberre, *Them Dark Days*; Ira Berlin; *Many Thousands Gone*; Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back*; Edward Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told*; Winthrop Jordan, *White over Black*; Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*.

[38] Horton and Horton, eds., *Slavery in Public History.*

more sentimental and romantic view of their former enemy, the nostalgic perception of an idealized South and an admiration for southerner's ability to maintain social and racial class lines emerged.[39]

In the last few years, a number of authors have shifted the focus of the war from the East to the West expanding the narrative of the Civil War. Most see the war in the West as an extension of federal state-building. Stacey L. Smith argues that the West has a place in the Civil War and Reconstruction. In "Beyond North and South: Putting the West in the Civil War and Reconstruction" Smith maintains that the Civil War in the West is central to understanding the expansion of the federal government's power during the war, Reconstruction, and beyond.[40] Smith contends that the West, along with the South, was a testing ground for federal authority and that by "[L]oosening the Civil War from its North-South moorings…the Civil War West takes a fully national, continental view of the nineteenth century."[41] Smith contends that the Southern secession is just one of many "rebellions" against federal authority in the last half of the nineteenth century and that the West, like the postwar South, was "a key place where the federal government experimented with new policies and structures of government" as multiple competing sovereignties vied for supremacy and autonomy.[42] Ultimately, the Federal governments success in stopping the Confederate attempt at independence directly led to an assault on tribal sovereignty in the post-war years including Reconstruction in Indian Territory.

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[39] Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.
[40] Stacey L. Smith, "Beyond North and South: Putting the West in the Civil War and Reconstruction," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 6, no. 4 (December 2016): 566-591.
[41] Smith, "Beyond North and South," 567.
[42] Smith, "Beyond North and South," 571.

In “Slave Emancipation, Indian Peoples, and the Projects of a New American Nation-State” Steven Hahn argues “Wars of the Rebellion” led to both slave emancipation and the destruction of Native sovereignty resulting in an imperial nation-state.[43] Hahn maintains that the crisis over slavery made war necessary when political rebellion-turned-revolution and that the process continued with tribes following the defeat of the Confederacy. The process of federal emancipation marked an important turning point where the federal government redefined its power and reach while territorialization signaled the emergence of a new nation-state. More importantly for this study, Hahn argues that the Civil War created a new “Indian problem” when the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations became allies of the Confederacy. Powerful slaveholding tribal members responded to offers of sovereignty, guaranteed annuities, incorporation into the new Confederate army, and congressional representation as the federal government abandoned Indian Territory leading to an extension of the American Civil War into Indian Territory. The losses the tribes suffered as allies of the failed Confederate state led to a new Indian policy where Natives “had to be hunted without mercy until beaten into submission” rather than negotiated with.[44] Following the war, the government abolished the treaty system and began to establish the framework for “detribalization.”

Megan K. Nelson’s *The Three-Cornered War: The Union, the Confederacy, and Native Peoples in the Fight for the West* moves the focus of the Civil War to New

[43] Steven Hahn, “Slave Emancipation, Indian Peoples, and the Projects of a New American Nation-State,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3 no. 3 (September 2013): 307-330.
[44] Hahn, “Slave Emancipation, Indian Peoples, and the Projects of a New American Nation-State,” 320.

Mexico and Arizona and frames her work around nine individuals.[45] As the war broke out, Confederate leaders sought to expand into the West while the federal government tried to maintain its control. Nelson argues the summer of 1862 was a turning point where the defeated Confederacy abandoned their continental slave empire, and the federal government began expanding control of the area. Much like Indian Territory, preexisting animosities shaped the war years and Reconstruction in the borderlands.

C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa's *Crooked Paths to Allotment: The Fight over Federal Indian Policy after the Civil War* argues that the path to allotment was tied to larger questions of state authority in the postbellum years.[46] The author identifies two historical moments, the first circa 1870 and the second circa 1880, when reformers challenged the idea of assimilation and dispossession of Native Americans. These efforts, led by Ely S. Parker and Thomas A. Bland, sought to "protect tribal landownership and sovereignty, to provide educational opportunities and capital, and to develop industry and agriculture" while opposing the coercion adopted by mainstream reformers.[47] Genetin-Pilawa argues Indian policy is at the heart of the postbellum state building era prompted by the Civil War.

But this new focus on the West is not without its critics. Historian Gary Gallagher recognized the new focus on the West in Civil War literature and noted the "West's centrality to secession and the coming of conflict in 1860-1861" and the role of the Western Theater but maintains the Trans-Mississippi West lagged far behind the Western

[45] Megan Kate Nelson, *The Three-Cornered War: The Union, the Confederacy, and Native Peoples in the Fight for the West* (New York: Scribner, 2020).
[46] C. Joseph Genetin-Piliwa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment: The Fight Over Federal Indian Policy after the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 2012).
[47] Genetin-Piliwa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment*, 2.

and Eastern theaters in significance where neither the federal government nor the Confederacy made it a priority. For Gallagher, the West is peripheral and events such as the Sioux Uprising in Minnesota in 1862 and the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864 were not Civil War events. Gallagher's Reconstruction focuses on bringing the former Confederate states back into the Union although he does specifically note "[N]egotations and treaties between the U.S. government and the "Five Civilized Tribes" in Oklahoma could also be considered part of Reconstruction."[48] Instead, these other "Indian clashes" were separate from the Civil War. Gallagher argues that "wartime struggles between Indians and the United States… would have occurred, at some place and in some fashion, in the absence of the four-year slaughter triggered by sectional wrangling."[49] Megan K. Nelson was quick to respond to Gallagher. She notes events in the West were widely reported at the time and that military campaigns in the West, though short-lived, did in fact influence the eastern theater.[50]

One could argue that Timothy Smith is the leading scholar on battlefield preservation. A former public historian and park ranger, he authored a series of works focusing on NPS sites.[51] Smith pioneered the chronicling of battlefield preservation and the administration of Civil War interpretation at historic sites. In *The Golden Age of*

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[48] Gary W. Gallagher, "The importance, or lack thereof, of the various western theaters of war," www.historynet.com/out-west.htm, accessed November 6, 2021.
[49] Gary W. Gallagher, "Brutal battles between the U.S. Army and Indians were not considered part of the "real war." www.historynet.com/insight-conflcit-apart.htm, accessed November 6, 2021.
[50] Megan K. Nelson, "The Civil War West mattered," www.historynet.com/civil-war-west-mattered-still.htm, accessed November 6, 2021.
[51] See Timothy B. Smith, *This Great Battlefield: History, Memory, and the Establishment of a Civil War National Military Park* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006); Timothy B. Smith, *The Untold Story of Shiloh: The Battle and the Battlefield* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006); Timothy B. Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation: The Decade of the 1980s and the Establishment of America's First Five Military Parks* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2008).

Battlefield Preservation: The Decade of the 1890s and the Establishment of America's First Five Military Parks, Smith outlined how a combination of time and circumstances led veterans to take on the work of preservation. By the last decade of the nineteenth century, veterans held positions of power and influence in government, especially Congress. The combatants, now decades removed from the bloodshed of Civil War and Reconstruction, sought to preserve a collective memory of events, advance reconciliation, dedicate monuments, and begin participating in reunions during this "Golden Age' of Civil War battlefield preservation" in the 1890s. For Smith, these first five Civil War parks had similarities, but each developed in its own unique manner. Although it was not the first park established, Smith credits Gettysburg and the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association with establishing basic preservation and commemoration methods. This "Golden Age" continued until the 1910s, when age drove the veterans from political office, removing the needed appropriated money to sustain battlefield preservation.

The 1920s saw renewed battlefield preservation efforts. Although not officially designated a national battlefield until 1940, the Sons of Confederate Veterans established Confederate Park on the site of the Manassas battlefield land in 1921. Joan Zenzen's *Battling for Manassas: The Fifty Year Struggle at Manassas National Battlefield Park* chronicles the efforts of preserving the nation's first major battle for the public.[52] Located just outside Washington D.C., Manassas faced repeated threats from urban development. As Zenzen demonstrates, the past, and the redefined national heritage associated with it, can be controversial and challenging. In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt

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[52] Joan Zenzen, *Battling for Manassas: The Fifty Year Struggle at Manassas National Battlefield Park* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1998).

designated over 1,000 acres for the Manassas Battlefield, but the site would not be placed under NPS administration and designated a national battlefield park for another five years. Despite its status, Manassas faced regular threats including a proposed multi-lane highway, construction of a theme park, and a proposal to build a mall.

The Civil War Centennial in 1961 - 1965, meant to link the nation's past with the present around shared values, immediately met with controversy. Museums and historic sites provided visitors with interpretations that had changed very little since their establishment and the Lost Cause narrative remained dominant. Southern writers celebrated the South's brave and heroic soldiers and leaders such as Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson while avoiding issues of race and maintaining that enslaved blacks supported the South and its efforts. Robert J. Cook, the leading author on the topic, framed centennial celebrations and activities within the context of 1960s in *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961-1965*.[53] By exploring the Civil Rights Movement, Cold War tensions, and racial violence surrounding the centennial planning and implementation, Cook chronicled the Centennial Commission's attempt to mark milestones in the war as their anniversaries occurred. As much as white Americans wanted to commemorate brave soldiers fighting one another, news of school desegregation, sit-ins, lynching, and Freedom Riders bombarded newspapers and television screens. In many ways, Cooks work shows how nationalistic historical perspectives in the 1950s came undone with the swift changes of the early 1960s. Despite this shift, the change in the public sphere moves slowly. The narrative is

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[53] Robert Cook, *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961-1965* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007).

expanding, interpretation improving, and access to a wider number of perspectives greets visitors at historic sites and museums; however, in 2021 we are still removing monuments to the Confederacy and divided over the inclusion of race and the role of the enslaved people in our national story.

Literature on the National Park Service, while more focused, has grown over time. Former NPS Director Conrad Wirth discussed the establishment of the park service, influence of the New Deal, and MISSION 66 in *Parks, Politics, and the People*. A second work chronicling the NPS, and its history is Ronald A. Foresta's *America's National Parks and their Keepers*. Both provide comprehensive and inciteful introductions to the agency, their mission, and changes over time.[54] Although not a Park Service member, Freeman Tilden's *Interpreting our Heritage* is a masterful collection of essays on the art and implementation of interpretation. Tilden, one of the most influential authors on interpretation and education for historical interpreters, historic site staff, and park rangers, remains a salient and seminal work used by many including the NPS.[55] The Park Service, despite international recognition and public support, is not without problems. Eugenia H. Connally's *National Parks in Crisis*, an outgrowth of a conference sponsored by the National Parks and Conservation Association, features several essays that explore threats or problems faced by the park system. Part of the crisis is a result of overuse, adjacent development, and environmental challenges while seeking to preserve the natural and cultural resources of the park system for the public.[56] A second work

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[54] Conrad Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980). Ronald A. Foresta's *America's National Parks and their Keepers* (Washington, D.C: Resources for the future, 1984).
[55] Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957).
[56] Eugenia H. Connally, ed., *National Parks in Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: National Parks and Conservation Fund, 1982).

addressing problems within the Park Service is an official report issued by the Conservation Fund. Sponsored by the Richard King Mellon Foundation, *National Parks for a New Generation: Vision, Realities, Prospects* explores key issues including fiscal restraints and shortfalls, land use, conservation of cultural resources, visitor use, negotiating with private landowners, and more across four parks.[57]

In the years following the Civil War, competing views of rationalizing the war evolved as distinct conflicting visions of memory. These perspectives sought to reconcile the unprecedented death and destruction that the nation experienced and fundamentally shaped how we remember and interpret the Civil War in a public setting. From early autobiographical accounts, in which Native and African American perspectives were marginalized if included at all, to the reconciliationist and white supremist Lost Cause perspectives that dominated the majority of the twentieth century, Indian Territory remained an enigma even though its military history is well documented, analyzed, and interpreted by countless authors. In the 1910s, the war for Native Americans entered the historiography from the Anglo perspective. Decades passed before African American memory of the war finally received the treatment it deserved as the Civil Rights Movement revived the sacrifices and contributions of both the enslaved and those who took up arms for the Union. This section introduces select works from the historiography related to the war in Indian Territory that contributed to the growing public interpretation.

David Blight, a prominent historian on Civil War memory, identified three distinct sets of competing visions of American memory relating to the conflict:

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[57] Richard King Mellon Foundation, *National Parks for A New Generation: Visions, Realities, Prospects* (Washington, D.C.: The Conservation Fund, 1985).

reconciliationist, white supremacist, and emancipationists. Historians since have argued the war does not fit as neatly into the three categories as Blight would have his readers believe. This is true for the Civil War in Indian Territory and its aftermath as well. Blight's competing visions can be applied to most of the literature written on the Civil War in the Indian Territory since they examine the conflict from an outside perspective. That is, they primarily place the war in Indian Territory within the greater framework of the Civil War. From the internal division amongst the tribes to the suffering of African American slaves and soldiers, Indian Territory provides some distinct differences that move it beyond the traditional literature on the Civil War. The American Indian, neither white nor Black and removed from the cultures of both, faced many of the same sectional schisms that existed between North and South, in addition to factionalism dating back to the removal period in the 1830s. Among the Five Tribes, progressive mixed bloods with cultural ties to the South formed treaties with the new Confederate States while more traditional tribal members advocated for neutrality or sought to openly remain pro-Union. With war imminent, internal fractures forced each tribe into what can truly be described as an Indian Civil War. Following the war, the United States imposed its own unique version of Reconstruction on the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations despite the valiant service of pro-Union Indians factions. Ultimately, the American Civil War entangled the tribes in Indian Territory and led to loss of land, decreased sovereignty, allotment, and the opening of the territory to non-Anglo settlers as a result of their participation in the conflict. While their contemporaries to the east reconciled the war, so too did factions within each tribe in an effort to resist the threat from the federal government.

These three distinct sets of competing visions of Civil War memory are supplemented by the Lost Cause ideology and the attempts of the nation to build thousands of monuments to reconcile the war and the suffering of the nation.[58] Blight ultimately concludes the prevailing interpretation was, and still remains, the reconciliationists view where white northerners and southerners reconciled at the expense of African Americans. As competing views emerged, the Lost Cause construct became a leading ideology portraying the Confederacy and its "valiant" soldiers as heroic predecessors of the American Revolution, marginalizing slavery in favor of states' rights. As the Lost Cause tradition evolved, so too did the romanticized version of the antebellum South and the notion of paternalistic slavery.[59] But these are not the forms of memory traditionally applied initially within the Indian Territory to shape interpretation for the public. They are the forms of memory imposed by outsiders who became the dominant majority after the opening of the territory to non-Indian settlement. If public memory reflects current social and political relationships at the time of its creation, where does the Indian Territory literature developed within these frameworks fit within the memory of the American Civil War? It fundamentally shaped the narrative of interpretation in the preservation movement within the OHS administration and guided public historians and staff as they presented the war to the public.

Annie Heloise Abel, an early pioneer in chronicling the Native American participation in the Civil War, was among the earliest professional historians to study

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[58] David Blight, *Race and Reunion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 2-3

[59] W. Stuart Towns, *Enduring Legacy: Rhetoric and Ritual of the Lost Cause* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 2012), x-xi. See also Gary W. Gallagher, "Shaping Public Memory of the Civil War: Robert E. Lee, Jubal A. Early, and Douglas Southall Freeman" in *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*, ed. Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

Indian Territory. Abel completed her doctorate at Yale and was among the first women to earn her PhD. She is credited as being among the first historians to utilize Office of Indian Affairs records after serving as their historian in 1913. Abel was keenly aware that tribal members from the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations served in regular military commands in both the Union and Confederate armies. Throughout the war, guerilla warfare among the Indian Nations was commonly practiced by factions on both sides of the conflict and was often rooted in removal era feuds that continued to bitterly divide these tribes. Abel completed several works on the Civil War in Indian Territory, that while dated, provide the foundation for evolving literature in the field.

The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist, the first volume in Abel's slaveholding Indian trilogy, introduces the Native American experience during the Civil War and chronicles the early years as the secession crisis threatened union and its relationships with tribes. [60] Abel focuses on Confederate diplomacy with the tribes residing in Indian Territory and the dilemma they faced with an influential minority of slaveholders in positions of power and leadership in tribal government. Volume two in the trilogy, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, begins with the 1862 Battle of Pea Ridge and follows Indian involvement in the conflict and the suffering by soldiers and civilians throughout the war. [61] In the third volume in the trilogy *The American Indian under Reconstruction*, Abel follows the horrors of war that ran rampant

[60] Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist* (Cleveland, OH: Arthur C. Clark Co., 1915).
[61] Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War* (Cleveland, OH: Arthur C. Clark Co., 1919).

and the predicament of the of the tribes within the Indian Territory from the end of hostilities through Reconstruction.[62] While Reconstruction for the tribes was particularly harsh compared to other southern states, additional "sources might also have served to temper Abel's ethnocentric perspective and racist language."[63]

In their introduction to the reprinted edition, Theda Purdue, noted Cherokee historian, and Michael D. Green, Muscogee (Creek) historian, go on to say, "access to Native sources would have produced a different book, one that still needs to be written."[64] And this analysis is still relevant today even as new interpretations continue to add to the historiography. Despite being a multi-volume set on the American Indian, Abel's interpretation is written from a distinctly non-Native perspective. As the first professional historian to address the war in the Indian Territory, her works fall well within the reconciliationist framework despite its Native focus. Because of their shared relationship with the South as slaveholders, Native Nations – themselves conflicted – are treated more closely to the white North and South while their postwar struggles are often pushed aside like the emancipationist memory. Written in an era when the idea of "noble savages" disappearing from the landscape dominated the literature on Native Americans, Abel's volumes yet afford the reader a sound basis for beginning further study of the war in Indian Territory because of her extensive research and incorporation of Indian records.

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[62] Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian Under Reconstruction* (Cleveland. OH: 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).
[63] 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. Reprint from the original edition entitled *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, Cleveland: Arthur C. Clark Co., 1919.
[64] Abel, *The American Indian and the Civil War, 1862-1865,* 5.

Another early author who shaped the memory and interpretation of the Civil War in Indian Territory is Wiley Britton, who served in the 6th Kansas cavalry in the territory during the war. He draws upon his personal memories of the events, official records, and his relationship with other veterans of the war to narrate his analysis of the conflict and was actively involved in early preservation work. His interpretation is influenced by his experiences as a Union soldier who witnessed the horror of war and wrestled with that carnage before attempting to memorialize the conflict in words. His first work, released in 1883 just years after the war, was drawn from his partial personal memoir of the war. *Memoirs of the Rebellion on the Border, 1863*, illustrates the life of a soldier in Indian Territory, depicts camp life, and provides the personal reflection of a white outsider caught up in a distinctly "Indian" territory embroiled in America's war.[65] Britton's memoir provides a fascinating look at the guerilla war, Native American affairs, and the tension between civilians in the region before the reconciliationists perspective became prominent. In his memoir, Britton unabashedly recorded both the kindness and blatant acts of destruction perpetrated by Federal and Confederate forces. In his introduction he states, "I noted not only the movements of the army with which I was connected, and the battles and minor engagements which it fought, but I also turned aside now and then to note a good many other things; as, for instance, the thoughts and feelings of the soldiers on various subjects, as reflected in their conversations around their camp fires and on the march" making the reader keenly aware that it is Britton's deeply personal narrative.[66] At

[65] Wiley Britton, *Memoirs of the War on the Border, 1863* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993.) Reprinted from the original 1882 addition.
[66] Britton, *Memoirs of the War on the Border, 1863*, 5.

some point Britton lost a portion of his memoir leaving readers with the narrative of 1863.

Once decades removed from the conflict, Britton adopted a more reconciliationist approach to his narratives while including the success and suffering of both Indian and African American soldiers as brothers in arms in Indian Territory. His *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War* is a regimental history of American Indian troops composed of refugees and the pro-Union Indians who sought to maintain their alliance with the federal government, particularly after the Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas, in 1862.[67] This work is especially helpful when considering that Britton spent much of his Civil War service in Indian Territory witnessing "their" war. In creating the monograph, Britton hoped to leave a "monument to their heroism and devotion…in the struggle and saw their sufferings and trials for the cause they espoused" for "these Indian allies…were as gallant in action and as patient in enduring perils and hardships as their white comrades."[68]

Civil War on the Border, a two-volume narrative of operations in Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, and the Indian Territory chronicles what Britton refers to as the "border region." The area where these three states and the Indian Territory meet was the intersection of very different lifestyles and opinions on the institution of slavery and its expansion. The set is based on observation by the author as well as the official reports of Union and Confederate commanders and correspondence with participants from the theatre.[69] This two-volume set includes the history of Indian Territory and places it within

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[67] Wiley Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War* (Kansas City, MO: F. Hudson, 1922). An excellent reprint is available in the Kansas Heritage Press 1994 reprint.
[68] Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 9, 10.
[69] Wiley Britton, *The Civil War on the Border*, 2 vols. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1899). The Kansas Heritage Press offers this publication in reprinted paperback form (1994).

the greater context of the region. Britton's books are well written, easily readable, and reliable narratives of the military campaigns interspersed with personal accounts and anecdotes are similar to other autobiographical interpretations of the memory of the war produced in the 1910s and 1920s. Abel and Britton's collective works shaped early historiography and became the base upon which all literature on the war in Indian Territory evolved.

Several firsthand accounts of the war years are available from Confederates who experienced the conflict in Indian Territory. One of the few memoirs written from the Native American perspective is *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy: The Autobiography of Chief G. W. Grayson*, edited by W. David Baird.[70] Grayson was born near North Fork Town in the Creek Nation in 1843. From Grayson's writing, one witnesses what a pivotal role the Civil War played in his personal life and in the history of the tribe. Through detailed personal views and accounts of guerilla warfare in the territory, the reader gains a sense of the significance the war played as it evolved and drew in the many residents of Indian Territory and how their participation significantly altered life after the end of hostilities. Following the war, Grayson served in various Muscogee (Creek) tribal offices until his death and emphatically defended Muscogee (Creek) sovereignty.

Because of the large number of Texas troops operating in Indian Territory *A Texas Cavalry Officer's Civil War, the Diary and Letters of James C. Bates*, edited by Richard Lowe, is a helpful analysis of a pro-Confederate officer's experience in the

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[70] W. David Baird, ed., *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy: the Autobiography of Chief G. W. Grayson* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988).

territory.[71] Although not a slaveholder, he firmly believed blacks were inferior and slavery was the obvious solution to dealing with them. Bates served extensively in the Indian Territory. This work, based primarily on a combination of Bate's diary and personal letters provides articulate and insightful details on the Confederate experience in the Indian Territory as viewed from a southerner's perspective. Bates, college educated and well spoken, wrote countless letters to his family on topics including combat, life in camp, campaigning in the field, army politics, and more leaving quite vivid personal reflections of his experiences. Bates was shocked by the war's brutality. By 1862 he wrote home warning that the confiscation and destruction of property by Union soldiers sought not to end the rebellion but abolish slavery and crush the political power of the South. Bates wrote that the federals took "every last grain of corn & the last pound of bacon from defenseless women & children, leaving them to starve."[72]

Craig W. Gaines' *The Confederate Cherokee: John Drew's Regiment of Mounted Rifles* chronicles another Cherokee story illustrating the complexity of factionalism and loyalty to Confederacy.[73] Prior to the war, the Cherokee Nation was deeply divided between Chief John Ross and Stand Watie following removal. Struggling with internal divisions surrounding the schism of loyalty to the federal government or the new Confederacy, the tribe fielded several regiments in both waring armies. Stand Watie often receives significant treatment in studies relating to the Civil War; however, a second regiment of Confederate Cherokee was placed under the command of John Drew. This

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[71] Richard Lowe, ed., *A Texas Cavalry Officer's Civil War, The Diary and Letters of James C. Bates* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999).
[72] Bates, *A Texas Cavalry Officer's Civil War*, 132.
[73] Craig W. Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokee: John Drew's Regiment of Mounted Rifles* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989).

regiment was composed primarily of troops whose loyalty remained with the pro-Union leadership in the nation who reluctantly sided with the South because of the geographical and social positions. Gaines chronicled the exploits of Drew and his men in extensive detail but candidly acknowledges Drew and his command were "useless as a fighting force."[74] In December of 1861, this regiment pursued Opothleyaholo and his pro-Union band as they fled towards Kansas. At the Battle of Caving Banks (Chusto-Talash) Drew's regiment suffered desertion in mass with many fleeing towards the Union lines. After the federal invasion of Indian Territory during the summer of 1862, the remainder Drew's regiment disbanded with most joining newly formed Union regiments.

The emancipationist memory of the war in Indian Territory remains largely unwritten and only entered the public history sphere in the 1980s. To date, few chronicle the experiences of the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry. Ian M. Spurgeon's *Soldiers in the Army of Freedom: The 1st Kansas Colored, the Civil War's First African American Combat Unit* explores the prewar politics of Kansas and Senator James H. Lane's efforts to enlist, and arm escaped slaves and push them into service against the Confederacy. The book explores the regiments wartime experiences, including the regiments tremendous battlefield success and race-based persecution through the ghastly atrocities committed upon them by Confederate troops and guerillas.[75] Readers hoping to gain firsthand insight into the personal thoughts of the enlisted will be disappointed. Unfortunately, few African American men left diaries, letters, or other descriptions of their experiences.[76] A

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[74] Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokee*, 58.

[75] Ian M. Spurgeon, *Soldiers in the Army of Freedom: The 1st Kansas Colored Infantry, the Civil War's First African American Combat Unit* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014).

[76] The Works Progress Administration recorded interviews with former slaves in Oklahoma during the 1930s. Much of the interview content was created by the formerly enslaved who relocated to Oklahoma

recent work on James M. Williams, commanding officer of the 1st Kansas, expanded the narrative on this unit's development, leadership, politics, and combat experiences during the conflict. Robert W. Lull's *Civil War General and Indian Fighter James M. Williams: Leader of the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry and the 8th U.S. Cavalry* provides the most complete account of the officer. Williams, an ardent abolitionist, proclaimed "as a citizen of Kansas since the year 1856, I had learned to hate the institution of slavery and I was taught to believe that every effort that could consistently be made to crush the infamous institution should be made."[77] Throughout the war, Williams proved a stalwart commander facing constant threat from his foes due to the color of his unit. Even among the Union rank and file it was assumed that the newly formed United States Colored Troops would not equal their peers. Williams, along with General James G. Blunt, remained adamant supporters of the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry and their role as soldiers during the war.

For a biography on the primary United States officer overseeing operations on the ground in Indian Territory see *General James G. Blunt, Tarnished Glory* by Robert Collins. [78] General Blunt, void of any previous military experience, proved himself on the battlefield in Indian Territory. Blunt, friends with Kansas Senator James H. Lane, was an ardent New England abolitionist who moved to Kansas in the middle of the 1850s free soil struggle against slavery. It was his friendship with Lane that led to an appointment as brigadier general. As a military officer, Blunt was courageous and aggressive, often

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following emancipation and the opening of the territory to non-Indian settlement. See T. Lindsay Baker and Julie P. Baker's *The WPA Oklahoma Slave Narratives* for more information.

[77] Robert W. Lull, *Civil War General and Indian Fighter James M. Williams: Leader of the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry and 8th U.S. Cavalry* (Denton, Texas: University of North Texas Press, 2013): 38.

[78] Robert Collins, *General James G. Blunt, Tarnished Glory* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 2005).

defeating larger Confederate forces and winning stunning victories at Prairie Grove in December 1862 and Honey Springs in July 1863. Unfortunately, Blunt often feuded with other officers, particularly John M. Schofield who eventually removed him from command. Blunt was also embroiled in controversial deals with army contractors. Despite his robust and charismatic self-righteousness, his affinity for alcohol and female companionship likely led to venereal disease, resulting in frequent illness and eventually insanity before his death in a mental institution in 1881. While Collin's work is considered the first biography of Blunt, students and scholars will be disappointed with his bibliography and failure to cite materials. A critical failure is the absence of personal correspondence from Blunt or his acquaintances, colleagues, and rivals.

The historiography on Native Americans in the Civil War witnessed a revolutionary change in the last two decades with the expansion of both social history and Native American studies. Since Annie Heloise Abel's trilogy on *The American Indian in the Civil War*, the majority of books examined Stand Watie and his exploits as a Confederate officer until more recent literature in the 1990s began to examine the complexities of Indian Territory and the internal war waged during the Civil War. Since 2000, that historiography expanded to include the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations as enslaver but fails to truly delve into the postwar Reconstruction complexities, particularly in the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nation, where the emancipated remained without status and violence continued well into Reconstruction.

The early period of the war and the difficulties faced by loyal Muskogee (Creek) is chronicled by two separate works. Christine and Benton White's *Now the Wolf has*

Come: The Creek Nation in the Civil War launched the modern examination of the effects of the Civil War on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. [79] This book, which only looks at the outbreak of hostilities and the three-month period of November 1861 through January 1862, focuses on the pursuit of Opothleyaholo and his followers by Confederate Texans and more progressive pro-Confederate factions of the tribe led by Daniel McIntosh. The author's "wolf" within the title is represents McIntosh and the white Texans preying upon Opothleyaholo and his band. The authors interweave Muskogean culture heritage into their narrative. Readers will quickly realize that McIntosh is the villain and betrayer of the Muscogee (Creek) with Opothleyaholo narrated as a hero. In addition, Anglo's within the narrative are addressed in blatantly negative terms.

Clarissa W. Confer shifts the focus of the war from the Muscogee (Creek) in *The Cherokee Nation in the Civil War.* Confer examines the Cherokee Nations factionalism and position in the pre-war years, the tribe's decision to go to war, the conflict, and the post-war refugee status of its tribal members.[80] In her book, she argues that principal chief John Ross and other Cherokee leaders had little choice but to join the rebellion. The removal factionalism reared its head when rivals such as Stand Watie openly supported the new Confederacy. Many Cherokees were slaveholders and welcomed secession. The greatest strength of Conifer's work is the discussion of the struggle of Cherokee civilians during the tenuous war. With a shattered economy and thousands of refugees, she

[79] Christine S. White and Benton R. White, *Now the Wolf has Come: the Creek Nation in the Civil War* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1996).
[80] Clarissa W. Confer, *The Cherokee Nation in the Civil War* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007).

provides a moving account of the civilian experience in the face of war as Union and Confederate armies vied for control of Indian Territory.

Tiya Miles expands the story of the Cherokee Nation in *Ties that Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom.* In it, she traces the story of an African woman named Doll and her Cherokee husband Shoeboots along with their mixed-race descendants from the late eighteenth century through the end of the nineteenth century. Miles chronicles the struggle of Shoeboots as more progressive white-Cherokee mixed-bloods come to dominate the economics and politics of the Cherokee Nation in the nineteenth century and adopted law mirroring the South related to the position of Africans in their society. The book explores the narrative of race in the Cherokee Nation in a uniquely new way by revealing how race relations were radically altered through increasing contact with whites. One of the unique characteristics of the book is how Miles explored source material in ways not previously imagined as she combined the study of African American and Native American pasts in slavery, removal, and emancipation.[81]

Mary Jane Warde's *When the Wolf Came: The Civil War in Indian Territory* moves beyond the Civil War battles and leaders and provides a distinctly more personal account of the conflicts effect on individuals, families, and the Indian Nations.[82] Warde explores the conundrum of how the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations, just decades beyond their horridly painful forced removal, could

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[81] Tiya Miles, *Ties that Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2015).
[82] Mary Jane Ward, *When the Wolf Came: The Civil War in the Indian Territory* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2013).

ally themselves with their former persecutors in the South. Following federal abandonment of the territory, slaveholding tribal leaders warmly received the promise of independence and full representation in the new Confederate Congress. But these leaders did not speak for all tribal members. Schisms within the tribes led to factionalism, guerilla warfare, and the devastating narrative of the destruction of Indian Territory. Warde provides the most comprehensive treatment of the Indian Territory to date and addresses complex topics of war, race, politics, and Native culture.

In *Black Slaves, Indian Masters: Slavery, Emancipation, and Citizenship in the Native American South* Barbara Krauthamer focuses on how the Choctaws and Chickasaws subjectively exploited Africans by developing a legal code mirroring the racial hierarchy of the South. Both tribes actively engaged in the traffic of slaves and would carry them to Indian Territory during removal. The introduction of slavery, Krauthamer argues, forced the Choctaw and Chickasaw to renegotiate their traditional ideas of status, gender, citizenship, and the economy as they adopted southern characteristics before emancipation radically altered these new constructs and forced them to relinquish aspects of tribal sovereignty. Like the rest of the South, the legal and social divide erected between the enslaved and free remained the dominant racial structure among tribal members who resisted granting status and citizenship to the emancipated.[83] The bitter racism practiced by the former slaveholders and tribal members continued well into the twentieth century.

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[83] Barbara Krauthamer, *Black Slaves, Indian Masters: Slavery, Emancipation, and Citizenship in the Native American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2013).

No singular Native American individual receives more treatment in the historiography than Stand Watie. There are many published works on Watie and his role in removal and the Civil War. Watie, one of the signers of the Treaty of New Echota in 1835, surrendering the Cherokee homeland in the east, was hated by supporters of Chief Ross and many who objected to relocation. Under Cherokee law Watie faced death along with other signatories to the removal treaty. In 1839, he escaped assassination and became a lifelong enemy of the principal chief. As war approached, removal factionalism again divided the Cherokee Nation. Chief Ross sought neutrality while Watie and his supporters openly supported the South, signed treaties of alliance with the newly formed Confederate States, and raised troops for military service. Despite his objections, Ross finally relented to pressure from pro-southern leaders within the tribe and agreed to the Cherokee-Confederate alliance. When Ross fled with federal forces in August 1862, Watie replaced him as chief among the Cherokee in rebellion.

One of the best-known early works on Stand Watie is Frank Cunningham's 1950s *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*.[84] In this Lost Cause narrative, Cunningham treats Watie and his fellow slaveholders as an aristocratic planter elite with deep cultural ties to the South. When published, Cunningham argued the Confederate cause crossed cultural and ethnic lines. Cunningham focuses on Cherokee contributions to the Confederate war effort and argues that despite being poorly supplied, their allegiance to Watie, and the South remained steadfast. Cunningham argues the Cherokee, and other pro-Southern tribal leaders, directed their animosity over removal towards the federal

[84] Frank Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indian*s (San Antonio, TX: Naylor Co., 1959). This book was reprinted by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1998.

government rather than the states that prompted the policy of exile. Unfortunately, the author inaccurately holds Watie up as a gentleman-soldier whose convictions and southern sympathy increased his reputation, which went untarnished, by the war. At the time of publication, Watie was the pinnacle of applying the Lost Cause narrative to the war in Indian Territory. Watie is very much a participant in the South's war in Cunningham's interpretation.

Wilfred Knight offered a similar perspective with *Red Fox: Stand Watie and the Confederate Indian Nations during the Civil War Years in Indian Territory.*[85] This book expanded the biography of Watie little, despite nearly thirty years of expanded historiography since Cunningham, and continues to hold Watie and his military career as sacrosanct and larger than life. Knight's analysis of Watie's battlefield strategy and success leave the general's reputation untarnished avoiding potentially conflicting atrocities in this interpretation. Lastly, Knight is sharply critical of Chief John Ross without providing evidence for the accusation other than he acted in opposition to Watie. Both Cunningham and Knight apply the Lost Cause ethos to the Civil War in Indian Territory and present Watie and pro-Confederate progressives as the Cherokee version of the statesmen of secession and military leadership of the east. Both view Watie as the Confederacy's remarkable Cherokee general who was the last among the military elite to surrender.

Stand Watie's life spanned two of the most traumatic events in recent memory for the Cherokee Nation. During his lifetime he, and many plantation and progressive elite,

[85] Wilfred Knight, *Red Fox: Stand Watie and the Confederate Indian Nations During the Civil War Years in Indian Territory* (Glendale, CA: A.H. Clark Co, 1988).

adopted a variety of Anglo-American cultural traits. Kenny A. Franks' *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation* provides a look at the political situation within the tribe placing Watie more broadly in the context of the Cherokee Nation.[86] While Watie is considered a controversial figure, Frank's analysis of Watie fails to truly dive into the details or extend his biography much beyond Cunningham and Knight. To truly understand the plight of the Cherokee Nation, and other tribes within Indian Territory at the outset of the war, one must understand the political atmosphere of tribal government and the factionalism that existed because of the various removal treaties. Franks presents a partisan biography that assumes that Watie is the hero within the political division where Ross is decidedly his villainous foe.[87]

A more recent collection of essays meant for a broader readership is Bradley Clampitt's *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory.* The essays, by leading scholars in the field including Clarissa Confer, Richard McCaslin, Christopher Bean, and Linda Reese, look at the civilian experience, Reconstruction, the plight of the freedmen following the war, and more. The individual essays attempt to move beyond the constraints of North and South and bring balance and focus to Indian Territory. Collectively, they acknowledge that "none of the military activity in the territory

[86] Kenny A. Franks, *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation*, (Memphis, TN: Memphis State University Press, 1979). This work is based on the author's thesis at Oklahoma State University, 1973.
[87] For more on Indian Removal and post-removal factionalism see Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal: The Emigration of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians*; Michael D. Green, *The Politics of Indian Removal: Creek Government and Society in Crisis*; Mark Stewart, *The Indian Removal Act: Forced Relocation*; Amy Sturgis, *The Trail of Tears and Indian Removal*; Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, ed., *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*; Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*; Claudio Saunt, *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory*; Andrew Denson, *Monuments to Absence: Cherokee Removal and the Contest over Southern Memory*; Christopher D. Haveman ed., *Bending Their Way Onward: Creek Indian Removal in Documents*;

significantly affected the outcome of the war, and neither the military campaigns nor the civilian suffering proved especially urgent to officials in Richmond or Washington."[88] Together, the contributors show that the Civil War was a watershed event for the Indian Territory. Clampitt understood that the war alone was not a singular defining moment, but part of a continuum that began as the tribes sought to rebuild their lives following removal extended through Reconstruction. While the war and the participation of the tribes fundamentally reshaped the territory, one must understand that in Indian Territory there were fundamentally two separate wars. The war waged in the territory between the Union and the Confederacy involving Native Americans and the second waged internally between tribes during the conflict and then after with the freedmen following emancipation. By focusing on the civilian population and the effects of removal, war, and Reconstruction collectively, one gains a greater understanding of the complexities of just what the war meant for Indian Territory.

While not an extensive analysis of all literature on the topic of the Civil War in Indian Territory, this section offers an overview of influential works that shaped the development of historical preservation at the institutional level and contributed to the memory and memorialization of the war by the public. But the literature remains incomplete. As museums and historical sites continue to integrate an expanded narrative into their exhibits and programs, it is fundamental that the Native American and African American experience continue to develop and become integrated into the story. The narrative must move beyond the America's Civil War in Indian Territory and transition

[88] Bradley R. Clampitt, ed. *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015): 8.

into the decidedly complicated series of tribal civil wars that raged in tandem with the greater national event. The Native American perspective must replace the Lost Cause ideology imposed on the state by its white migrants beginning in 1889 so that the complexity of individuals such as Stand Watie, John Ross, Opothleyaholo, and others is understood. The voice of the civilian must expand the story beyond the battlefield so that we understand the sophistication of experiences in in how the war unfolded in Indian Territory. The difficulty of the freedmen in gaining their newly won rights established by the Treaties of 1866, that was contested by the tribes well into the twentieth century and then pushed aside by the white legislature with Senate Bill One implementing segregation, must become part of the mainstream discussion of the war's aftermath. More importantly, we must relate these concepts and voices to the public in our historic sites and museums where large majorities of the general public are exposed to history in a setting, they deem reliable and trustworthy.

CHAPTER II

FROM WAR OF THE REBELLION TO NATIONAL PRESERVATION

"I beheld settlements and farms, where a few months ago families lived… now deserted and ruined."

– J.S. Murrow

What is Oklahoma's Civil War? Oklahoma was neither a state nor territory at the time of the nation's bloodiest conflict. How does Oklahoma fit within the war between North and South, between the competing rationales for taking up arms against fellow citizens of the United States? This chapter provides a brief overview of the war in Indian Territory, the geographical space that would become Oklahoma. Understanding the fundamentals of the Civil War in the Indian Territory is essential to understanding how the historical memory surrounding the war developed and changed over time within the state. The war played a pivotal role in shaping late nineteenth-century territorial development and the eventual influx of tens of thousands of white migrants to the territory, radically altering the internal memorialization of the war within Oklahoma. This transplanted memory drove preservation, commemoration, and public memorialization for decades before changes

in interpretation recognized the unique character of the war within the boundaries of Oklahoma, bringing a voice to Native American soldiers and civilians and the role of African Americans during and after the war.[89]

For four years, the Civil War devastated Indian Territory. The Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations suffered significant losses for their part in America's war. As armed conflict broke out in the east, United States troops stationed across the Indian Territory abandoned their posts leaving the Indian Nations without promised government protection. The Confederacy sought alliances with the tribes in Indian Territory including, the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations, citing cultural, economic, and geographic ties. Growth and development throughout Indian Territory resembled that of the South, with farming, livestock production, and slave-driven agriculture. Many progressive Indians among the Cherokee, Choctaw, and Chickasaw Nations imitated southern aristocracy while prominent families shared bonds with southern families through marriage. Southern emissaries espoused the various tribes' cultural and economic ties to the south, including slavery. The dominant river systems in Indian Territory flowed towards the southeast, tying trade to the South, particularly New Orleans.

The war in Indian Territory was no less horrific or devastating than the war in the east. Military campaigns, guerilla warfare, and factionalism brought destruction, particularly to the Cherokee Nation. Bloodshed came to the Indian Nations early in 1861

[89] This chapter is drawn from the author's previous work and includes updated interpretations relevant to this study. For more information, see Jason T. Harris, "Combat, Supply, and the Influence of Logistics during the Civil War in Indian Territory," masters thesis, University of Central Oklahoma, 2008.

when pro-Confederate Choctaw and Chickasaw troops joined Texans and drove pro-Union Indians under Opothleyaholo north to Kansas. When war broke out across the nation in 1861 following decades of tension between northern and southern states over slavery and its expansion into western territories, the United States withdrew their armed forces from Indian Territory. The federal government cited the inability to supply such garrisons with provisions and the need to bolster forces in other areas in response to the developing conflict. Abandoned by the United States and refused annuity payments, the Choctaw Nation was the first to sign treaties with the new government in Richmond. In August 1861, the Confederate victory at Wilson's Creek, Missouri, inspired other tribal governments to renounce alliances with the United States and seek treaties with the South. The decision was not unanimous, leaving many loyal tribal members with little choice but to flee north to Kansas. In early September, United States Indian Commissioner E. H. Carruth contacted Muscogee (Creek) leader Opothleyaholo and other loyalists requesting that they travel from Indian Territory to Kansas.[90]

Attacked repeatedly and devastated as they fled to Kansas by veteran Texas cavalry, Opothleyaholo and his band of pro-Federal Indians from the region eventually crossed the border destitute and near starvation, prompting attention from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. George W. Collamore, Mayor of Lawrence, wrote to Commissioner of Indian Affairs William P. Dole, stating that the refugees "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

[90] E.H. Carruth to Hopoeithleyohola [sic], Letter, September 10, 1861, in United States War Department, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,* Series 1, Volume 8, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901, 25. (hereafter *OR*).

frozen limbs, as did the men."[91] The war in Indian Territory constantly displaced bands of refugees as Union, and Confederate forces vied for supremacy.

In 1862, the destitute natives in Kansas quickly overwhelmed the Southern Superintendency and military quartermasters at Fort Scott with demands for provisions inciting calls to return the refugees to Indian Territory. Plans for a military invasion to the south and occupation of Fort Gibson formed quickly and included the arming of loyal Indians. In March, the order was sent to Major General Henry W. Halleck, 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."[92] Without delay, General Blunt directed that "…the two Indian regiments…be raised…with all possible speed."[93] With increased activity in Missouri by Confederate forces, Indian Territory appeared lightly defended. The Union command decided to move quickly with the plans for the invasion and relocation of the refugee Indians.[94] Enlistment for the First Indian Regiment included 1,800 men in eight Muscogee (Creek) companies and two companies of Seminoles tribal members. The Second Indian Regiment included just over 1,400 soldiers from Delaware, Kickapoo, Quapaw, Seneca, Shawnee, and Cherokee Nations but

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[91] 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.
[92] *OR*, Series 1, Volume 8, 624-625.
[93] General Orders No. 2, May 5, 1862, *OR*, Series I, Volume 13, 370.
[94] Heath, "First Federal Invasion," 411.

still lacked the number of troops needed to fill the ranks. As a result, Colonel John Ritchie, commander of the unit, ventured into the Osage Nation looking for recruits.[95]

The Indian expedition was equipped for their move south at Humboldt, Kansas, and placed under the command of Colonel William Weer. Weer moved rapidly, and Union battlefield victories destabilized Confederate alliances with the tribes, particularly the Cherokee. When offered the chance to restore their allegiance to the Federal government, Cherokee Chief John Ross replied, "…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."[96] Their success did not last. Soon failures to supply the troops and weaknesses in command resulted in a mutiny by some federal troops resulting in Weer's arrest. Colonel Frederick 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."[97] The catastrophe that ended the first expedition reassured Confederate military leaders and tribal governments that Union troops could not support themselves within the borders of Indian Territory.[98] As a result, thousands of refugees were abandoned in the territory as Union troops returned to Kansas.

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[95] Indian Affairs, 1862, 164-166.
[96] *OR*, Series I, Volume 13, 137-138, 450, 463-464; Ross to Weer, letter dated July 8, 1862. *OR*, Series I, Volume 13, 486-487.
[97] Frederick Solomon, Report, *OR*, Series I, Volume 13, 476-477.
[98] L. Thomas, Letter, March 19, 1862.

The return of Unionists and Federal Indian regiments back into the territory prompted some to settle old scores. Murders, house burnings, and robbery became prevalent following across Indian Territory, and especially within the Cherokee and Creek Nations. Unionists took revenge on Confederate sympathizers for their actions over the past year and sought to persuade neutral families to their cause, while pro-southern partisans victimized the newly returned Indians. Neither side could muster enough strength to push the other from the area. J. S. Murrow wrote of the destruction, "my heart ache[s] as I beheld settlements and farms, where a few months ago families lived… now deserted and ruined."[99] "A federal Indian agent noted it created a "spirit of license" and feared that it if "our citizens are in the habit of taking vengeance into their own hands, the Indians may follow the example."[100] Stephen Foreman, a Presbyterian missionary, wrote on the death of Abijah Hicks, "He was an inoffensive man and if killed it was either for his abolition sentiments or property… I have heard of no one being killed yet for his sentiments, still I should not be surprised if it came to that."[101] Hannah Hicks, whose husband was killed just days before by mistake, recorded in her diary "on the night of the 31st of July, rather, the morn. of the 1st of August, our house was burnt down, that was the first great trial that my husband was not here to share with me."[102] Factionalism led both sides to extract a heavy toll on those still in support of the opposition while civilians faced physical dangers and constant psychological terror from frequent raids.

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[99] J. S. Murrow to Bro Hornaday," letter, January 11, 1862, Box 34, Volume 97, Grant Foreman Collection, Gilcrease Library and Archive, Tulsa, Oklahoma.
[100] Quoted from Franzman, "Peculiarly situated between rebellion and loyalty" Civilized Tribes, Savagery, and the American Civil War," 151.
[101] Stephen Foreman, Diary, July 18, 1862, Stephen Foreman Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.
[102] Hannah Hicks, Diary, July 31, 1862, Gilcrease Library and Archive, Tulsa, Oklahoma. (hereafter Diary of Hannah Hicks).

The summer of 1863 proved to be a turning point for the Civil War in the Indian Territory. That spring, Union General James G. Blunt sent Colonel William A. Phillips back into Indian Territory with roughly 1,000 Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole families and 3,000 U. S. Troops opening the door for General Blunt's occupation of Forts Gibson and Fort Smith, on the border with Arkansas, and establishing a lasting federal presence in the region. In response to the federal buildup, Brigadier General Douglas H. Cooper began massing Confederate forces to push the Union troops from Indian Territory. In early July, Confederate troops attacked a large wagon train at Cabin Creek. Federal troops, including the First Kansas Colored Infantry, successfully defended the train and continued south to Fort Gibson.[103]

Just a few weeks later U. S. troops under General Blunt would move south from the post and, in a pivotal battle, defeat Confederate troops at Honey Springs. M. E. Holderman, a soldier in Hoplins' Battery, remembered the arduous fighting at Honey Springs. "We crossed, with considerable difficulty, the Arkansas River…Some of the lighter artillery was carried over by ferryboats, but the larger guns were too heavy…the treacherous quicksand came near engulfing the whole battery, but we finally reached the shore and set out marching straight over."[104] He later wrote, "We found the crossing very difficult for even the infantry and there were but a few places where cavalry could ford the creek…We were at a great loss to find a way to get our heavy artillery over when a dilapidated bridge was found… in a rain of bullets we repaired it in some fashion and

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[103] Britton, *Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 96-99; Burke, *The Official Military History of Kansas Regiments During the War for the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, 411; Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War,* 259-265; Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 100; U.S. War Department, Company Returns, Indian Home Guard, August 1863, Special Microfilm Collections, Roll IAD-5, Oklahoma Historical Society.
[104] M.E. Holderman, "Remembering Honey Springs," *The Wichita Eagle* January 3, 1909, p. 14.

were able to protect our men until the whole army had crossed."[105] As the Union victory became likely, Confederate troops set fire to all buildings and supplies at the Depot.[106] Federal troops captured a commissary building before it could burn. The 1st Kansas Colored Infantry found some 400 pairs of handcuffs among the ruins. 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."[107]

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 astounding. Late in the year, an overwhelming defeat at Baxter Springs reminded Union soldiers that enemy troops could successfully attack above the Arkansas River. Raids became the main form of attack, most led by Colonel Stand Watie, later promoted to general, and the Cherokee Mounted Rifles. Frequent incursions resulted in open hostility between federal forces and the civilian population as both armies requisitioned livestock and crops from residents. Many families found themselves without food as the year closed.

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[105] M. E. Holderman, "Remembering Honey Springs," *The Wichita Eagle* January 3, 1909, p.14.
[106] W.K. Makesmon, Letter, 19 November 1910, Joseph B. Thoburn Collection, Box 9, Oklahoma Historical Society, Archives Division; Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 282.
[107] Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 123; Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 282-283.

By December of 1863, some 18,000 pro-Confederate Indians fled south into the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in search of assistance. Frustrated by experiences with other officers and the poor condition of troops in Indian Territory, Confederate General Frederick Steele requested he be relieved of his command. In December, General Samuel B. Maxey of Texas 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. The summer of 1863 brought a decisive blow to Confederate operations in Indian Territory when they lost Fort Gibson, Fort Smith, and depots at Honey Springs and Perryville. Frequent raids by Stand Watie and his Cherokee Mounted rifles resulted in open hostility. Federal forces also targeted the civilian population and both armies requisitioned livestock and crops from local residents. Many families found themselves without food as the year closed. General Maxey constantly grumbled to his superior General E. Kirby Smith that his troops lacked competent leaders, lacked discipline, and was without even basic military supplies.[108]

In January 1864, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation to the Five Tribes offering pardons to any tribe willing to cease hostilities and support the federal government. Colonel Phillips sought to take the war to those still in rebellion to distribute the proclamation. He included letters of his own with those of the President, citing the futility of continuing the war. Phillips wrote to the Chickasaws, "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." Phillips pleaded in with Seminole Chief

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[108] Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 85-87; Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 59.

John Jumper to "accept it soon [defeat], you may be preserved; if you do not, you and your people will be blotted out in blood."[109]

In a daring move, Federal troops marched into the heart of the Choctaw Nation in February. Phillips called on the soldiers to unleash their vengeance and make their footsteps severe to crush the civilian population's will. Remembering Colonel Phillips' orders, Union soldiers took no prisoners and left some forty-nine dead on the field Middle Boggy with their throats cut from ear to ear.[110] Throughout the remainder of the year, numerous federal officers began similar offensives. Phillips' march proceeded General William Tecumseh Sherman's infamous March to the Sea by three months and was no less devastating. During Phillip's 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.[111] The Federal offensive convinced some tribal members to rebuke their allegiance to the government in Richmond, especially after the annuity payments failed to arrive early in the year but the death and destruction that was left in Phillips' wake hardened the resolve of some southern sympathizers.

Throughout 1864, both sides struggled with the burden of thousands of refugees, forced from their farms by the prospect of enemy raids and starvation. Later in the year.

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[109] William A. Phillips to Governor Colbert, Letter, February 15, 1864, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 109-110; William A. Phillips to Chief John Jumper, Letter, February 15, 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 24, part 1, 111; Ernest I. Darling, "Lincolns Message to Indian Territory," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 63 (Fall, 1985): 186-192.

[110] *Itinerary of the Indian Brigade,* No Date; William A. Phillips, Report, February 16, 1864; Samuel B. Maxey, Letter, February 26, 1864; Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory,* 66.

[111] General Order No. 3, January 31, 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 191-192; *Itinerary of the Indian Brigade,* No date, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 111-112; Jacob Perryman, Letter, 3 March 1864, Alice Robertson Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Edwards, *The Prairie Was on Fire,* 92; Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory,* 61.

Confederate raids targeted communication, wagon trains, detached troops in hay camps, advanced, lightly defended civilian populations, and even took the steamboat *J. R. Williams*. In September, Confederate forces seized a federal supply train valued at more than $1,500,000 in one of their most significant victories at Cabin Creek. This battle took the ragged Confederate army and transformed it into a well-fed, well-equipped, and virtually uniformed fighting force and left Union commanders in awe.

The Confederate offensives in 1864 failed to recapture Fort Gibson and Fort Smith, but it did succeed in holding Federal troops in check. The campaign inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy, denied military resources to the federal commanders, and prevented a large-scale offensive into the Choctaw or Chickasaw Nations outside of Phillips' February incursion south. As the year ended and winter approached, relative quiet spread across the Indian Territory as Union and Confederate troops settled into defensive positions. In early 1865, both the Union and Confederate commands reorganized again but did not undertake major operations. On May 26, 1865, General Edmund Kirby Smith ordered the Trans-Mississippi Department to lay down its arms. On June 10, tribal governments began to surrender to the United States individually. Finally, Stand Watie and his Cherokees laid down their arms at Doaksville, a Choctaw community located near Fort Towson, on June 23, ending the war in Indian Territory. Unlike the outbreak of hostilities in 1861, the end came quietly.

By the time the war ended, thirty-three percent of the population were widowed, sixteen percent of the children were fatherless, fourteen percent of children were orphans and, over 7,000 enslaved individuals were emancipated and without status within the Indian Nations they called home. The war stripped the land of livestock, destroyed

countless homes, and farms were abandoned as refugees fled the area causing many to rebuild following the conflict. Many residents across the territory depended on the generosity of others for mere survival as they began to rebuild. By the end of the war, the Confederacy received over 10,000 Native Americans volunteers while the United States recruited some 5,000 troops from the various tribes.[112]

Reconstruction of a Different Sort

Following the end of hostilities, tribes began the long process of rebuilding. The U. S. government sought to apply republican values to the South and, by capitalizing on Confederate defeat, fundamentally reshaped the relationship between the federal government and Indian Nations. Reconstruction came to the Indian Territory with the treaties of 1866 between the United States and the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations, resulting in racial antagonism, bitterness, and the destruction of pre-war sovereignty held by the tribes. While some within the tribes attempted to maintain neutrality and loyalty to the United States, many progressive mixed-bloods had sought treaties with the South creating internal strife. Before the war, the Keetoowah Society actively advocated abolition within the Cherokee Nation while factions among the Seminole and Muscogee (Creek) permitted fugitive slaves to take residence. In addition to abolishing slavery and emancipating some 7,000 enslaved, the treaties of 1866 nullified all existing treaties, reorganized tribal governments, led to significant transfers of tribal land to the federal government and moved toward ending

[112] 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; Grindle, Jr., Donald, "Red vs Black: Conflict and Accommodation in the Post Civil War Indian Territory, 1865-1907," *American Indian Quarterly* (Summer 1984): 212; Franzmann, "Peculiarly situated between rebellion and loyalty" Civilized Tribes, Savagery, and the American Civil War," 145-148.

tribal sovereignty by placing tribes under congressional control. Unlike the policy of Reconstruction applied to the South, tribal Reconstruction would last for decades.[113]

In 1866, tribal delegates from Indian Territory converged in Fort Smith, Arkansas, to meet with the newly appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Dennis Nelson Cooley. They included both Union and Confederate factions from the Five Tribes and others. Cooley, who had no experience working with tribes, set out to renegotiate their relationship with the government under the direction of James Harlan, the new secretary of the interior. Harlan intended to consolidate the tribes under a civil government within the territory. By signing treaties of alliance with the Confederacy and taking up arms in rebellion against the United States, Cooley had proclaimed the tribes forfeited their annuities and lands in the territory and declared representatives must sign new treaties of peace containing a variety of stipulations. These included the abolition of slavery and incorporation of the freedmen into the tribe; loss of territory for the resettlement of additional Indian nations; assistance in maintaining peace with Plains Indians; preparation for the consolidation of tribal governments into a singular territorial government; and the stipulation that no white person except federal employees or those authorized by the United States would be allowed to reside among the Indians.[114]

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[113] M. Thomas Bailey, *Reconstruction in Indian Territory: A Story of Avarice, Discrimination, and Opportunism* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1972), 24-25; Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., *The Cherokee Freedman: From Emancipation to American Citizenship* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978), 8-10; Claudio Saunt, "The Paradox of Freedom: Tribal Sovereignty and Emancipation during the Reconstruction of Indian Territory," *The Journal of Southern History* 70 (February 2004): 64-67.

[114] Baiely, *Reconstruction in Indian Territory*, 58-59, 66; Christopher B. Bean, "Who Defines a Nation?" in *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory,* Ed. Bradley R. Clampitt (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 111-112; Gary L Roberts, "Dennis Nelson Cooley," in *The Commissioners of Indian Affairs*, ed. Robert M. Kvasnicka and Herman J. Viola (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 99-100.

Each tribal government delegation negotiated separate agreements with the federal government and abolished slavery, although the disposition of the recently freed enslaved varied by treaty. The Cherokee, Muskogee (Creek), and Seminole reluctantly agreed to grant tribal citizenship to their enslaved. The Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations entered negotiations rather unapologetically and received different terms. They were not required to grant citizenship to their former slaves and managed to keep the majority of their territory intact. Negotiations with the Cherokee, Seminole, and Muskogee (Creek) were the less favorable. The Seminole Nation lost roughly ninety percent of their tribal lands while the Cherokee sold the Neutral Lands to the government for $1.25 per acre. Each nation provided for railroad rights-of-way in negotiations.[115] While the government approached the tribes with a series of non-negotiable mandates, the Indian nations who embraced less traditional attitudes and continued to incorporate more progressive Anglo viewpoints tended to retain more independent tribal agency and received less punitive punishment.[116]

This was especially true for tribes who suffered less internal strife during the conflict such, as the Choctaw and Chickasaws. Despite acknowledging their loss in the war, the Choctaw and Chickasaw remained defiant, retaining formidable pro-Union

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[115] Charles J. Kappler's edited six-volume collection chronicles the treaties between the United States and various Indian tribes. For Reconstruction Treaties of 1866, see volume 2. Gail Balman, "The Creek Treaty of 1866," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 48 (Fall 1970): 184-196; Harry Henslick, "The Seminole Treaty of 1866," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 48 (Fall 1970): 280-294; Paul Lambert, "The Cherokee Reconstruction Treaty of 1866," *Journal of the West* 12 (July 1973): 471-489; Marion R. McCullar, "The Choctaw-Chickasaw Reconstruction Treaty of 1866," *Journal of the West* 12 (July 1973): 462-470; Francis P. Prucha, *American Indian Treaties: The History of a Political Anomaly* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[116] Saunt, "Paradox of Freedom," provides an expanded discussion of internal divisions between pro-Union and pro-Confederate representatives in the 1866 treaty negotiations. In addition, he differentiates negotiation strategies and outcomes.

attorneys and using public relations to help shape their negotiations in a more favorably. As a result, the federal government paid for land ceded through treaties. In addition, neither the Chickasaw or Choctaw Nations granted their formally enslaved people the same rights as tribal members, a contentious stipulation imposed on the Cherokee, Muskogee (Creek), and Seminole. Another significant victory for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations was their insistence that the United States continue to honor previous treaties providing the tribes with millions of dollars in annuities despite admitting to openly taking up arms and waging war against the federal government.[117]

Much like the rest of the South, Indian Territory grappled with race relations following emancipation. Unlike their former allies to the east, the Five Tribes wrestled with sovereignty and the extension of tribal citizenship rights to ex-slaves under the recently signed Treaties of 1866. According to historian Claudio Saunt, the ideology of freedom was both emancipatory and oppressive in the Indian Territory. "In the name of freedom, the federal government fought to abolish tribal sovereignty, distribute Indian lands in severalty, and absorb Indians into the American republic."[118] Slavery within Indian Territory ranged from relatively benign kinship to extensive plantation chattel

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[117] Bean, "Who Defines a Nation," 112-115; Lewis A. Kensell, "Phases of Reconstruction in the Choctaw Nation, 1865-1870, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 47 (Summer 1969):138-153; Kevit, "Trail of Tears to Veil of Tears," 148-151. The imposition of full citizenship rights to Freedmen remains a contentious issue among some tribes. Factions among the Cherokee Nation still seek to separate the Freedmen descendants from the tribal roles and in 2007 voted to strip them of their rights. U.S. District Judge Thomas F. Hogan overturned the vote. In his ruling, the judge argued that the Cherokee Nation can continue to define itself but must do so equally and evenhandedly with respect to native Cherokees and the descendants of the Cherokee Freedmen. Principal Chief Chuck Hoskins Jr. issued a statement in February 2021 calling for equal rights for all citizens. Chief Hoskins noted, "Cherokees must all be equal citizens under the law. This means all Cherokee citizens, irrespective of descendancy, should enjoy the rights and obligations of citizenship." In his statement, he specifically included the freedmen arguing, "Together we have a shared history, rooted in the Cherokee Nation's sacred promises in the Treaty of 1866." Clara Sue Kidwell's *The Choctaws in Oklahoma: From Tribe to Nation, 1855-1870* chronicles the Choctaw and Chickasaw approach to treaty negotiations with the United States government and explores treaty specifics in depth.

[118] Saunt, "Paradox of Freedom," 93.

slavery in others. For planters, emancipation created labor problems. For many, it jeopardized the racial hierarchy created over the preceding half-century. Each tribe struggled internally with emancipation clauses as they negotiated new treaties with the United States. The federal government viewed the incorporation of emancipated slaves as a step towards the assimilation of the tribes into the American republic as they enforced political and civil rights for the formerly enslaved.[119]

The attitudes of the delegates often fell along wartime alliances. Pro-Union Muskogee (Creek) leader Oktarsars Harjo declared, "[t]he Colored-people residing among the Creeks under their laws and usages were entitled to all the rights and privileges of full-blood Indians of the Nation" and "no distinctions were to be used save those on the score of loyalty or disloyalty to the U.S. Government as exhibited during the war for the Union, 1861-1865."[120] Lewis Johnson, a pro-Union Chickasaw, exclaimed, "[t]hey suffered as much as we did. I have always understood that the President esteemed the colored people, and we are willing to do just as our Father may wish, and take them in and assist them, and let them help us."[121]

The Cherokee, Choctaw, and Chickasaw had more vocal pro-Southern delegates negotiating their treaties. While some loyal Cherokee emancipated their enslaved in 1863, they continued to deny the rights of citizenship while tribal governments sought to expel them from the Cherokee Nation. Pro-Southern Cherokees accepted abolition while asserting it would not benefit the formerly enslaved nor the tribe to "incorporate the

[119] Saunt, "Paradox of Freedom," 71.
[120] Bean, "Who Defines a Nation," 116; Saunt, "Paradox of Freedom," 83.
[121] Saunt, "Paradox of Freedom," 73.

former into the several tribes 'on an equal footing with the original members."[122] Ultimately, the Cherokee Treaty of 1866 required the tribe to adopt and grant full citizenship to their former slaves if they returned to the nation within six months. This citizenship provision is still contested today. Principal Chief Chuck Hoskins, Jr., issued executive order 2020-05-CTH in 2020 calling for equal protection for Cherokee citizens, addressing the exclusion of Cherokee citizens of Freedmen descent. In February 2021, the Cherokee Nation Supreme Court supported the decision and struck "by blood" from the Cherokee Nation's tribal laws and determined Freedmen citizens to have full rights as Cherokee citizens based on the Treaty of 1866.[123]

The Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations presented the most resistance to forced equality within Indian Territory. Home to the most extensive plantations in the territory, the Choctaw and Chickasaw frequently ignored emancipation and launched "a most deadly persecution upon the colored people."[124] Unlike the new treaties signed with other tribes, theirs did not mandate adoption and equality for the previously enslaved. These tribes reserved the right to adopt the freedmen and receive $300,000 for their lands or have the federal government remove the previously enslaved. Both pushed for removal. When the United States government failed to act, the tribes took matters into their own hands, forming patrols to eradicate the emancipated, leading to many deaths as they were simply murdered without punishment for the perpetrators. Both the Freedmen's Bureau and Brigadier General John B. Sanborn, one of the commissioners appointed to negotiate

[122] Report of John B. Sanborn, January 5, 1866, Serial 1248, 284.
[123] Bean, "Who Defines a Nation," 117. Saunt, "Paradox of Freedom," 78. Report of John B. Sanborn, January 5, 1866, Serial 1248, 284.
[124] Report of John B. Sanborn, January 5, 1866, Serial 1248, 284.

the treaties of peace with the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations at the end of the war, called for action, including deceleration of martial law as violence escalated and then diminished.

Ultimately, the treaties of 1866 focused on several principal issues, including reconciliation of tribal factions, emancipation and incorporation of the enslaved into the tribes, land cession for the settlement of additional Native nations, and the extension of jurisdiction over the formerly enslaved in Indian Territory.[125] Resistance to the adoption of freedmen was widespread with issues of tribal self-preservation and sovereignty at the forefront. In 1870, S. N. Clark noted, "[T]hat the rebel Indians of those tribes (Choctaw and Chickasaw) would recognize the freedmen as citizens was as probable as that the white rebels of Georgia or South Carolina would voluntarily recognize the freedmen of those states as citizens." This animosity and racism among tribal factions continued well into the twentieth century. As large numbers of southerners emigrated to Indian Territory in the 1890s, the racism African Americans in the territory faced continued to increase. In addition, the tribe's role in the war and service to the Confederacy provided Anglo veterans and other southerners a shared collective past to draw upon when they began to memorialize the war in Oklahoma.[126]

Tribal leaders among the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Muscogee (Creek) Nations feared the federal government would move freedmen from across the South to Indian Territory and a shift in the balance of power within their societies. Many argued that only the tribes should define what it meant to be Indian. Only the Seminole Nation

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[125] Bailey, *Reconstruction in Indian Territory*, 68-69.
[126] S. N. Clark to O. O. Howard, February 1, 1870, NAMS M-742, Reel 67, 585.

willingly provided “unconditional citizenship” to the former enslaved. Historian Claudio Saunt argues that “at the core of the problematic relationship between ex-slaves and native peoples was the paradoxical nature of freedom in Indian Territory.”[127] Emancipation within the territory ended slavery while precipitating the abolishment of tribal sovereignty. As a result of the treaties, each tribe conceded large territorial losses to the United States, paving the way for the federal government to relocate additional tribes into the territory.

As a result of this final concession, the Five Tribes lost the western half of Indian Territory. Eventually, the Unassigned Lands at the heart of Indian Territory drew the attention of white settlers. Throughout the 1880s, the Boomer movement, composed of non-Indian outsiders hoping to colonize the Unassigned Lands, called for unoccupied lands to be opened to homesteading. After a decade of effort, Representative William Springer of Illinois introduced the Springer Amendment to the Indian Appropriations Bill, allowing President Benjamin Harrison to declare the Unassigned Lands subject of opening to non-Indian residents in February 1889. Just two months later, some 50,000 non-Indians, including thousands of African Americans from the South, settled the 2,000,000 acres of Unassigned Lands ushering in a radical change and the organization of Oklahoma. With these new settlers and the many who followed, radically different Civil War memories would quickly shape how the war would be remembered, and memorialized, what would become the state of Oklahoma.

[127] Saunt, “Paradox of Freedom,” 93.

The National Battlefield Preservation Movement

This section provides a brief history of the battlefield preservation movement in the United States. Understanding the context of national preservation efforts and park development lay the groundwork for states to memorialize their own Civil War battlefields. These farms, fields, and communities across the nation witnessed the carnage of war. However, they did not necessarily alter the outcome of the war or garner the same national efforts as the first national battlefields at Gettysburg, Chickamauga and Chattanooga, Shiloh, Antietam, and Vicksburg. As a result, state efforts followed years, if not decades, after. Public memory reflects current social and political relationships at the time of its creation. The beginning of Civil War battlefield preservation is paired with the rise of the Lost Cause ideology.

Charles Reagan Wilson argued that the Lost Cause became a "civil religion" in the New South, offering cultural redemption. As Northerners memorialized the lives lost, preservation of the Union and the moral victory over the bondage of the enslaved, Southerners "made a religion out of their history" with post-war memorials and ceremonies that reinforced the significance of the war while separating secession from slavery.[128] Karen L. Cox demonstrated how the United Daughters of the Confederacy, which formed in the 1890s, took on memorization as a way to vindicate their loved ones and their parent's generation who struggled through wartime experiences and the culture of defeat.[129] The second generation of Confederate women undertook widespread

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[128] Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 36.
[129] Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida 2003).

monument creation and pro-Confederate interpretation of the war in public. These monuments, paired with those of the Union, dominated early memorization of their shared history in America's Civil War in a way that made its loss more tolerable as the nation moved on. The Lost Cause emerged after the Civil War and flourished well into the twentieth century and recast secession and the war that followed as a heroic defense of the South and its culture, obscuring the truth on slavery, the causes of the war, and Reconstruction. But, by providing a heroic soldier mentality, it fostered the emergence of the reconciliationist mindset that allowed the white soldiers of the United States and the former Confederacy to reconcile their war.

Edward Linenthal has argued that battlefields are both ceremonial centers for veneration and civil spaces where Americans of various ideological persuasions compete for ownership of national stories. For Civil War battlefields, the latter is particularly poignant. Battlefields engender multiple forms of veneration including patriotic rhetoric, monument building, and preservation of the physical space. Patriotic rhetoric "is made up of 'fixed' translations of the patriotic canon and serves to establish and continually reinforce the primal themes of patriotic orthodoxy, war as a holy crusade, bringing new life to the nation and the warrior as a culture hero."[130] The monuments we dedicate at these sacred fields "make it worthwhile to be a descendent" of this patriotic faith. Within this framework of veneration, institutions preserve the sacred space from its surroundings, applying their interpretation to the memory of place.

[130] Edward Linenthal, *Sacred Ground*, 4.

Civil War veterans took the lead in turning former battlefields into protected, enduring, physical memorials for their fallen brethren. On countless battlefields, thousands of fallen soldiers were interred in mass graves or newly created cemeteries. At locations such as Honey Springs, the number of dead might be in the hundreds, and internment took place quickly. At large engagements such as Gettysburg, the number of killed was in the thousands and took months. At Gettysburg, residents quickly worked to establish a new cemetery for fallen Union soldiers establishing the model for early memorialization laying the groundwork for battlefield preservation. Within a month, two local attorneys started the process that eventually led Gettysburg to take the lead in battlefield preservation. David McConaughy began to purchase small parcels of the battlefield to preserve them and to establish a cemetery for the proper burial of Union soldiers on behalf of several Union states, including Pennsylvania. For the cemetery, David Wills chose a prominent parcel on Cemetery Hill, part of the federal line, next adjacent to the community's existing cemetery. Crews began to reinter the fallen Union soldiers in the new cemetery immediately.[131]

On November 19, 1863, a crowd of 20,000 gathered for the dedication of the new Soldiers National Cemetery. Edward Everett, an orator from Boston, delivered the lengthy keynote before President Abraham Lincoln delivered his brief remarks. In just 272 words he captured the magnitude of the war and the suffering it imposed on the population. Lincoln proclaimed, "we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have

[131] Richard W. Sellars, "Pilgrim Places," *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 2, no. 1 (Winter 2005) 23-24; Jennifer M. Murray, *On A Great Battlefield* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2017), 9-11.

consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract." It was in this "final resting-place for those who gave their lives" that Lincoln, and the many who had gathered, recognized the "unfinished work" and sought "increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion" so "that the nation might live."[132]

The following spring, the Pennsylvania legislature chartered the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association in the earliest attempt to preserve Civil War battlefields. Composed of primarily local residents during its formative years, the association focused on three issues. First, they sought to identify and purchase land connected with the battle. Next, they supervised the installation of over 300 early monuments and markers. Finally, they helped establish access by constructing early battlefield avenues.[133] While the initial effort was local and disjointed, numerous attempts were made to preserve isolated areas of conflict and memorialize the fallen through monuments. This local preservation effort following the war lay the groundwork for what Timothy Smith defines as the "golden age of battlefield preservation" in the 1890s.[134]

By the end of the 1880s, there would be a marked shift in the style of commemoration and memorialization at Civil War battlefields. Reconstruction officially ended, and the North and South gradually moved towards reconciling differences. Early commemoration at Gettysburg was limited to recognition of Union soldiers and their success. Across the South, there was little effort to support the preservation of battlefield

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[132] Abraham Lincoln, "The Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863.
[133] Murray, *On a Great Battlefield*, 11.
[134] See Timothy B. Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation: The Decade of the 1890s and the Establishment of America's First Five Military Parks.* Smith provides an excellent narrative establishing and implementing preservation efforts at Gettysburg, Chickamauga and Chattanooga, Shiloh, Antietam, and Vicksburg as veterans moved towards reconciliation following Reconstruction.

sites initially. Southerners feared that preservation would remind them of the significant loss of life, the destruction of property, and the radical changes to their culture that resulted from the war. By the end of the 1880s, southern veterans' groups and citizens began to take up the reconciliationists perspective.

In 1889, a coalition of Union and Confederate veterans' organizations joined with residents to create the Chickamauga Memorial Association to establish a national park.[135] Their success, along with numerous veterans in positions of power in state legislatures and Congress, helped secure the establishment of the first national military parks under the administration of the War Department for the preservation and memorialization for the public. However, the growing reconciliation movement proved detrimental to former slaves. It excluded their contributions to the war effort, displaced their suffering, and buried the moral cause of emancipation. By the close of the decade, Congress authorized five battlefield parks, including Chickamauga and Chattanooga (1890), Antietam (1890), Shiloh (1894), Gettysburg (1895), and Vicksburg (1899).[136]

In 1896, in a unanimous ruling, the Supreme Court solidified the right of the government to preserve historic military parks in a landmark case paving the way for future large land acquisitions. The Gettysburg Electric Railway Company obtained the rights to build a rail line through a portion of the battlefield, including the sites known as Little Round Top and Devil's Den, for tourists. The Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial

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[135] Georgie Boge and Marie H. Boge, "Paving Over the Past: A History and Guide to Civil War Battlefield Preservation," (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1993): 16.

[136] Boge, "Paving over the Past," 17-21. Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation*, 34-39. Ronald F. Lee, "The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea" (Office of Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1973): 13. Sellars, "Pilgrim Places," 26.

Association petitioned Congress to intervene. In June 1894, Congress passed a joint resolution preventing construction. citing imminent danger to the battlefield's integrity. The Secretary of War moved to acquire the property owned by the railway company without success. Instead, condemnation proceedings were initiated under the Attorney General. The railway company immediately filed suit claiming the government could not condemn the land for historic preservation and that the parks establishment was not a legitimate public purpose. On January 27, 1896, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in favor of the federal government. It declared that the preservation of battlefields did qualify as a legitimate public purpose under eminent domain and condemnation and that the government could acquire and protect these sites through the power of eminent domain.[137] The power of eminent domain would be used extensively in Oklahoma decades later when the Oklahoma Historical Society expanded the borders of the battlefield park at Honey Springs.

While preservation efforts expanded rapidly in the 1890s as veteran groups pushed for memorialization and preservation, progress slowed after the turn of the century because of the economic realities of such massive efforts. The growth of reconciliation and the fact that veterans were now in positions of power allowed them to exert tremendous political pressure at home and in Washington, D.C., creating battlefield parks. During this early battlefield preservation and conservation phase, the government established the legal right to preserve and protect these former battlefields. However, management remained decentralized under independent park commissions leading to

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[137] United States v. Gettysburg Electric Railway Company, 160 U.S. 668 United States Supreme Court (1896). Accessed 2021. Boge, "Paving Over the Past," 20. Linenthal, *Sacred Ground*, 104

large fiscal expenditures and lack of control. The initial establishment of the military parks required extensive land purchases and financial investment. The creation of the battlefield park Chickamauga was meant to set the early standard for others.

At roughly 6,000 acres, the plan called for preserving the entire battlefield; however, Congress, still dominated by veterans, faced fiscal opposition to the cost of such large military parks. Former general George B. Davis, chairman of the commission for the publication of the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion,* testified before the House Military Affairs Committee and introduced a new plan to acquire battlefield property. Davis was a commanding figure who had risen through the ranks, becoming one of the nation's foremost authorities on military law and a leading preservationist. His design, known as the Antietam Plan, called for the construction of smaller "ribbon parks" securing sections of the former battlefields where most of the fighting took place or areas of great significance. Davis feared a day when a lack of Congressional funding could lead to refuges for "tramps and all sorts of people."[138]

In the hearing, Davis suggested the Antietam Plan was successful and used Appomattox as an example, arguing that the majority of events occurred within a 150-acre site and that securing the 2,500-acre park "would commemorate nothing, it would perpetuate the memory of nothing."[139] Secretary of War Daniel S. Lamont, who oversaw the most rapid growth of military parks, actively sought a national battlefield policy. His annual report recommended that Congress decide the issue and lobbied for future parks to be developed under the new Antietam Plan. Lamont informed Congress that "It is

[138] *House Reports*, 59th Congress, 1st sess., H. Report. 4421, 8-9.
[139] *House Reports*, 59th Congress, 1st sess., H. Report. 4421, 13-14.

important that Congress should early adopt and consistently pursue a fixed policy in regard to marking the battlefields of the Civil War."[140] The House committee quickly adopted the new plan and moved it to Congress, where it was passed. This development forever altered the course of battlefield preservation. At the time, many in the preservation movement believed the areas surrounding most battlefields would remain agricultural and rural. Decades later, this assumption proved false, leading to future preservation problems. After 1900, the establishment of new parks dramatically slowed while Congress attempted to improve administration at existing parks.[141]

In 1916, Congress transferred the existing parks to the War Department to centralize authority and provide oversite, reducing the autonomy of the individual commissions. At the end of World War I, better transportation and the growth of mass-produced automobiles brought increased awareness preservation and tourism. In 1926, President Calvin Coolidge approved legislation directing the War Department to create a survey of all battlefields across the United States to inventory and assess the sites. As a result, the Army War College created a three-tier system to classify Civil War military sites based on their military significance and role in the outcome of the war. The survey, completed in 1932, was forwarded to Congress.[142]

The War Department's survey was completed at just the right time for a new era of federal preservation. In 1933, President Roosevelt transferred the administration and oversite of the military park system to the National Park Service. The NPS, created by

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[140] *House Reports*, 59th Congress, 1st sess., H. Report. 4421, 8-14; Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation,* 45-47.
[141] Boge, "Paving over the Past," 17-27; Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation,* 36, 39-40; Daniel S. Lamont, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (1895), 31-32.
[142] Boge, "Paving Over the Past," 27.

Congress in 1916 and placed under the Department of the Interior, was developed to administer the nation's historic and cultural resources. The Organic Act proclaimed, "the service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations…to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein… and to provide for the enjoyment of future generations."[143] Roosevelt's executive order centralized the administration of the natural parks, national monuments, military sites, national cemeteries, and historic sites under one entity. Despite reorganization, the NPS continued to use the Army War College classification system through the 1940s until a new classification system was developed as the Civil War Centennial approached.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt launched the New Deal to restore prosperity to the United States in response to the global economic decline. The Great Depression led to widespread unemployment, financial disaster, and large-scale migration of many. At the height of the New Deal, Congress passed the Historic Sites Act of 1935, making preservation a national policy and creating a comprehensive national model. The act declared that "it is a national policy to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings, and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States."[144] The act provided government authority to establish and preserve historic sites and properties for public benefit. As a result, the Army War College's tiered

[143] The National Park Service Act 39 Stat. 535 (19 U.S.C. 1, 2, 3, and 4) August 25, 1916; Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 6166 dated June 11, 1933.
[144] Historic Sites Act of 1935, 49 Stat. 666, passed August 21, 1935.

system and the War Department survey served as the basis for battlefield preservation and the creation of historic landmarks for the next two decades.[145]

While these early efforts led to the establishment of several military parks that eventually fell under the administration of the National Park Service, lack of continued funding and a centralized national preservation program meant that many battlefields remained in private hands. In the 1950s, interest in preserving Civil War battlefields returned as the centennial approached, particularly at the state level. A proposal to establish a national military park at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, resulted in Congressional changes to the tiered system to allow lower-tiered battlefields with solid state and local support access to national status. To preserve the battlefield, the state of Arkansas purchased just over 4,200 acres and deeded it to the federal government to establish a national park. In addition, the state contributed $500,000 in cash towards the $2,000,000 project. Congress officially created the Pea Ridge National Military Park in 1960. As a result of Arkansas' success, the state of Missouri took a similar course purchasing over 1,700 acres associated with the Battle of Wilson's Creek. The land and an additional $450,000 were given to the federal government to help establish the Wilson's Creek Battlefield National Park in 1960.

In 1988, Congress recognized the need to reevaluate the protection of Civil War battlefields after successfully protecting Stuart Hill at Manassas. The government authorized the purchase of 542 acres at the cost of more than $120,000,000. The realization that the NPS had the opportunity to secure the same property at the beginning

[145] *Historic Sites and Building Act*, United States Code, Volume 11, Secs 2073-292, 1935; Boge, "Paving over the Past," 29.

of the decade for significantly less money led to a series of legislative initiatives to improve the federal governments' role in identifying and protecting threatened battlefields. On July 21, 1990, the Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan introduced the American Battlefield Protection Program on the anniversary of First Manassas, advising that the program would provide a cooperative approach to preservation. Unlike previous federal projects, Congress designed the initiative to identify at-risk sites and work with state and local officials to secure their protection. The program was designed for the Department of the Interior to take a leadership role in identifying threatened battlefields and provide technical assistance through NPS to assist state and local organizations in preservation efforts.[146]

The ABPP initially focused on twenty "priority" locations before Congress authorized a Civil War Sites Advisory Commission in 1990 to determine the protection status of Civil War sites across the United States. When it launched, Congress instituted funding on an annual basis with appropriations varying year to year. The ABPP utilized the commission's recommendation to develop its planning strategies. [147] NPS offered technical assistance with earthwork surveys, mapping, site planning, and National Register documentation throughout the program. In 1991, the Oklahoma Historical Society decided to actively patriciate in the American Battlefield Protection Program. Honey Springs Battlefield was one of the sites that received initial funding for assistance

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[146] Civil War Sites Advisory Commission and the National Park Service, *Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1993): 34-36.
[147] Manuel Lujan, "Remarks to Announce the American Battlefield Protection Program, July 21, 1990, *Battlefield Protection Study: Honey Springs Battlefield Park, Oklahoma* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1991): 51-52; Civil War Sites Advisory Commission and the National Park Service, *Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1993): 34-36.

to complete planning. This initial support led to several commission surveys and final reports contributing to the site's master planning.[148]

The Civil War Sites Advisory Commission was composed of a fifteen-member commission appointed by Congress and the Secretary of the Interior. The commission was tasked with identifying the nation's historically significant Civil War sites, determining their current condition, assessing threats to their integrity, and creating recommendations for preserving and interpreting them. The commission featured several prominent historians, including Ken Burns, Edwin C. Bearss, and Dr. James M. McPherson. For two years, they held sixteen public meetings across eleven states, gathering testimony from countless individuals concerning the status of battlefield preservation. In addition, they or their representatives visited over 350 battlefields in preparation for the release of their report. The commission identified 384 sites and assigned them to four classes. Class A battles had a decisive impact on the war, Class B had a direct and decisive influence on their campaign, Class C influenced a particular campaign, and Class D had limited importance but achieved local objectives. In their assessment, the commission determined that 235 of the sites remained in good condition and were largely unaltered, sixty-four were significantly altered with poor integrity, and that seventy-one retained little or no historical character. Ultimately, the commission concluded that two-thirds of all sites studied would face threats to their integrity within

[148] "American Battlefield Protection Program," *CRM Bulletin* 13 (No. 5, 1990): 1-2. Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, 1990, Public Law 101-628, November 28, 1990; *Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields,* 35; Minutes of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, July 14, 1991, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 69 (Fall 1991): 335.

the next decade. At the time of the report, Honey Springs in Oklahoma was designated a Class B site with roughly 600 protected acres.[149]

Although the American Battlefield Protection Program and the commission renewed focus on preserving battlefields across the United States, it relied heavily on cooperation with state and local entities due to limited funding. Long gone were the days when significant federal funding would help establish large battlefield parks to memorialize the fallen. Instead, ABPP worked with State Historic Preservation Offices, state governments, historical organizations, and local entities to improve protection through new zoning, provide for acquisition through easements, and facilitate historic district designation. The Advisory Commission made several recommendations, including focusing efforts on Class A and B sites with a moderate to high level threat of integrity loss. To help meet their goals, the commission recommended Congress establish a "Civil War Heritage Preservation Law, an emergency Civil War Battlefield Land Acquisition Program providing matching grants, tax law revision, and more to help build collaborative public-private partnerships."[150]

The success at Pea Ridge and Wilson's Creek prompted organizations across Oklahoma to create the Honey Springs National Battlefield Park. The American Battlefield Protection Program brought a renewed focus on preserving battlefields across the United States, ultimately helping the OHS make significant advancements in their development of Honey Springs. Since the addition of Wilson's Creek, Congress has not

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[149] Civil War Studies Act of 1990, Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, Public Law 101-628, 16 USC 1a-5, November 28, 1990. *Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields*, 12, 13, 16-17, 22-24, 41-42.
[150] "American Battlefield Protection Program," 2. *Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields*, 58-60.

authorized the creation of any other Civil War battlefield parks. Instead, they have focused on improvements to existing sites and the additional of acreage when preservation studies are warranted. Today there are currently seventeen Civil War battlefields sites under NPS administration. Several, including the Richmond National Battlefield Park and the Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park, are composed of more than one site. Today, the park service administers more than forty Civil War-related historic sites.[151]

[151] LeRoh H. Fischer, "The Honey Springs National Park Movement," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 47 (Spring 1969): 519; *Pea Ridge National Military Park*, Brochure, National Park Service, no date, Honey Springs Battlefield Collection, Box 3, Oklahoma Historical Society; William E. Dyer, Superintendent, Pea Ridge National Military Park, to LeRoy H. Fischer, December 9, 1966, Honey Springs Battlefield Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; David L. Heib, Superintendent, George Washington Carver National Monument, to LeRoy H. Fischer, December 8, 1966, Honey Springs Battlefield Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; *Wilson's Creek National Military Park*, Brochure, National Park Service, no date, Honey Springs Battlefield Collection, Box 3, Oklahoma Historical Society; Boge, "Paving Over the Past," 29-31.

CHAPTER III

FINDING HISTORY: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRESERVATION MOVEMENT IN OKLAHOMA

> *"Of him who writes, it shall be written. The Chronicler himself passes into history."*
>
> *– Muriel H. Wright*

In the middle of the growing movement by veterans to memorialize the Civil War and the creation of numerous historical societies to capture the changing world and lifestyle that some felt was quickly disappearing because of the Gilded Age, the Oklahoma Historical Society was born. The Gilded Age, a period of rapid economic, political, and social transformation in American history, resulted in dramatic urban growth and the loss of newly won civil rights for African Americans with the rise of the Jim Crow South. In 1906, the year before Oklahoma statehood, the federal government passed the Antiquities Act establishing the first national historic preservation policy for the United States. While this legislation authorized the President to set aside objects and structures of historical and scientific value as national monuments, it indicative of the growing sense of

preservation at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. [152]

This chapter will focus on the early development of the Oklahoma Historical Society. Memory reflects current social and political relationships at the time of its creation and can give insight into the evolution of historical thinking and attachment to local heritage. How the OHS evolved to tell the story of Oklahoma during the American Civil War over the last century must begin with an understanding of how the OHS and early preservation evolved within the state. When we understand how Oklahomans, at least those in a position to decide the status of preservation and decide public interpretations of the past, we understand how it becomes "their memory" that is the trusted source for the public.

The current mission of the Oklahoma Historical Society is to "collect, preserve, and share the history and culture of the state of Oklahoma and its people." Telling the story of a state and its citizens is a daunting task. Over the last 128 years, the institution has wrestled with which stories, what people, how to share that story, and where they would share it. Oklahoma has a rich and varied cultural history that includes the indigenous Caddo, Comanche, Kiowa, Osage, and Wichita Nations and thirty-four other forcibly removed tribes. It was home to some 7,000 emancipated slaves following the Civil War who constructed thriving African American communities that endured and expanded through the 1920s, with several remaining today.[153] Beginning in 1889, countless new whites settled the territory, with their population climbing from a few

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[152] Antiquities Act of 1906, 16 USC 431-443 (1906).

[153] For more information on Oklahoma's All-Black towns, see Norman Crockett, *The Black Towns*; Norman Crocket, "Witness of History, Booker T. Washington Visits Boley," in *Chronicles of Oklahoma*; Karla Slocum, *Black Towns, Black Futures: The Enduring Allure of a Black Place in the American West*; Hannibal B. Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration: The All-Black Towns in Oklahoma*.

thousand to 1,414,177 by the time of statehood, significantly altering the culture and makeup of the state.[154]

From this last group, a handful of newspaper editors cooperatively organized the Oklahoma Historical Society in 1893 to collect their history in opening and establishing the new territory for posterity. However, the OHS is a continuously evolving organization that adapted over time, eventually embracing the Native and African American past that came before their arrival and developed alongside them. Today, the OHS includes thirteen museum sites, five historic forts and battlefields, and six historic homes. In the 2021 fiscal year, the Oklahoma Historical Society received $11,871,018 in state-appropriated revenue and employs 134 full-time staff. The agency has grown exponentially since its founding in 1893.

Defining Memory: Local Museums and the Construction of History in America's Changing Communities, Amy Levin's collection of essays, argues that American culture has become increasingly more standardized as homogenizing forces eliminate regional differences throughout the twentieth century. Despite this national trend, the preservation of local culture and the distinct identity surrounding our communities and states remain the exception at our museums across the United States. Nostalgia plays a prominent role in local history, and "nostalgia is a unique way of knowing that valorizes certain aspects of the past, endowing them with importance as truths.[155] Under the auspices of nostalgia, competing ideas are minimized in order to create a more palatable consensus. Levin

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[154] Department of Commerce and Labor, *Bulletin 89: Population of Oklahoma and Indian Territory, 1907* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1907) 7.
[155] Amy K. Levin, ed. *Defining Memory: Local Museums and the Construction of History in America's Changing Communities* (New York: Altimira Press, 2007). 93

acknowledges that visiting museums is often linked to a sense of place, whether within our own communities or curiosity in another. For the public, it helps create meaningful relationships with the past and satisfies educational inquisitiveness. The essays contain an underlying theme connecting the relationship of museums to their individual locations.

In *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*, Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen argued that the majority of Americans feel disconnected with history during their school years but connect deeply when the story of the past involves family, formal activities such as visiting museums, and a focus on everyday history. Based on survey responses of 1,500 individuals, their work concluded that "over half of the respondents assigned museums a score of 9 or 10 on the 10-point trustworthiness scale" because of the museum's immediacy and association with eyewitnesses to the past and interaction with artifacts. Respondents indicated that trust in museums and historic sites is based on the belief that they are transported back in time to when people used the artifact or occupied a particular site. This connection to the material culture and historical landscape of "place" helps establish a familiar connection rather than an abstract presentation from traditional academic history. According to one respondent, "the museum isn't trying to present you with any point of view…You need to draw your own conclusions."[156] Although, museums do present points of view. The respondent, in this case, credited the idea of informal self-directed learning and the ability to reach his own conclusion as a lack of interpreted perspective. The data provided by Rosenzweig and Thelen repeatedly show how individuals use the past to inspire

[156] Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 105-106.

themselves, assist in solving questions or dilemmas, and in creating personal narratives for the passing of family knowledge and morals on to the next generations.

David Glassberg explores the many ways that the public makes sense of history and place. In *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*, he reminds us that the public historians' reach is much greater than we might imagine. Glassberg intended to "explore the ways Americans have understood and used the past in the twentieth century" and concluded that the disconnect between the historian and the public is the academics focus on the "interpretation of history" without understanding the public's "sense of history." For example, he uses Ken Burns' *The Civil War* as a case study on civic celebration and the public's connection to a past that they recognize and connect with. Civic celebration provides a setting to remember the past, create new experiences, and unite with the community in a shared way.

However, these celebrations are not always universally accepted. While each viewer interpreted the documentary in their own unique manner, it placed the conflict within the context of the viewer's own lives by focusing on individuals and their stories. Nevertheless, the public's interpretation is not always correct. It can be biased, based on limited experience and evidence where an incomplete understanding leads to erroneous belief. It can also be shaped by social and cultural factors that create disassociated outside flawed perspectives. Furthermore, as Glassberg notes, these civil celebrations and historical monuments often transform meaning over time. The overall conclusion from Glassberg's work is that the problem is not how to get the public to think about the past, but rather how to do this in an insightful and constructive way that allows change in meaning over time, promotes cultural dialogue, and provides for the expression and

inclusion of multiple voices from the past so that the visitors, or consumers of the past, can find their connection to place.[157]

If public memory reflects current social and political relationships at the time of its creation, where does the Indian Territory fit within the framework of the American Civil War? In the vast literature regarding the conflict, the western theater, and even more frequently the Indian Territory, is often overlooked in most military works because of its indirect relationship to the war in the east and the final campaigns that led to the surrender of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox on April 9, 1865. It would not be any less traumatic for the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), or Seminole Nations that called the eastern half of what became Oklahoma home. Who would create the public memory of the war for them? Jeff Fortney argues that Native Americans whose lives were shaped by the war practiced self-silence, that is an intentional disconnection to deal with the loss and tragedy, regarding Civil War commemoration well into the twentieth century. Instead, Fortney maintains that despite their critical sacrifices, they sought to bury the past as the tribes themselves reconciled internally and moved in opposition to the continued threat from the Federal government during Reconstruction and beyond.[158]

While competing views sought to rationalize and reconcile the conflict across the nation openly in public view, Native tribal members remembered the war personally. However, they had no desire to commemorate it collectively in public. Their collective

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[157] David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), xiii, 6.
[158] Jeff Fortney, "Lest We Remember: Civil War Memory and Commemoration among the Five Tribes, *American Indian Quarterly* Vol. 36, No. 4, Special Issue: Native American Cultural Tourism: Spectatorship and Participation (Fall 2012), 525-544.

efforts focused on the reconciliation of tribal divisions that erupted into violence internally. Fortney attributes it to the Civil War's "unjustified and unavoidable hastening of U.S. interference" in the politics and culture of the Five Tribes, where all faced land loss, reduction of tribal sovereignty, and the eventual end of tribal government in the postwar period. He argues allotment and statehood were the beginning of "a colonialism of public memory that projected 'lost cause' mythology onto the Five Tribes," which will be discussed over the next several chapters.[159]

The historiography of the Lost Cause is extensive. The Lost Cause emerged after the Civil War and flourished well into the twentieth century and recast secession and the war that followed as a heroic defense of the South and its culture obscuring the truth and fostering white supremacy and the Jim Crow South. The Lost Cause, based on fabricated narratives on slavery, the causes of the war, and Reconstruction, disregarded divisions in southern sentiment for the myth of unwavering support of the Confederacy by white southerners. It was born in the struggle of the South in the aftermath of tremendous loss and carnage to legitimize its cause in the face of defeat to the United States.[160]

If Fortney's public memory was the result of colonialism projected onto the war in Indian Territory, whose memory was it? Does Indian Territory fit within Blight's three distinct sets of competing visions of American memory relating to the war? Do they

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[159] Fortney, "Lest We Remember," 527.

[160] For more on the Lost Cause, see Terry A. Barnhart, *Albert Taylor Bledsoe: Defender of the Old South and Architect of the Lost Cause;* William C. Davis, *The Cause Lost: Myths and Realities of the Confederacy;* Adam H. Domby, *The False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory*; Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913*; James W. Loewen and Edward H. Sebesta, *The Confederate and Neo-Confederate Reader: The "Great Truth" about the "Lost Cause";* Cynthia J. Mills, *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*; Charles R. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865 – 1920*.

remain relevant here? For Blight, the reconciliationists' version of the war took shape during the conflict itself, primarily as a means of dealing with its unprecedented death and destruction and intended to help both individuals and the nation put themselves back together was applied to Indian Territory by non-Natives who migrated into the territory following allotment. Reconciliation within the tribes took a different form. Blight's second form of understanding Civil War memory is that of white supremacy, which took on a new form early during the terror and violence of the Ku Klux Klan and Reconstruction. Within the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations, violence against African Americans was extreme. Following the opening of the territory to non-Natives, the violence and racism common across the South followed, leading the new state of Oklahoma to institute Jim Crow immediately after statehood. Together, these two forms of memory eventually created the racially segregated memory that reconciled the heavy toll of war and the Confederacy's losses with the quest for white social and political dominance at the cost of embracing the causes of emancipation and the freedoms won by African Americans through Union victory.

Blight's third form of memory embodied by African Americans, rooted in Reconstruction's politics, is emancipationists memory. It challenged other versions by focusing on the moral crusades over slavery and its abolition that ignited the war and included the participation of African Americans in achieving this goal. Emancipationist memory would be the memory created by some 7,000 enslaved Blacks freed in Indian Territory due to the Treaties of 1866 ending the war with the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations. It finally brought emancipation in 1866 and the enrollment of the freedmen into the Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), and

Seminole Nations. However, this enrollment remains contested even today among some factions of the tribes.

Blight ultimately concluded that the prevailing view of the war was, and remains, the reconciliationists view where white North and South reconciled their losses with the Lost Cause construct of valiant soldiers. Blight and other historians have continued to overlook Indian Territory. These were not the forms of memory prominent within the Indian Territory. Not for the thirty percent of the American Indian population who were widowed or the sixteen percent who were fatherless. Nor for the nearly 15,000 Native Americans who were motivated by internal tribal divisions and took up arms in America's Civil War. They are the forms of memory imposed upon the war within Indian Territory following allotment and the opening of the territory to outsiders beginning in 1889. They are the forms of memory that drove collecting, preserving, and sharing white Oklahoma's history for nearly a century.[161]

Oklahoma Territory was the last organized territory within the continental United States. From its acquisition as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 through the 1880s, it remained home to thirty-nine sovereign Native American tribes and void of any federal territorial government outside of the handful of military posts and Indian Agencies.[162]

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[161] David Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Pres, 2002), 134; David Blight, *Race and Reunion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 2-3; Whit Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire,* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2001),132; Carolyn Johnston, "The Panther's Scream is Often Heard" Cherokee Women in Indian Territory during the Civil War," 84; Donald A. Grindle, Jr., "Red vs Black: Conflict and Accommodation in the Post Civil War Indian Territory, 1865-1907," *American Indian Quarterly* (Summer 1984): 212; Tom Franzmann, "Peculiarly situated between rebellion and loyalty': Civilized Tribes, Savagery, and the American Civil War," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 76 (Summer 1998): 145-148; Mark A. Lause, *Race and Radicalism in the Union Army,* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 129.

[162] These include Absentee Shawnee Tribe, Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, Apache Tribe of Oklahoma, Caddo Nation, Cherokee Nation, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, Chickasaw Nation, Choctaw Nation, Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Comanche Nation, Delaware Nation, Delaware Tribe of Indians, Eastern

Following the Civil War, the treaties negotiated in 1866 between the United States and representatives of the Five Tribes resulted in the transfer of significant portions of western Indian Territory to the federal government to relocate additional Native Americans. At the center of Indian Territory remained some 2,000,000 acres of land, known as the Unassigned Lands. With a population of 51,279 Native Americans in 1890, the Indian Territory was sparsely populated with minimal settlement by white standards.[163] This area was soon at the center of controversy as Boomers, the common label applied to those calling for the opening of the Unassigned Lands to white settlement, asserted that the Homestead Act applied to the Unassigned Lands. Additional pressure for opening the unsettled lands came from railroad companies, with lines through Indian Territory, and mid-western farmers exerting pressure through Congress. Near the end of the 1889 Congressional session, William Springer of Illinois, chair of the House Committee on Territories, added an amendment to the Indian Appropriations Act removing any remaining tribal claims to the Unassigned Lands and placing them within public domain. Once the Springer amendment authorizing the opening of the lands for settlement passed through Congress, President Grover Cleveland signed the legislation two days before Benjamin Harrison took office on March 4, 1889. Just weeks later,

Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, Euchee (Yuchi) Tribe of Indians, Fort Sill Apache Tribe, Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma, Kaw Nation, Kialegee Tribal Town, Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma, Kiowa Tribe, Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, Modoc Nation, Muscogee Nation, Osage Nation, Otoe-Missouria Tribe, Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma, Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma, Quapaw Nation, Sac and Fox Nation, Seminole Nation, Seneca-Cayuga Nation, Shawnee Tribe, Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, Tonkawa Tribe, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, and the Wyandotte Nation.

[163] Department of Commerce and Labor, *Bulletin 89 Population of Oklahoma and Indian Territory, 1907* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1907) 7.

President Harrison issued a proclamation setting the opening of the Unassigned Lands in Indian Territory on April 22, 1889, at noon.

The Land Run of 1889 began the process by which all tribal lands in western Indian Territory would be opened to settlement. Within each reservation, the government provided an allotment of 80 – 160 acres of land to each qualifying Indian individual leaving vast tracts of "surplus" land for homesteaders. The federal policy of allotment divided communally held land into individually owned private property to destroy tribal governments.[164] From 1889 through 1900, a series of five "land runs" allowed hundreds of thousands of settlers to migrate into the unassigned lands and former Indian nations in a short time, creating Oklahoma Territory. Estimates of the number of settlers making the first run into the Unassigned Lands vary dramatically, with 50,000 the most common. In this first opening, more than 9,000 homesteads were claimed, and Oklahoma City and Guthrie exceeded 10,000 inhabitants each by the time the rush ended. The prospect of "free land" encouraged many to travel to the area to make the run, despite the $14.00 fee, approximately a months' worth of earnings for the average farm laborer in the 1890s, for filing the claim.[165] It also offered an opportunity for African Americans. Former slaves emancipated in 1866 often settled together, establishing All-Black towns. Following the opening to non-Indian settlement, African Americans from outside the territory migrated to Oklahoma and followed a similar pattern for safety and economic security. African

[164] For more on allotment, see Kent Carter, *The Dawes Commission and the Allotment of the Five Civilized Tribes, 1893-1914*; William T. Hagan, *Taking Indian Lands: The Cherokee (Jerome) Commission 1889-1893*; D. S. Otis, *The Dawes Act and the Allotment of Indian Lands*, ed. Francis P. Prucha.
[165] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*, *Part 1*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975): 163.

American leaders like Edward P. McCabe even marketed the communities across the South to create an All-Black state.[166]

Additional openings followed as other tribal lands across the territory were allotted and residual acreage made available to non-Indians. On September 22, 1891, the second opening occurred in the Iowa, Sac and Fox, and Shawnee-Pottawatomie lands. Roughly 20,000 settlers occupied more than 1,100,000 acres in less than a day, significantly increasing the non-Indian population of the territory.[167] The third opening, within the Cheyenne and Arapaho lands, occurred on April 19, 1892, more than doubling the area of the Oklahoma Territory. The vastness of the Cheyenne and Arapaho lands led to a delay in filing for all the claims. The eastern acreage filled quickly while the western portion remained grazing land for cattlemen. Despite the delays, the majority of Cheyenne and Arapaho lands were occupied before statehood.[168] The Cherokee Outlet opened on September 16, 1893, and followed the same patterns as the Cheyenne and Arapaho lands, filling from east to west.[169] The last opening by land run was the Kickapoo lands, which opened on May 23, 1895. In addition to Land Runs, No Man's Land was added to Oklahoma Territory by the Organic Act in 1890 and Greer County by

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[166] President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act into law on May 20, 1862, and encouraged Western migration by providing 160 acres of public land settlers. In exchange, homesteaders paid a small filing fee, $14.00 for the Unassigned Lands, and were required to complete five years of continuous residence before receiving ownership of the land. The Homestead Act led to the distribution of 80 million acres of public land by 1900. Charles R. Goins and Danney Goble, *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 112. For more information on the Oklahoma Land Runs and the opening of the territory, see Stan Hoig. *The Oklahoma Land Rush of 1889*. Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1989. For more on

[167] Department of the Interior, *Report of the Governor of Oklahoma,* 1892 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1892): 474. (Hereafter Report of the Governor, 1892)

[168] Report of the Governor, 1892, 470

[169] Department of the Interior, *Report of the Governor of Oklahoma*, 1897 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1897): 18. (Hereafter Report of the Governor, 1897)

Supreme Court Decision in 1896. Additional openings occurred in the Wichita and Caddo, and Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache lands.[170]

This migration to Oklahoma Territory was fluid and complex. Despite the widespread attention devoted to opening Indian Territory, many of the new immigrants relocated from neighboring states with Kansan's accounting for nearly sixteen percent of the total population by 1900. Citizens from Missouri provided for twelve percent of the population, followed by Texas with nine percent. The settlement of the Oklahoma Territory consisted of mostly Anglo-Americans, constituting ninety percent of the population by 1900. The population of the territory continued to multiply as additional tribal lands were opened to settlement.[171] The percentage of foreign-born residents among the citizens of Oklahoma remained low. Territorial governor Cassius McDonald Barnes declared in 1897 that "Oklahoma is distinctively an American community, the proportion of citizens of foreign birth being smaller than in any state of the Union."[172] No census data is available for 1897; however, the governor reported the population could be safely estimated at 300,000. By statehood a decade later, more than 1.4 million residents called Oklahoma home compared to a Native population of just over 52,000. This rapid expansion of white migrants, particularly from the South, brought with them their own heritage and memory of the Civil War and continued it to their new homes.[173]

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[170] *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma*, 122-133. The Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache and Wichita Caddo Lands were opened by Lottery from July 9 through August 6, 1901. In addition, the Big Pasture was opened to white settlement in 1906.
[171] Candee, 430-431. & Solon J. Buck, "The Settlement of Oklahoma," *Transactions, Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters,* 15, Part II, (1907): 372-374. Report of the Governor, 1897: 7.
[172] Report of the Governor, 1897: 3.
[173] Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, "Population of Oklahoma and Indian Territory 1907, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1907), 7.

The dramatic influx of new residents brought a new mindset of collecting their history, excluding Native and African American history because of contemporary attitudes, for posterity in the form of historical societies. Historical societies have a long tradition in the United States, with their roots in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe. The Massachusetts Historical Society, founded in 1791, is considered the nation's first historical society. Many, formed by collective groups of like-minded individuals, sought to collect papers, manuscripts, books, artifacts, and other ephemera for future generations. By the nineteenth century, historical societies expanded their membership beyond the elite and by the 1910s began to transition to institutions with an obligation of public service for a broader, predominantly white, public.

On May 27, 1893, at the annual meeting of the Territorial Press Association in Kingfisher, nineteen members gathered to examine their papers' progress, establish uniform printing rates for public printing, and discuss a planned excursion to the Chicago World's Fair. After regular business, William P. Campbell talked at length about the establishment of a historical society in Kansas in 1875 and called upon the collective editors in Oklahoma and Indian Territory to do the same with the hopes of collecting and preserving all publications of the Twin Territories deemed worthy of preservation for future historians. Campbell was successful, being elected the first custodian for the society. Just days later, Circular No. 1 was issued proclaiming the establishment of the OHS with the mission of collecting "newspapers, books and periodicals, productions of art, science, and literature, matters of historical interest, etc. and calling upon publishers across the Twin Territories to submit two copies of each publication to be filed and

bound for posterity. Campbell himself funded many of the society's early collections and paid postage for the collection of newspapers.[174]

The founding of the OHS followed the unique opening of the territory. The development Twin Territories of Oklahoma and Indian Territory was distinct in the history of the American West. Its growth followed a path separate from the rest of the west and created an unparalleled environment for the development of a unique identity for its white, Native, and Black residents. In 1893, Frederick Jackson Turner spoke at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, proclaiming that the American frontier was closed. For Turner, the frontier was indeed an "Americanizing" process in his perception, "American Social development ha[d] been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities…furnishes the forces dominating American character."[175] Along with the forces unique to the frontier, Turner believed that sectionalism was critical in forming American character. "There is and always has been a sectional geography in America based fundamentally upon geographic regions," he argued, "distinct from other parts of the country."[176] While the historiography has moved well

[174] Oklahoma Historical Society, "Review of Inception and Progress, Accessions and Donors, Historic Papers," (Perry, Oklahoma: Noble County Sentinel Print, 1905), 3-5; Eva R. Johnson, "The Oklahoma Historical Society and its Work," (master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1926), 1-2.
[175] Frederick J. Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *Frontier and Section*, ed. By Ray Billington. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1961): 38.
[176] Turner, 131. The historiography since Turner is extensive. See Ray A. Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American* Frontier; William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*; William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, eds. *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past;* John M. Faragher, *Rereading Fredrick Jackson Turner: The Significance of the Frontier in American History and other Essays;* Fred E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880*-1920; Wilbur Jacobs, *On Turner's Trail: 100 Years of Writing Western History*; Patricia Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West*; Clyde A. Milner, II, *A New Significance: Re-envisioning the History of the American West;* Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West: Historical Interpretations 1890-1990*; Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of my Own: A New History of*

beyond Turner, his thesis played a direct role in the early development of the Oklahoma Historical Society. Many of the migrants settling Oklahoma viewed themselves as the last of the great pioneers closing the West. The "pioneering spirit" that developed continues today with many multi-generational families who arrived pre-statehood. April 22, and other "Land Run Days" are still marked as celebrations across the state. In the last several decades, growing recognition of Native perspectives began entering the dialogue as Oklahomans continue to understand the complexities of their state and its history.

Historians such as Edward Everett Dale, a former student of Turner, and others would shape their historical interpretation around the closing of the frontier and the increased interest in state and territorial history. In the minds of whites, the heritage of the numerous individual tribes that comprised Indian Territory became a cumulative legacy to be merged with the growth of Oklahoma. The idea of the "western frontier" of Oklahoma became representative of the great pioneering spirit of the nation. Moreover, it was during this territorial period of rapid growth and excitement that the OHS was established. Its founders believed that the "history they were living" would be worth preserving for future generations. But only some of that history. While recognition of diverse narratives would come decades later, the idea of "their heritage" dominated the founding era.

In February 1895, Campbell's society was merged with a second society, then forming at the University of Oklahoma. It was established with a similar mission the previous December, O.U. President David R. Boyd and professor F. S. E. Amos sought

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the American West; Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920*; Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West*;

an official charter, approval from the territorial legislature, and an appropriation for the society for their work. They were successful and received $2,000, resulting in the transfer of the growing collections in Kingfisher to Norman. As a result of the transfer, William Campbell tendered his resignation and was paid $450 for his personal expenses and to ensure ownership of the property collected to date. Until Campbell's return in 1904, the society functioned intermittently under continuously changing custodians at the university in Norman. Outgrowing its accommodations at the university, the OHS was transferred to the new fireproof Carnegie Library in Oklahoma City in 1902. The move to Oklahoma City would coincide with the rapid growth of the society and transition into the state repository.[177]

The move to the Carnegie Library in Oklahoma City marked the OHS's first era of extensive and consistent growth and the establishment of the society as a state entity. While temporary, the transition to a new facility placed the society in closer proximity to territorial affairs, offered the safety of a new fireproof building, more importantly, provided room for expansion. Legislation passed in February 1901 authorized the relocation and specified the society would transfer to the territorial capitol when construction was complete. In 1904, William Campbell, the society's original advocate and founder, rejoined OHS. His return was quickly followed by the appointment of Jasper Sipes as President of the society. Both brought consistency and continuity to the society for several decades. Sipes was instrumental in the growth of the society and the

[177] Articles of Incorporation, No. 3354 A. Office of the Secretary of the Territory of Oklahoma, Guthrie Oklahoma Territory, 632-633, *Corporation Record No. 3, Territory of Oklahoma*, Oklahoma Historical Society; Oklahoma Historical Society, "Review of Inception and Progress, Accessions and Donors, Historic Papers," (Perry, Oklahoma: Noble County Sentinel Print, 1905), 7-10; Oklahoma Territory, *Session Laws, 1895*, 150-152.

creation of a permanent dedicated historical building. With room for expansion, the society began expanding its collections predominantly from those who migrated to the territory in the 1890s and early 1900s. While at the Carnegie Library, Campbell and his assistant devoted significant time to the organization. In 1906, they began actively seeking the Indian records Congress transferred to the Department of the Interior following tribal dissolution, although it would finally take several decades to acquire them. During these formative years, the society also began acquiring Civil War-related collections.[178]

The OHS moved a third time in late December 1917 to the newly completed state capitol building in Oklahoma City. By the time of the relocation, overcrowding in the library space was so problematic they were forced to rent storage in offsite buildings. The change placed the society at the center of political activity. As with the move to the library, the new space allowed the society room to expand. During its tenure in the capitol, the society's staff size increased and the organization's first historians including Joseph Thoburn, Grant Foreman, Edward Everett Dale, and Muriel H. Wright, became actively involved. As a result of the new staff and involvement of historians, the society launched the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* in 1921 as a historical journal for the state with Dale and Wright as associate editors. The *Chronicles of Oklahoma* remains the

[178] Oklahoma Historical Society, "Review of Inception and Progress, Accessions and Donors, Historic Papers," (Perry, Oklahoma: Noble County Sentinel Print, 1905), 8-12, and for a detailed list of collections acquired 30-82; An Act Relating to the Oklahoma Historical Society, February 20, 1901, Journal of the House Proceedings of the Sixth Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Oklahoma (Guthrie, OT: State Capitol, 1901), 433; Robert L. Williams, "Jasper Sipes, 1860-1961," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 20 (December 1942): 319-320.

Oklahoma Historical Society's academic journal focused on the history of Oklahoma and its people.[179]

With the state capitol building complete in 1917 and the OHS in the building, the state legislature reacted to growing pressure from veterans' organizations for a memorial to the Civil War and decided to dedicate two additional rooms on the fifth floor of the capitol to the Union and Confederate soldiers and sailors who fought during the war, legally setting aside the space as memorials. The former Confederate soldiers started meeting regularly in Oklahoma in 1903, and by 1910 the veteran's group exerted strong political influence in the new state. The United Daughters of the Confederacy launched the Stonewall Jackson Chapter Number 40 in McAlester, Indian Territory, in 1896. This initial chapter was the first for Oklahoma or Indian Territory and the second west of the Mississippi River. However, it would not be the last. Grand Army of the Republic, Sons of Union Veterans, Daughters of Union Veterans, Sons of Confederate Veterans, and

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[179] Joseph Thoburn to Governor James Robertson, September 27, 1922, Joseph Thoburn Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Ralph Newcomb, "The Oklahoma State Capitol Building," Works Progress Administration, March 30, 1936, vertical file, Oklahoma Historical Society; Paul F. Lambert, *Joseph B. Thoburn: Pioneer Historian and Archaeologist* (Oklahoma City: Western Heritage Books, 1980), 58-66; Angie Debo, "Early Publications," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 26 (Fall 1948); 328; Joseph Thoburn, a prominent and historian and Oklahoma City civic leader, was elected to the OHS board in1903. In 1908, he published *The History of Oklahoma* and wrote or edited more than thirty-six articles. Originally an attorney who arrived in Oklahoma to work for the Dawes Commission, Grant Foreman helped establish the Muskogee Historical Society and became a prolific researcher. He was elected to the OHS board in 1924. Throughout his career, Foreman wrote or edited nineteen books and over fifty articles. Foreman was instrumental in the development of the OHS's Indian Archives. Edward E. Dale was a classically trained historian receiving his Ph.D. from Harvard, where he studied under Frederick Jackson Turner. Dale was a longtime professor at the University of Oklahoma and served on the OHS board of directors from 1930 to 1972. Muriel H. Wright was born in the Choctaw Nation to attend Wheaton Seminary and East Central Normal School in Ada before enrolling at Barnard College at Columbia University. Wright was active in the Choctaw Nation, serving in the Intertribal Indian Council. She coauthored *Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People*, a four-volume history of the state, and three additional state textbooks. Wright wrote countless articles for the *Chronicles of Oklahoma,* serving as its editor for decades. Wright was a leader in shaping Native American historiography in Oklahoma and an active participant in the Oklahoma Historical Marker Program. For more information, see LeRoy H. Fischer, "The Historic Preservation Movement in Oklahoma," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 57 (Spring 1979): 3-25 and individual entries in *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture.*

United Daughters of the Confederacy camps continued to spring up across the territory and eventually the state. Following statehood, the various veterans' organizations in Oklahoma and Indian Territory merged into a singular Oklahoma Division and led the call for the creation of formal memorials at the state capitol. Senate Joint Resolution 13, approved on March 21, 1923, established the two memorials at the capitol and authorized a custodian who was a soldier, widow of a soldier, or direct descendant of a soldier, for the care of the memorial. In addition, the legislation called upon the OHS to enter into agreements with "camps and agencies" of the organizations of Union and Confederate soldiers and sailors, and their sons and daughters, to secure relics, documents, and other items of relevance for permanent display within the memorials. The creation of the two memorial halls at the state capitol, under the care of the OHS, legally required the institution to memorialize the war and begin the process of establishing Civil War collections in earnest. It also made Oklahoma the only state with both Union and Confederate Memorial Halls.[180]

At the end of his term as governor, Robert L. Williams became actively engaged in the society. Williams, born in Alabama in 1868, was intensely proud of his southern heritage. Before making the land run into the Cherokee Outlet in 1893, Williams worked for the law firm of Colonel William S. Thorington, regarded as one of the South's most prominent lawyers. Williams entered territorial politics and helped craft portions of the

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[180] Union Soldier's Room and Confederate Soldier's Room, United Daughters of the Confederacy Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; "Confederate Memorial Hall," Confederate Memorial Hall and Correspondence, Oklahoma Historical Society; Grace J. Ward, "Union and Confederate Memorial Hall," reports, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 24 (Fall 1946): 255-256; Louise Cook, "The Confederate Memorial in the Oklahoma Historical Building," *United Daughters of the Confederacy* Vol. 22 (February 1959): 28; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview by Jason Harris, June 24, 2020, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library. (hereafter Bob Blackburn interview)

Oklahoma Constitution, and served as the first chief justice for the Oklahoma Supreme Court. Governor Williams was incredibly involved in the construction of the state capitol building. After leaving office, he would serve as a judge for both the United States District Court and the United States Circuit Court of Appeals. Williams was primarily responsible for leading the efforts to construct a dedicated historical building on the capitol grounds for the society.[181]

The Oklahoma Historical Society gained national attention in March 1923 when the Mississippi Valley Historical Association held its annual meeting in Oklahoma City, officially introducing the society's work to the nearly 500 historians in attendance. It also planted the seed for the OHS's preservation at historic sites. During the MVHA meeting, attendees toured of historical sites in the state. One excursion took participants west and included a stop at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indian Agency at Darlington. The abandoned site prompted a conversation regarding the preservation of it as a historical landmark. Joseph Thoburn, who led the tour, worked with Muriel Wright to expand the mission of the OHS from preservation of collections to protection of historical sites as well. Both actively investigated prehistoric and historic sites across Oklahoma and submitted articles to the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* regarding their significance.[182]

The society received its first significant increase in funding in 1923 when the legislature nearly quadrupled the agency's budget to $17,650. Unfortunately, in May of 1924, William Campbell, who worked so diligently to establish the OHS and served as

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[181] Charles Evans, "Robert Lee Williams," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 26 (Summer 1948): 123-128; Baxter Taylor, "Robert Lee Williams As I knew Him," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 31 (Winter 1953): 379-380.
[182] LeRoy H. Fischer, "The Historic Preservation Movement in Oklahoma," 3-8; "Experts Come to State for History Study," *Daily Oklahoman,* March 25, 1923, 8; "Historians Inspect Darlington Agency; Pleased with Visit, *Daily Oklahoman,* April 1, 1923, 1.

custodian of its collections, died. Campbell had labored tirelessly to expand the society's collections since its organization, and upon his death, *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* declared, "of him who writes, it shall be written. The Chronicler himself passes into history. William P. Campbell, the real founder, nester and for many years the custodian in active charge of the collections of the Oklahoma Historical Society, is no more."[183] Joseph Thoburn was selected to fill the position until becoming Director of Research.

In 1924, Dr. Grant Foreman joined the OHS board of directors. Foreman, a leading Native American historian, helped lead the effort to secure the Federal Indian and Dawes Commission records. The addition of the Indian Archives would help set the OHS on a course to expand its collections beyond the non-Indian settlement of Oklahoma and secure the society a role as a national repository gaining recognition as an institution for the study of Native American History and Culture.[184]

When the society first started collecting, it focused primarily on print materials, especially newspapers from across the Twin Territories, although three-dimensional artifacts were donated or acquired in some cases. By the mid-1920s, space again became a problem. In September 1922, Thoburn wrote Governor Robertson seeking additional room at the capitol. Space was provided, but the collection quickly expanded, repeating the problem. Despite frequent conversations regarding the construction of a dedicated building, the legislature remained unwilling to fund the project even though the state received increased revenue and general spending. The OHS continued to stagnate with a

[183] OHS, "William Parker Campbell, An Appreciation," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 2 (June 1924): 93.
[184] Oklahoma Session Laws of 1923, "Historical Society Appropriations," (1923); Charles Evans, "The State Historical Society of Oklahoma and Its Possessions," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 24 (Autumn 1946): 254. Lawrence C. Kelly, "Indian Records in the Oklahoma Historical Society Archives," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 54 (Summer 1976): 229-230.

lack of funding resulting in staff layoffs. Finally, after years of persistence, the OHS saw their appropriation increase to $38,500 in the late 1920s, which helped to staff the society adequately.[185]

In 1926, Jasper Sipes retired as President of the OHS and was replaced with Charles Colcord. Colcord, who arrived in the Land Run of 1889, became a prominent and influential leader in Oklahoma City. In 1927, the Oklahoma Senate passed Senate Joint Resolution No. 36, calling on the Oklahoma Historical Society and other patriotic societies receiving funding to identify and erect permanent markers at historical sites throughout the state. Under the legislature's direction, the society expanded its mission to identify and preserve historic sites, although the majority of the effort was directed at locating and identifying historical sites rather than marking and memorializing them. The society would undertake a statewide marker program in earnest beginning in the 1940s.[186]

In February 1927, the OHS made another significant advancement towards the preservation of documents in the state. This time the focus shifted from white citizens of Oklahoma to the original residents and those forcibly removed to the territory. Grant Foreman submitted a resolution to the board of directors calling for the addition of the Indian Archives of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations as well as the Dawes Commission records located in Muskogee. The board approved the resolution creating the Department of Indian Archives in 1929 and hired a

[185] Joseph Thoburn to Govern Robertson, letter, September 27, 1922, Joseph Thoburn Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Joseph Thoburn to Senator M. F. Ingraham, letter, September 14, 1921, Joseph Thoburn Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Oklahoma Session Laws of 27, "Historical Society Appropriations," (1927).

[186] Joseph Thoburn, "Charles F. Colcord," December 28, 1937, p. 1-3 vertical file, Oklahoma Historical Society; Oklahoma Senate, SJR 36, 1927.

dedicated archivist. The board employed Rella Watts to arrange and prepare the documents in Muskogee for transfer to Oklahoma City. Initially contracted for two years, Watts spent the next five years preparing and cataloging the records for the move. Once the transfer was complete, Watts continued serving the archive for years, helping the society gain national attention as a research center for Native American history second only to the National Archives. The establishment of the Indian Archive quickly grew to include documents from the Civil War as Joseph Thoburn and others expanded the collection. The establishment of the Department of Indian Archives was not the only major accomplishment in 1929. Joseph Thoburn, Grant Foreman, and Robert L. Williams continued to advocate for constructing the permanent historical building. To gain support from the legislature, Foreman and Owens sought to secure the Indian records from the federal government as justification for a permanent standalone building for the society.[187]

With every previous move, the OHS quickly filled its new space by expanding its collection. The construction of the "Temple of History" would provide the society with a permanent and independent home. The effort to create this temple to the past began in earnest in 1909 when the Women of '89 organized to create a state historic building for the preservation of history. This original effort was based on the growing sense of heritage and preservation at the turn of the century. Completion of the state capitol building in 1917 prompted a resurgence in calls for establishing a permanent home for the society. The end of World War I and the movement to preserve the sacrifices of Oklahomans during the late war led to calls for a permanent memorial. These efforts to

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[187] Lawrence C. Kelly, "Indian Records," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 54 (Summer 1976): 229-231; Charles Evans, "The State Historical Society of Oklahoma and Its Possessions," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 24 (Autumn 1946): 254.

memorialize World War I quickly expanded to include the Spanish American and Civil War too. Seeing an opportunity, Robert Williams led the effort to construct a building rather than the proposed arch at the capitol as a way to memorialize all veterans and others. Williams wrote numerous letters to organizations and clubs seeking support, including one to Mrs. J. C. Pearson and the Oklahoma State Federation of Womens Clubs arguing, "in the building, halls and rooms for the American Legion should be appropriately and permanently designed as a memorial to the soldiers of the late World War and tablets should be erected and placed in this memorial hall in memory of all the Oklahoma soldiers who died in battle."[188] While a legislative committee was created to build a memorial hall to house the society, it would be nearly a decade before the building moved forward.[189]

The birth of the society was tied to growing efforts to memorialize Civil War battlefields and the feeling of urgency in preserving the heritage of the past due to urbanization and technological advances from the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. From their early efforts in Kingfisher to the rise of the OHS's "Temple of History," the OHS struggled with growing pains, relocation to new homes, and the whims of legislators. The rise of the "Temple of History" marked a significant change in the society as it moved into a formal authoritative role in Oklahoma history. Tied to the memorialization, the

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[188] Robert L. Williams to Mrs. Eugene B. Lawson, June 4, 1920, Robert L. Williams Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

[189] "Historical Home Urged Near Capitol," *Daily Oklahoman* October 2, 1910, p. 24; Mrs. O. A. Mitecher to the Oklahoma Historical Society, Letter, Women of '89 of the State of Oklahoma Organization Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Jasper Sipes to Robert L. Williams, letter, June 21, 1920, Robert L. Williams Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; *Senate Bill No. 12, Session Laws of 1919* (Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Company, 1919): 44.

new permanent home offered the organization the opportunity to grow and expand, establishing itself among the other cultural institutions of the nation.

CHAPTER IV

STATE MEMORY, THE TEMPLES OF HISTORY, AND BEYOND

"The archive before which we stand are to preserve for our posterity the evidence of Oklahoma's culture and greatness."

– Governor William J. Holloway

In the middle of the growing movement to memorialize veterans and their sacrifices in the Civil War, Spanish American War, and World War I, the Oklahoma Historical Society saw an opportunity to establish a permanent home. This chapter will focus on the continued development of the Oklahoma Historical Society from the creation of the "Temple of History" through recent renovations and interpretive changes statewide and explore how the society has collected, preserved, and shared the story of the Civil War in its exhibits and historic sites over time. But why does this history of how we interpret the Civil War matter? Why is the story relevant to the larger narrative of the nation and culture as a whole? How the institution developed and expanded its interpretation illustrates how Oklahoma embraced the collective stories of the conflict and its legacies that continue until today. It fundamentally shapes the collection,

preservation, and sharing of Oklahoma's varied history as defined in the mission of the OHS. With every subsequent move, the OHS quickly filled its new space by expanding its collection. The construction of the so-called "Temple of History" provided the society with a permanent and independent home. After years of effort, the Oklahoma legislature finally appropriated $500,000 to construct the historical building on the capitol grounds providing a dedicated space for the collection, preservation, and exhibition of Oklahoma history. The new facility was also to house offices for veteran and service organizations as well as patriotic associations. This connection between the society and the patriotic groups was indicative of memorialization efforts in the early twentieth century, from attempts to preserve Civil War battlefields and historical sites to creating legacy memorials to the fallen from World War I, the public representation of preservation focused on memorization of conflict. Once the legislation passed and planning was underway, representatives of patriotic societies across the state were invited to make suggestions. For inspiration and ideas on the construction of the new facility, the OHS building committee toured several societies across the country, including Indianapolis, Indiana; Topeka, Kansas; Rochester, New York; St. Paul, Minnesota; Nashville, Tennessee; Madison, Wisconsin; and Washington, D. C. The committee ultimately chose to base the new OHS historical building on the Minnesota Historical Society and hired Solomon A. Layton as the architect. On August 2, 1929, planning with complete, the construction contract was awarded to Holmboe Construction for $412,000.[190]

[190] *Senate Bill No. 24, "Oklahoma Historical Building, Sessions Laws of 1929* passed February 25, 1929, (Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Company, 1929): 57-59; Oklahoma Historical Society, "Building for the Historical Society," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 7 (March 1929): 2-6; Edward P. Allen, "Oklahoma Historical Building: Architectural Selection," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 48 (Winter 1970-1971): 475-478.

On November 16, 1929, the cornerstone was laid for the new historical building on Statehood Day. The list of speakers was extensive and included Governor William J. Holloway, Robert Williams, and Gabe Parker, former superintendent of the Five Tribes. Governor Holloway proclaimed, [T]he archives before which we stand are to preserve for our posterity the evidence of Oklahoma's culture and greatness…[and] to preserve the traditions, achievements, and hopes of the remarkable people who formed by the fusion of two great and dissimilar territories." Williams referred to the new structure as "the spiritual home of the state."[191]

Construction moved at a rapid pace, and the structure was formally dedicated on November 15, 1930. The building, designed by state capitol architect Solomon Layton, was impressive. The structure was placed on the southeast corner of the capitol and included a grand stair, large wings, a limestone exterior, and massive bronze doors. The interior of the new "Temple of History" included three main floors and a basement. The first-floor corridor featured vaulted ceilings and a marble entrance marble. All of the buildings main corridors were terrazzo marble. The ground floor featured an auditorium and large exhibit wings. The new library included a reading room and extensive newspaper collections. Museum offices and the required memorial halls were included on the second floor. The third floor contained extra museum space with two large galleries. With the addition of a dedicated museum exhibit space, the OHS established the Oklahoma Museum of History as a division of the OHS. Following Oklahoma aviator

[191]Thomas H. Doyle, "Address Delivered at the Laying of the Cornerstone of the Oklahoma Historical Society Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, November 16, 1929," Thomas H. Doyle Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Edward P. Allen, "Oklahoma Historical Building: Architectural Selection," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 48 (Winter 1970-1971): 475-478; "Historical Building Stone Laid," *Daily Oklahoman,* March 7, 1930.

Wiley Posts' tragic death in a plane crash with Will Rogers, the historical building was renamed the Wiley Post Building and retains that name today.[192]

The original historical building included a designated space allocated to Union and Confederate Civil War memorials due to legislative statute. Their origin dates back to the society's time in the state capitol building. When the OHS moved from the capitol into the new historical building, Senate Joint Resolution 13 legislated the space be set assisted as the "Confederate and Union Memorial Rooms." The Union and Confederate soldier's rooms were created to provide a lasting memorial to the soldiers and sailors who fought for the Union and Confederate military forces during the war. Created in an era when the Lost Cause ideology and memorialization of the Confederacy was prominent, this type of legislation is why we continue to have contested memory and legacy today. In 1935, the legislature amended the previous statute reauthorizing the Union and Confederate Memorials in the new OHS building and requiring a custodian with lineage to the war through their own service or by relationship to someone who had served be provided by the society. The memorials included roughly 150 books, photographs, images of generals, bronze tablets and sculptures, flags, uniforms, equipment, firearms, personal papers, a sword reportedly belonging to General Robert E. Lee, a top hat belonging to President Abraham Lincoln, and more.[193]

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[192] "Oklahoma Historical Society Building Construction and Building Materials to be Used, OK-2," p. 1, 2-6; Joseph Thoburn Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

[193] *Oklahoma Session Laws, 1935,* 65; Union Soldier's Room and Confederate Soldier's Room, United Daughters of the Confederacy Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; "Confederate Memorial Hall," Confederate Memorial Hall and Correspondence, Oklahoma Historical Society; Grace J. Ward, "Union and Confederate Memorial Hall," reports, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 24 (Fall 1946): 255-256; Louise Cook, "The Confederate Memorial in the Oklahoma Historical Building," *United Daughters of the Confederacy* Vol. 22 (February 1959): 28; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview..

Little interpretation was provided to visitors. Instead, cases displayed the material culture as curious and relics from the past without any narrative on the war, Reconstruction, or the legacy outside of veteran organizations or the sons and daughters' groups that followed. That is not because the collection did not contain artifacts related to the war in Indian Territory needed for interpretation. On display were several original flags from regiments with service in Oklahoma, artifacts related to Union and Confederate Indians, uniforms, and archival material specific to the territory. When the new rooms were established, Oklahoma was the only state with memorial halls to both the Union and the Confederacy, and the story of the Civil War was still being told from an outsider's perspective imposed on the war in Indian Territory. Indian Territory was not the only geographic space that contributed soldiers to both armies. Border states such as Tennessee, Kentucky, and Maryland faced similar dilemmas. Anne E. Marshall examines how Kentucky, a predominantly pro-Union state, embraced the Lost Cause narrative and developed a culture of pro-Confederate memorialization. Oklahoma's culture of memorialization was imposed predominantly by migrating southerners; however, they did not monopolize preservation efforts and commemoration at the state level. Former Union veterans and their families also migrated to the state leading to a reconciliationist relationship in the early decades of the twentieth century.[194]

After more than three decades, the "Temple of History" was complete. Numerous groups praised the construction of the facility. An editorial in the *Tulsa Sunday World*

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[194] *Oklahoma Session Laws, 1935,* 65; Union Soldier's Room and Confederate Soldier's Room, United Daughters of the Confederacy Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; "Confederate Memorial Hall," Confederate Memorial Hall and Correspondence, Oklahoma Historical Society; Grace J. Ward, "Union and Confederate Memorial Hall," reports, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 24 (Fall 1946): 255-256; Louise Cook, "The Confederate Memorial in the Oklahoma Historical Building," *United Daughters of the Confederacy* Vol. 22 (February 1959): 28; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview..

entitled “Pioneer Dream Realized,” proclaimed, “commemorating the entrance of a commonwealth into the United States and in tribute to the men and women who helped found that commonwealth, the Historical Society’s new home is bequeathed to the state whose name it bears.” This singular and exclusionary vision continued to remain the prominent driving perspective at the society. The growing push to expand the society remained predominantly white despite the society’s attempts to broaden the collections to include American Indian documents and artifacts and chronicle their history in publications. In the 1920s, the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* printed dozens of articles relating to Native American history in the state. In a letter to J. Henry Scattergood, the Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Williams acknowledged that the society's new building was finished and expanded its museum exhibition space for American Indian history across half of the full fourth floor. By contrast, African American history would not become prevalent in the *Chronicles* until the 1970s, and exhibits depicting it would not appear until decades later with the Diamond Jubilee in 1982.[195]

Despite the accomplishment of creating the new building, the 1930s were a tumultuous time for the OHS. The Great Depression provided substantial federal funding for projects through attempts at national recovery, and the records for the Five Tribes finally arrived, bringing national attention to the institution. Under the supervision of

[195] “Pioneer Dream Realized in New Historical Building: Founders Chronicled Events When History was in Making,” *Tulsa Sunday World,* November 9, 1930, section 5, p. 1; Baxter Taylor, “Robert L. Williams,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 31 (Winter 1953): 379; Muriel H. Wright, “A History of the Oklahoma Historical Society,” vertical file, Oklahoma Historical Society. For an annotated guide to the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* through the 1990s, see Carol Welsh, *An Annotated Guide to the Chronicles of Oklahoma, 1921 – 1994*. An annotated guide to for 1992 to 2019 is available on the OHS website at www.okhistory.org/publications/contents. The *Chronicles of Oklahoma* can be accessed through The Gateway to Oklahoma History. Robert L. Williams to J. Henry Scattergood, letter, May 4, 1932, Robert L. Williams Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

Grant Foreman, Rella Watts organized and cataloged the extensive material before its transfer. Nevertheless, the Five Tribes records were not the only Indian Archive records the society would secure. In September 1933, Williams had approached assistant commissioner Scattergood regarding other records at Anadarko, Concho, Miami, Pawnee, Pawhuska, and Shawnee. In March 1934, Congress authorized the Secretary of the Interior to transfer the various tribal records to the Oklahoma Historical Society, acting as custodian for the Secretary of the Interior. In addition to the Oklahoma records, Grant Foreman traveled to Mississippi, Alabama, and Washington, D. C. to gather documents from various archives. During his travels, he collected papers from the Adjutant General's office regarding "Indians who served in the Confederate Army," helping to expand the Civil War-related collection and adding to Thoburn's previous work acquiring individual letters and personal accounts regarding sites in Oklahoma. In all, over 150,000 documents and papers arrived, helping raise the society's prestige as a research center.[196]

At the April 1934 OHS Annual Meeting, Grant Foreman presented a written resolution calling on the OHS to "aid in the location and preservation" of historical sites in Oklahoma. Though not in attendance due to illness, his resolution sought immediate action to help save Cherokee Nation tribal member Sequoyah's cabin near Sallisaw and the surviving structures at the Fort Gibson military post. Foreman decried the condition

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[196] Robert L. Williams to J. Henry Scattergood, letter, September 23, 1932, Robert L. Williams Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; An Act to Authorize the Secretary of the Interior to Place with the Oklahoma Historical Society at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, As Custodian For the United States, Certain Records of the Five Civilized Tribes, and of Other Indian Tribes in the State of Oklahoma, USC, Pub. L. No. 133, (1934); Grant Foreman to the Oklahoma Historical Society, no date, Robert L. Williams Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Grant Foreman to the Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, letter, June 17, 1936, E. E. Dale Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society. Grant Foreman, “Survey of the Tribal Records,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 11 (March 1933) 629-631.

of historical sites that had "no provision for their preservation so that they have been subjected to a ruthless course of destruction at the hands of the elements and of vandals" and reported that the buildings would quickly disappear if not saved. In his address, he reminded the board that the legislature had expanded the mission of the OHS to locate and preserve historic sites and monuments across the state. In his address, he reminded the society that "historic posts as Fort Towson, Fort Washita, Fort Arbuckle, Fort Coffee, Fort Wayne, and Fort Gibson have all but entirely disappeared under the ruthless hands of the white man through the failure to reserve them from allotment and sale…" and in some cases, little remained to show the life and activity of these places. He closed his resolution by noting that organizations such as Daughters of the American Revolution, the Daughters of the Confederacy, the Old Fort Club of Fort Gibson, and others were actively taking steps to preserve and mark historical sites and features across the state.[197]

Grant Foreman's resolution moved the historical society and their efforts at preservation beyond the "Temple of History." He was adamant in his call for urgent action to preserve Sequoyah's cabin and the remaining structures at Fort Gibson and hoped that the state would acquire the property for the purposes of state parks. In his address, he specifically asked the OHS to develop a policy and take the necessary steps to establish a model for future preservation efforts. The society adopted the resolution, and the society began to systematically identify prehistoric and historic sites in Oklahoma. Muriel Wright would lead the effort, producing countless *Chronicles of Oklahoma* articles featuring historic sites. J.Y. Bryce and his wife spent six weeks traveling eastern

[197] Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, April 19, 1934, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 12 (June 1934): 228-231.

Oklahoma to identify, photograph, map, and temporarily mark the first historic sites. As a result of the resolution, the OHS acquired Fort Gibson and Sequoyah's home in 1934 and began seeking federal funds for their restoration and preservation.[198]

Fort Gibson, established in 1824, was constructed to prevent conflict between the Osage and Cherokee Nation and protect the western United States along the frontier. When occupied, the post was the westernmost military installation in the United States. During the 1830s and 1840s, it served as a terminus for the federal government's Indian Removal Policy. The post was abandoned just before the Civil War but reoccupied during the Federal invasion of Indian Territory. It served as the United States' primary base of operations throughout the conflict. As the war spread throughout territory, thousands of refugees sought safety at the post. Following the war, the Tenth United States Cavalry occupied the fort and remained through the 1880s.[199]

Beginning in 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal boosted the OHS's efforts in preservation. The stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression, and the extended drought of the Dust Bowl wrought havoc on Oklahoma and its economy. High unemployment overwhelmed the urban areas of Oklahoma while farm income fell more than sixty percent, devastating the tenant farmer population. Through the Works Progress

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[198] Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, April 19, 1934, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 12 (June 1934): 230-231; J. Y. Bryce, “Temporary Markers of Historic Points,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 8 (September 1930): 282-290; Joseph Scott Mendingham, “Historic Fort Gibson, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1966); For more on Oklahoma and the Great Depression era see Keith L. Bryant, Jr., “Oklahoma in the New Deal,” in *The New Deal, Vol. 2, The State and Local Levels*; Kenneth E. Hendrickson, Jr. ed., *Hard Times in Oklahoma: The Depression Years*; and Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s*.

[199] For more information on Fort Gibson, see Grant Foreman, *Fort Gibson, A Brief History*; Vincent Lackey, *The Forts of Oklahoma*; and C. W. West, *Fort Gibson, Gateway to the West.*

Administration, the federal government sought to assist the unemployed by providing resources, assistance, and employment.

The OHS and preservation in Oklahoma benefited significantly from the W.P.A. and other federal programs such as the Federal Art, Music, Theater, and Writer's Projects. For example, Kiowa artists Monroe Tsatoke and Spencer Asah received a contract to create a series of murals in the historical society's building in 1934. Eight native figures representing the Kiowa, Cheyenne, Comanche, Osage, Choctaw, and Secotan tribes were created. The Kiowa Five remained actively involved in federal art projects and completed works at countless post offices, federal buildings, and other spaces. The OHS recognized the need to collect, preserve, and actively share the state's Native American roots and culture. However, this would only be the beginning of New Deal projects for the society.[200]

In November 1935, Grant Foreman led a W.P.A. project cataloging and indexing the institution's massive archive, including 15,000 newspaper volumes and 350,000 archival documents and manuscripts. The federal government provided $24,000 for salaries, with the society contributing $1,892 for supplies and other materials. The project employed more than fifty workers. In 1936 the OHS and University of Oklahoma collaborated on another W.P.A project to conduct interviews throughout the state to collect oral histories "from early settlers of Oklahoma" and life in the territorial period. In

[200] Monroe Tsatoke and Spencer Asah were students at the University of Oklahoma studying under Oscar Jacobson along with James Achuah, Jack Hokeah, and Stephen Mopope. Collectively the five would bring recognition to traditional Indian art and gain international fame as the "Kiowa Five." For more, see Margaret Archuleta and Rennard Strickland, *Shared Visions: Native American Painters and Sculptors in the Twentieth Century*; Edwin L. Wade, ed., *The Arts of the North American Indian: Native Traditions in Evolution*; and Janet C. Berlo and Ruth B. Phillips, *Native North American Art.*

addition, the project sought to gather Native and African American "old timers" stories. Collectively, the project intended to collect the experience of Oklahomans through the stories of those who lived them. More than one hundred field workers took part in the project working under Foreman. Interviews were assembled, typed, edited, and bound in Norman under the supervision of Dr. Edward E. Dale. The two-year project continued through January 1938, completed over 11,000 interviews, and produced 116 volumes with duplicate sets shared by the Oklahoma Historical Society and the University of Oklahoma, creating the Indian-Pioneer's Papers. The project moved beyond white and Native perspectives and actively engaged with the African American experience in Oklahoma for the first time.[201]

The federal investment in Oklahoma also led to a long-lasting impact on the society's role in preservation outside of the "Temple of History" in Oklahoma City. The Works Project Administration and other federal funding offered the opportunity to invest in several historical sites under the society's care. By 1936, the OHS acquired Fort Gibson, Sequoyah's cabin, and the Robert M. Jones Cemetery in southeastern Oklahoma. Jones, a prominent Choctaw, was a secessionist plantation owner, served as the Choctaw and Chickasaw delegate to the new Confederate Congress. He owned dozens of trade stores, two steamboats, 225 enslaved Africans, and six plantations in several states. Jones

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[201] Report on the Works Progress Administration Project at the Oklahoma State Historical Building through January 10, 1936. Grant Foreman Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society. Grant Foreman, *The Oklahoma Historical Society,* pamphlet, departmental reports, Oklahoma Historical Society, no date, Grant Foreman Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Grant Foreman, "Indian Pioneer History," no date, Grant Foreman Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Oklahoma Historical Society, Notes and Documents, "Grant Foreman Papers: Indian and Pioneer History," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 37 (Winter 1959-1960): 507-510; Minutes of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, October 28, 1937, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 15 (December 1937): 496. All 116 volumes of the Indian-Pioneer Papers are available online through the University of Oklahoma at https://digital.libraries.ou.edu/whc/pioneer/.

was instrumental in negotiating the Treaty of 1866 with the federal government following the end of hostilities during the Civil War. Rose Hill, his plantation home in the Choctaw Nation, was destroyed by fire in 1912, leaving only the family cemetery.[202]

W.P.A. projects provided valuable preservation work at all three sites. At Fort Gibson, the powder magazine and stone barracks were restored, and the original wooden log stockade was reconstructed on a smaller scale. At Sequoyah's cabin, a new stone structure was constructed around the original log cabin to preserve the building and reduce damage from weather and exposure. The project also included a stone park wall for safety and security. The Jones Cemetery was cleared with stone fencing installed to protect the gravesites. At the board of directors meeting in October 1937, Robert Williams requested the installation of a plaque at the Jones Cemetery recognizing Jones' role as a Choctaw leader and member of the Confederate Congress and proclaimed the work at the cemetery created an enduring memorial to him and his leadership. This memorialization of pro-Confederate leaders in the Indian Territory became prominent during the 1950s and 1960s as the state installed historical markers.[203]

The W.P.A work accomplished at Fort Gibson and Sequoyah's cabin was extensive. Once completed, the new log stockade and Sequoyah's cabin were transferred to the Parks Division of the Planning and Resources Department (later known as the

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[202] For more information on R. M. Jones, see Michael Bruce, "Our Best Men are Fast Leaving Us': The Life and Times of Robert M. Jones," in the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* and W. David Baird, *Peter Pitchlynn: Chief of the Choctaws*.

[203] Grant Foreman, Report to the Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, June 17, 1936, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* vol. 14 (June 1936): 374-383; Minutes of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, October 28, 1937, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* vol. 15 (December 1937): 494-95; Minutes of the Oklahoma Historical Society Annual Meeting, May 5-6, 1938, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 16 (June 1938): 251; Bob L. Blackburn, "Battle Cry for History: The First Century of the Oklahoma Historical Society," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* vol. 70 (Winter 1992-1993): 368-370.

Department of Tourism) for operation while the society retained ownership of the historic buildings at Fort Gibson and the Jones Cemetery. The society continued projects under the W.P.A until the administration transitioned New Deal programs to support wartime efforts. This advancement with a handful of historic sites helped launch a more comprehensive attempt by the OHS to expand identification and preservation at historic sites. In January 1941, Robert L. Williams was authorized as board president to secure the Dwight and Union Missions and the site of the Cherokee Female Seminary; however, a lack of resources prevented their purchase. Funding continued to be a hindrance to the expansion of the OHS to sites across the state.[204]

The society continued to seek W.P.A funding to complete a statewide survey to determine the condition and location of historic sites in Oklahoma. While the project would not be federally funded, the OHS board appointed a committee to identify and study historic places worthy of preservation in the state. The work identifying sites led directly to the OHS's historical marker program. Oklahoma's marker program began shortly after World War II. The program intended to highlight various topics, including Civil War sites and prominent individuals associated with the war. Oklahoma historian and *Chronicles of Oklahoma* editor Muriel H. Wright, OHS board member General William. S. Key, and society director George Shirk played a pivotal role in working with

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[204] Grant Foreman, Report to the Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, June 17, 1936, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* vol. 14 (June 1936): 374-383; Minutes of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, October 28, 1937, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* vol. 15 (December 1937): 494-95; Minutes of the Oklahoma Historical Society Annual Meeting, May 5-6, 1938, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 16 (June 1938): 251; Joseph Scott Mendingham, "Fort Gibson, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1966); Joseph Scott Mendingham, "Sequoyah's Cabin," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1975); Minutes of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, October 23, 1941, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* vol. 19 (September 1941): 228; Bob L. Blackburn, "Battle Cry for History: The First Century of the Oklahoma Historical Society," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* vol. 70 (Winter 1992-1993): 368-370.

the legislature to appropriate the initial investment in the private-public collaborative partnership to promote local history, notable historic sites, and historical events in Oklahoma.[205]

In 1949, to reach the increasingly mobile traveler, the Oklahoma legislature provided $10,000 to develop a system of highway markers to identify and highlight historical sites and events across the state. Key, Shirk, and Wright developed a list of 100 specially selected historical sites, events, and individuals. Each included a brief history outlining its historical value. The legislation directed the society to work with the Oklahoma Highway Commission to erect markers. Later that fall, a proof was presented to the board along with a refined list of fifty sites already selected for markers for the project's initial phase, including six markers associated with Civil War sites in Oklahoma.[206]

The development of the historical marker program was quickly followed by the purchase of ten acres at the First and Second Battle of Cabin Creek site. Located along the Texas Road, the main supply route for Federal forces in Indian Territory, Cabin Creek saw numerous skirmishes and two major engagements during the war. In 1863, Union forces under Colonel James M. Williams defended a large wagon train en route to Fort Gibson, helping maintain their occupation of the post and Cherokee Nation. The

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[205] Blackburn, Bob L., "Battle Cry for History: The First 125 Years of the Oklahoma Historical Society," 12

[206] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, February 24, 1949, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 27, No. 1, (Spring 1949): 133; Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, May 26, 1949, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 27, No. 2, (Summer 1949): 230; The full list of the fifty original proposed sites is available in the July 28, 1949 Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society. Blackburn, "Battle Cry for History," 371.

following year, Confederate General Stand Waite successfully captured a federal wagon train valued at $1,500,000. The victory raised morale among Watie's men and provided much-needed supplies; however, they were unsuccessful in driving Federal troops from Indian Territory. It would be the last major battle in Indian Territory. The society purchased the original ten acres for $800 in 1952. After some ninety years, the battle site retained its original appearance, including the high steep bluffs.[207]

The work of initially preserving the battlefield site was done by the United Daughters of the Confederacy chapter in Vanita. They originally started the purchase and worked with the Mayes County Commissioners to improve access to the location via an "all weather road." The UDC chapter approached the OHS to assist with the purchase. At the board meeting, it was decided to support the project and make the purchase and improvements through the historical society directly.[208]

Despite broad enthusiasm for acquiring historic sites for preservation, the long-term costs of maintaining historic sites remained problematic given the OHS's regularly legislated budget. At the next board meeting, it was noted that the Fort Gibson barracks buildings needed extensive repairs, including a new roof, forty-eight new windows, and the porch was in such disrepair that it needed to be completely reconstructed. The cost of repairs was estimated at $1,337. At the meeting, two board members stepped forward to

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[207] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, January 24, 1952, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 30, No. 1, (Spring 1952): 141; Britton, *Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 96-99; Burke, *The Official Military History of Kansas Regiments During the War for the Suppression of the Great Rebellion*, 411; Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War,* 259-265; Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 100.

[208] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, January 24, 1952, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 30, No. 1, (Spring 1952): 141; LeRoy H. Fischer and Kent Ruth, "Cabin Creek Battlefield," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1971).

support the OHS in their efforts and donated the funds needed for the roof and windows. The society authorized the porch repairs. While the addition of ten acres at Cabin Creek Battlefield would require only minimal funding for operations and maintenance, it was evident to the board that their aspirations to acquire and maintain additional historic sites would be limited until new funding was available.[209]

The postwar economy, radical improvements in agriculture, and a boost in manufacturing added to a growing state budget. The 1950s also saw an increased interest in tourism with growing economic development related to leisure travel. Improved highways and the Interstate Highway system championed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower offered an increasingly more mobile population the opportunity to travel. Economic development led to funding from the Oklahoma legislature for the Division of State Parks to operate several historic sites with connections to Oklahoma's Civil War, including Fort Washita and the reconstructed stockade at Fort Gibson. Other State Parks museums and sites at the time also included Boggy Depot, Robbers Cave, Fort Nichols, the Pioneer Woman Museum, and the American Indian Hall of Fame.[210]

The effort to expand beyond the "Temple of History" and work towards the preservation and operation of historical sites continued. Finally, the society's efforts paid off. In 1957 the OHS formed the Historic Sites Committee, and soon a sites division, after the state legislature appropriated $5,000 and authorized the agency to "survey,

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[209] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, January 24, 1952, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 30, No. 1, (Spring 1952): 141; LeRoy H. Fischer and Kent Ruth, "Cabin Creek Battlefield," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1971); Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, October 23, 1952, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 30, No. 4, (Winter 1952-1953): 483.
[210] Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, 70 Stat. 375 (1956). *Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1953*, 445-449; *Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1951,* 248.

evaluate, acquire, restore, and operate historic sites and buildings,"[211] specifically naming the Oklahoma Historical Society as the historic site authority. While the $5,000 appropriation set the process in motion, it would largely limit the society's ability to acquire sites. Instead, the agency initially focused on creating a survey of historical places for potential preservation before the next legislative session. The committee created a preliminary list of 512 historic sites for review before asking the editorial department of the society to make suggestions. The final survey listed 550 potential sites and created guidance in identifying sites for the society to potentially acquire, preserve, or interpret with markers. The committee was keenly aware that any property acquisition would also include the responsibility of completing preservation work and maintaining the property. As a result, sites were divided between those requiring no future obligation and sites that required supplemental funding. In addition to the extensive survey, the OHS installed twelve markers on the Butterfield Overland Mail Route and made some improvements at existing sites.[212]

Oklahoma's Semi-Centennial in 1959 offered the potential for additional funding for the society. The state supported the society several times for special projects in the past. The legislature appropriated $100,000 to celebrate the anniversary of statehood and commemorate the state's progress. Governor Raymond Gary named Representative Lou S. Allard as chair of the Semi-Centennial Commission. Slogans for the anniversary included "Arrows to Atoms" and "From Tepees to Towers" to help mark the rapid

[211] *Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1957*, 452.
[212] Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors April 25, 1957, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 35 (Summer 1957): 243; Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors July 25, 1957, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 35 (Fall 1957): 372, 374; Muriel H. Wright, "Oklahoma Historic Sites Survey," Vol. 36 (Fall 1958): 282-314.

advancement of the state over the last fifty years. Unfortunately, the OHS only received its historic yearly appropriation and $1,500 for the purchase of artifacts enhancing the society as a tourist attraction. However, the Semi-Centennial was not the only opportunity presented by a significant anniversary. The country was also preparing to mark 100 years since the outbreak of the Civil War.[213]

With the Civil War Centennial quickly following Oklahoma's Semi-Centennial, the OHS looked at priorities for the celebration commemorating the anniversary of the war. At their July 1960 meeting, the society board approved another round of improvements at Fort Gibson. The most recent survey reported, "this property is in pitiful condition, verging on what might be termed debris and junk" and argued that the society should be "greatly embarrassed" by the condition. The account advised that one room on the first floor of the barracks building was set up as a visitors' center. The report called upon the board to restore the furnishing "as nearly as possible as it was when occupied by troops" and supplement it with pictures and other items to help share the fort's history. The report advised that a representative from National Geographic visited the post for a story and refused to write the story saying, "the lack of local and state interest in the historic old fort was made manifest by the absence of directional signs to the site, and even more so by the dilapidated appearance of the buildings and neglected condition of the grounds." The OHS board authorized implementing the slate of recommendations outlined in the report. Despite several rounds of improvements, the state of Fort Gibson

[213] *Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1957,* 599-600; Bill Mullins, "An Exercise in Pride: Celebrating the Oklahoma Semi-Centennial," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 85 (Summer 2007); For more on the American Civil War Centennial see Robert Cook, *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961-1965.*

was a reminder of the cost of operating, preserving, and maintaining historical sites in the field.[214]

The Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission held its first meeting in October 1960. Henry B. Bass was named chairman. At this initial meeting it was decided that some of the routine work of the commission would be done by the staff of the OHS. The new commission proposed the creation of a dedicated Oklahoma State Highway Map, the creation of a syllabus for the teaching of the Civil War in Oklahoma, and asked Dr. LeRoy Fischer to research and identify "authentic sites of battles" of the Civil War fought in Oklahoma. The commission also requested the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* run a series of articles on the Civil War throughout the commemorative period. There were several other projects considered, including the creation of traveling exhibits; however, the commission was keenly aware that funding would be limited and that would influence their planning. The commission initially approached the legislature with a request for $3,500 for the commemoration of the centennial.[215]

The effort continued on the development of the state highway map while other public programs were considered. Muriel Wright and LeRoy Fischer worked diligently on the statewide survey of Civil War sites related to Oklahoma. By July 1961, the commission began a discussion on the creation of a battlefield park in Oklahoma. The successful establishment of the Pea Ridge National Battlefield in Arkansas and Wilson's

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[214] Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, July 28, 1960, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 38 (Fall 1960): 338, 349-351.
[215] Minutes of the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission, October 11, 1960, Civil War Centennial Commission Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; For the work completed by Dr. Fischer on Civil War sites see Muriel H. Wright and LeRoy H. Fischer, "Civil War Sites in Oklahoma," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 44 (Summer 1966): 158-215. The survey includes sites with locations and significance.

Creek National Battlefield in Missouri by state and local organizations prompted the commission to consider forming the Honey Springs National Battlefield Park. The Battle of Honey Springs was the state's most significant Civil War engagement. On July 17, 1863, Union soldiers under General James. G. Blunt decisively defeated Confederate forces under General Douglas H. Cooper and secured a foothold for Federal troops in Indian Territory. Beyond the decisive Union victory, the First Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry and Union and Confederate Indian troops played a prominent role. The development of Honey Springs Battlefield is discussed in detail in a later chapter.[216]

Bass and Fischer actively sought broad support within Oklahoma for the development of the park. With the centennial anniversary of the battle approaching, articles highlighting the importance of the engagement and efforts to preserve the battlefield ran in newspapers across the state. The commission's work with the Oklahoma Department of Highways to make the theme of the official 1963 highway map of the Civil War in Indian Territory with emphasis on the engagement at Honey Springs came to fruition. The commission's efforts culminated in a memorial celebration for the Battle of Honey Springs at the Oktaha Cemetery near the engagement site on July 17, 1963. The day before, Nettie Wheeler led a bus tour of the area highlighting historic sites near Muskogee, followed by a ceremonial dinner. At the dinner, commission chair Bass urged the purchase and preservation of the battlefield as a state park with the ambitions of creating a national battlefield, noting both the battle's historical importance and the role

[216] Fischer, "The Honey Springs National Park Movement," 521; Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, July 28, 1960, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 38 (Fall 1960): 338, 349-351; Minutes of the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission, March 14, 1961, Civil War Centennial Commission Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Minutes of the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission, July 27, 1961, Civil War Centennial Commission Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview..

that related tourism could play. In July, the commission also began to plan a commemorative ceremony at Doaksville on June 23, 1965, marking the surrender of General Stand Watie.[217]

Despite problematic funding, the acquisition of Fort Washita was discussed prior to the centennial by OHS and finally purchased in 1962 due to the increased awareness the Centennial provided. The OHS purchased Fort Washita with private funds donated by Ward S. Merrick, Sr., and developed ambitious plans for the newly acquired military post, including the complete restoration of the site. As with many projects, limited funding meant the project would be scaled back to one of the remaining barracks, several outbuildings, and the installation of a new entrance off Highway 199. Archaeological work at the site was completed Dr. James B. Shaeffer and the University of Oklahoma. The survey mapped eighty-six structures and reported that two of the original buildings remained standing in fair condition.[218]

Fort Washita became a priority project as a result of the Civil War Centennial. In March 1964, the Civil War Centennial Commission and the Fort Washita Commission held a joint meeting at the post. In spring 1965, the Civil War Centennial began to wrap

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[217] Fischer, "The Honey Springs National Park Movement," 521; Clippings on Honey Springs commemorations events, Muskogee *Times-Democrat,* July 16, 1963, and *Daily Phoenix,* July 17, 1963, Honey Springs Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, July 28, 1960, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 38 (Fall 1960): 338, 349-351; Minutes of the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission, March 14, 1961, Civil War Centennial Commission Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Minutes of the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission, July 27, 1961, Civil War Centennial Commission Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Minutes of the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission, April 9, 1963, Civil War Centennial Commission Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview..

[218] Minutes of the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission, April 9, 1963, Civil War Centennial Commission Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Minutes of the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission, March 27, 1965, Civil War Centennial Commission Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

up its efforts in commemorating the conflict. On June 22, 1965, the official dedication of Fort Washita took place, followed by a commemorative surrender ceremony at Fort Towson the following day. At each, large crowds gathered for the festivities. The Fort Sill Army Band entertained guests while the United States Air Force provided a fly-over. Harry J. W. Belvin, Principal Chief of the Choctaw Nation, and Overton James, Governor of the Chickasaw Nation, were among the speakers. At Fort Towson, the military band provided a concert of Civil War music before a series of reenactors, including Union and Confederate soldiers, witnessed the representative Stand Watie dismount from a horse to sign the surrender in the ruins of what once had been a thriving frontier outpost. [219]

And with that bit of pageantry, the Civil War Centennial in Oklahoma officially ended. The most outstanding achievements of the commission were the preservation efforts made towards the creation of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park and the acquisition of Fort Washita and Fort Towson. The commission primarily concerned themselves with meetings and discussions on Civil War topics that frequently included guest speakers. Many commissioners traveled to events out of state and to national committee meetings. Fischer and Wright's work on historic sites, prompted by the commission, had a long-term positive effect on the ongoing historic preservation movement. Following the Civil War Centennial, the state legislature appropriated the funding needed for scaled back restoration of Fort Washita and continued management of the post in 1967 as a historic site. The reconstruction of the barracks was an impressive

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[219] Minutes of the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission, April 9, 1963, Civil War Centennial Commission Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Minutes of the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission, March 27, 1965, Civil War Centennial Commission Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society. "Program for the Dedication of Fort Washita," program, June 22, 1965, Fort Washita Vertical File, Oklahoma Historical Society; "Fort Washita & Fort Towson Commemorative Events," no date, Fort Towson Vertical File, Oklahoma Historical Society; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview..

undertaking on the same scale as the W.P.A. project at Fort Gibson some thirty years earlier.[220]

Despite being identified as the state's authority on historical sites, the Oklahoma legislature continued to encourage the development of a similar program of historic site preservation for the public under the Division of State Parks. The Division of State Parks had managed the W.P.A. constructed log stockade at Fort Gibson since its completion for public use. In addition, they acquired and operated the Black Kettle Museum, Pawnee Bill's Ranch and Museum, the Pioneer Woman Museum, and the George Murrell Home (now Hunter's Home) in Tahlequah, which is the only remaining antebellum plantation home in Oklahoma. These dual heritage tourism and preservation projects limited the funding available to the OHS. By the late 1960s, the society received line-item appropriations for $10,000 each to operate and maintain their historic sites, including Fort Washita.[221]

The Historic Preservation Act of 1966 provided a turning point in expanding access to funding for projects at the OHS. The national legislation acknowledged the importance of protecting the nation's heritage, produced a federal policy for preservation, and established the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Program. The act mandated the selection of professional staff in the newly formed State

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[220] Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors July 28, 1960, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 38 (Fall 1960): 339; Joseph Scott Mendinghall, "Fort Washita," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1976); "Fort Washita Restoration," pamphlet, no date, Fort Washita vertical file, Oklahoma Historical Society; Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 40 (Spring 1962): 82.

[221] Kent Ruth, "George Murrell Home," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1970); *Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1967,* appropriations, 423.

Historic Preservation Offices and George Shirk, president of the OHS board, was named the state historic preservation officer by the governor in 1967. With his appointment, the agency gained access to beneficial matching grants. Initially, the OHS utilized contract employees to complete SHPO operations before finally bringing on full-time staff. With enthusiasm generated by the Civil War Centennial, calls for preservation-related to the war, and access to new federal funding, the OHS acquired its first acreage at Honey Springs Battlefield in 1967 and Fort Towson in 1968.

The purchase of Fort Towson for $15,000 was made possible through a grant from the Kirkpatrick Foundation. Constructed shortly after Fort Gibson in 1824, the post was used extensively through 1854 when it was abandoned. A devastating fire in 1857 had already destroyed many of the fort's original log buildings. During the Civil War, the post was occupied by Confederate troops and served as the headquarters for Confederate operations in Indian Territory. The site retained much of its geographic integrity despite the lack of structures at the time of purchase. Once acquired, the OHS constructed a maintenance facility and small visitors center in 1970 and 1972, respectfully. Just over a decade later, they reconstructed the sutler's store at the post adding to the interpretation of the site.[222]

[222] The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Pub. L. 89-665 (1966); Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, January 26, 1967, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 5 (Spring 1967): 99-100; Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, April 27, 1967, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 5 (Summer 1967): 233; Catherine M. Wood and Lynda S. Ozan, "Fort Towson," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2016); The original nomination form from 1970 was updated in 2016 for the construction of a new permanent visitors' center. "Fort Towson," vertical file, Oklahoma Historical Society. For more information on Fort Towson, See Grant Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier, 1830 – 1860* and Patrick B. McGuigan, "Bulwark of the American Frontier: A History of Fort Towson," in *Early Military Forts and Posts in Oklahoma*.

The 1970s brought about continued expansion across the state and the steps towards significant professionalization among staff. The society continued to move cautiously due to the costs associated with long-term commitments. In 1973, the Oklahoma Historical Society developed written criteria for the acquisition of historical sites. However, individuals, communities, and the Division of State Parks continued to seek legislative support independently for sites and museums without engaging the OHS, creating competition for funding at the state level. From 1973-1975, the state added ten new museums and historical sites to the OHS property list. Large federal grants in the 1970s helped the OHS make improvements at several sites, including Fort Washita. Finally, Governor David Boren vetoed appropriations to the various organizations and directed minimal funding directly to the society for properties already in the state's possession. A second blow followed quickly when Congress eliminated bricks and mortar projects support through SHPOs across the country. This dramatic loss of funding hampered the society's efforts to continue expansion and increased preservation. It was a problem faced by both the OHS and numerous other state institutions across the nation.[223]

The State Museum of History, the museum portion of the OHS at the Wiley Post historical building, applied for American Association of Museums (now American Alliance of Museums) accreditation in 1972. AAM established rigorous standards for collections care, exhibitions, and educational programs. The accreditation process

[223] *Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1975,* 699-701; Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, July 26, 1973, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 51 (Fall 1973): 375-377; Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, January 24, 1974, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 52 (Summer 1974): 265; Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, July 25, 1974, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 52 (Winter 1974-1975): 519-520; Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, January 23, 1975, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 53 (Summer 1975): 294-299.

assesses best practices through peer review and evaluates how well an institution meets its stated mission and goals. Following the completion of the accreditation process, the museum became one of 320 institutions across the nation completing the process.[224]

As federal funding slowed, the prospects for long-term investment in historical sites again appeared to be problematic for OHS. However, state-level support was about to return, even if only for the short term. Oklahoma Governor George Nigh asked Jack Conn, OHS president, to chair the Diamond Jubilee Commission celebrating seventy-five years of statehood. The selection of Conn to chair the commission insured a much-needed infusion of special one-time appropriated funding. Between 1980 and 1982, the Oklahoma legislature provided $1,700,000 for the jubilee, with nearly $1,000,000 designated for the renovation and development of museums and historic sites owned by the OHS to boost tourism and economic development. Major repairs and improvements were completed at thirty-seven sites and museums, including new exhibit research, design, and installation. At the Oklahoma Museum of History, "Seventy-Five Years of Statehood" ushered in a new model of interpretive exhibits and led to a rotation that included new exhibitions on the role of women in Native American cultures and African American history in the state.[225]

Immediately following the celebration marking seventy-five years of statehood, one of the worst oil crashes in state history led to a catastrophic budget crisis. In 1982,

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[224] Bob Blackburn, "Battle Cry of History: The First Century of the Oklahoma Historical Society," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 70 (Winter 1992-1993): 383.

[225] For more information on Oklahoma's Diamond Jubilee, see Kenny A. Franks, *You're Doing Fine, Oklahoma! A History of the Diamond Jubilee, 1907-1982*; Bob Blackburn, "Battle Cry of History: The First Century of the Oklahoma Historical Society," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 70 (Winter 1992-1993): 383-384; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Bob Blackburn, "Battle Cry of History: The First 125 Years of the Oklahoma Historical Society," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 96 (Spring 2018): 19.

the state of Oklahoma suffered its first revenue failure in history, resulting in a twenty percent cut over two years for state agencies. The crisis led to the closure of historic sites and museums throughout the state. Decades of reliance on the legislature for support produced an intermittent boom and bust cycle for the OHS. The budget crisis of the 1980s led to a new business plan that relied more heavily on public-private partnerships, expansion of sites as a source of economic development through earned income, and organizational stability.

While the society previously developed ambitious goals and waited for the opportunity to implement them, changes in approach moving forward would ensure growth through ambitious funding plans relying on private dollars and creativity. Recent modifications to the OHS Board of Directors brought new ideas, more comprehensive representation, and needed reform. In 1981, the OHS board adopted a new constitution and new by-laws that eliminated the longtime self-appointing board and replaced it with board members elected by the society's membership and appointed by the governor. Under the new constitution, members served three-year terms and had to have maintained membership in the society for at least two years. Although previous members had made significant progress throughout the society's history, new leadership focused on planning, long-term goals, and moving beyond the individual interests that led the agency in the past.[226]

[226] Bob Blackburn, "Battle Cry of History: The First Century of the Oklahoma Historical Society," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 70 (Winter 1992-1993): 388-390; Bob Blackburn, "Battle Cry of History: The First 125 Years of the Oklahoma Historical Society," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 96 (Spring 2018): 22-23; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview..

The OHS made significant organizational changes in 1992 in how it would collect, preserve, and share Oklahoma history. The agency adopted a new process for establishing five-year plans outlining institutional objectives and used them to prepare the annual budget and drive outside grant development. Under the leadership of Dr. Bob Blackburn, the society began to hire professionally trained staff to implement its vision and expand its capabilities through specialization. The agency also created its *Historic Context Review*. The planning document provided a framework enabling every OHS division and site to function collaboratively as one organization providing a thematic framework for integrating each site and museum into efforts to collect, preserve, interpret, and market the state's history while providing flexibility for site-specific interpretation and programming. The document identified three distinct criteria, including geography, chronology, and historical themes. The new plan also expanded the society's interpretive focus and defined the language for analysis.[227]

The *Historic Context Review* divided the state of Oklahoma into three geographical regions based on environmental factors, historical themes, and public perception. These included Eastern, Central, and Western Oklahoma. The document outlined seven broad-brush chronological eras to help focus on the integration of diverse topics. First was the pre-contact period before 1541, with its focus on Pre-Columbian indigenous cultures. The second was the Empire Period between 1541 and 1803. This era included the first European exploration of Oklahoma and the rapidly changing lifestyles

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[227] Oklahoma Historical Society, *Historic Context Review* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2018): 1-10; Bob Blackburn, "Battle Cry of History: The First Century of the Oklahoma Historical Society," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 70 (Winter 1992-1993): 390-391; Bob Blackburn, "Battle Cry of History: The First 125 Years of the Oklahoma Historical Society," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 96 (Spring 2018): 23; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview..

of Native Americans resulting from contact, trade, and disease. The third was the Westward Expansion from 1803 to 1861. During the era, Oklahoma became part of the expanding United States through the Louisiana Purchase. This led to the establishment of the "Indian Territory" and the forced removal of tribes, including the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations. These tribes introduce the Southern cash crop economy and slavery to the area and included the "golden age" for the Five Tribes and Southern Plains Indians.[228]

The Territorial Period from 1861 to 1907 was one of rapid change for Oklahoma, illustrating the devastation caused by the Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory as well as the continuous assault on tribal sovereignty. The abolition of slavery created a new class of tribal citizens who were contested for decades and openly excluded from white and Native American cultures. During the same era, the Plains tribes were defeated and forced into allotments. Beginning in 1887, the process of transferring tribal lands began, and a flood of non-Indian settlement and led to a dramatic shift in power in the territory. In addition, the rise of Oklahoma's all-Black towns as African Americans sought to establish a space of their own. The period was marked by the rapid expanse of farming, ranching, and urban development leading to statehood.[229]

The next period in the context review was early statehood from 1907 to 1941. This period was marked by cyclical economic booms and busts tied to agriculture, oil, industry, and urban growth, with cycles of turbulent politics including Progressivism,

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[228] Oklahoma Historical Society, *Historic Context Review* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2018): 1-3.
[229] Oklahoma Historical Society, *Historic Context Review* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2018): 3.

Populism, Socialism, and Urban Conservatism leading to political swings. It was also a period of intense racism and oppression for African Americans in Oklahoma, with a rise in violence, including the Tulsa Race Massacre.[230] Lastly, this era witnessed a major rural-to-urban shift accelerated by the decline of cotton culture and the Great Depression. The outbreak of World War II is considered the beginning of Oklahoma's industrial age. The Industrial Period from 1941 to 1982 saw the growth of Oklahoma-based companies such as Kerr McGee, Phillips Petroleum, and C. R. Anthony's. Transportation improved. The era observed the growth of big government, an expanding military infrastructure in the state, and changing party politics. Oklahoma ends Jim Crow, expands civil rights, and sees a new influx of immigration, this time, from Asia.[231]

From 1982 to the present, the Modern Period began with the widespread economic disaster related to the Oil Crash in the early 1980s. The crash had a significant impact on state politics for nearly a decade. Political party lines changed dramatically with the Republican Party coming to dominate the state. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the restoration of tribal sovereignty, a revitalization of tribal government, and the resurgence of tribal cultures across Oklahoma. Oklahoma saw a new round of immigration predominantly from Latin America. Reviewed annually and periodically

[230] For more information see, Scott Ellsworth, *Death in a Promised Land;* Hannibal B. Johnson, *Black Wall Street: From Riot to Renaissance in Tulsa's Historic Greenwood District* and *Up From the Ashes: A Story about Building Community;* Tim Madigan, *The Burning: Massacre, Destruction, and the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*; Mary E. Jones Parrish, *Events of the Tulsa Disaster.*
[231] Oklahoma Historical Society, *Historic Context Review* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2018): 3-4.

modified as needed, the last revision to the *Historical Context Review Plan* was completed in 2018.[232]

In addition to historical eras, the *Historical Context Review* document provided a series of thematic approaches arguing Oklahoma history should be approached thematically. These themes remain American Indians, Settlement Patterns, Agriculture, Transportation, Natural Resources, Industry and Business, Military, Social and Culture, Education, Government, Diversity, Civil Rights, and Family. The *Historical Context Review* was more than just a guiding document; it would become the blueprint for exhibit development when the society constructed the Oklahoma History Center and the new visitors' centers at Fort Towson and Honey Springs.[233]

In 1992, The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department transferred ten historic sites under their control to the Oklahoma Historical Society, bringing their total historic sites inventory to thirty-nine. Senate Bill 112 resulted in an additional $1,303,828 in funding but was only two-thirds of the cash needed to operate the new sites. In addition, the transfer failed to include the site's repair and maintenance funds or support staff. The transfer came amid a severe budget shortfall leading to cuts for most state agencies. Senate Bill 112 also authorized the OHS to dispose of surplus properties and received funding as in-kind compensation from the sale. The budget crisis and the addition of ten new facilities resulted in a reduction of hours or closure for fourteen museums and sites with several properties surplused and transferred or sold to other

[232] Oklahoma Historical Society, *Historic Context Review* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2018): 3.
[233] Oklahoma Historical Society, *Historic Context Review* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2018): 3-9.

entities. The budget crisis in 1992 prompted the continued push to seek out private funds and grants. To help facilitate local support, the museums and sites division helped establish 501(c)(3) support groups at each site to help raise money, share operational expenses, and provide an opportunity for growth outside of the state process. Despite the state budget hardships, in 1995, the OHS worked with community leaders, local legislators, key donors, and a $200,000 ISTEA grant from the U. S. Department of Transportation to complete a $1,700,000 renovation at the Route 66 Museum in Clinton. Under the new collaborative model, the society was successful in bringing radical change to a historic site. The same model would be used for others moving forward, including developing a new Oklahoma History Center to house the OHS administration, archives, and the Oklahoma Museum of History.[234]

Just as it had done with previous homes at the University of Oklahoma, the Carnegie Library, and the Oklahoma State Capitol, the OHS outgrew the Wiley Post building completed in 1930. The agency continuously sought to meet developing standards for collections care, archival storage, and exhibitions. When the original building was constructed, climate control, relative humidity, lighting, and other factors were not considered. The board considered numerous options, including separating the museum from the OHS administration and archives. Ultimately, the growing relationship with the legislature led to a planning meeting for general improvements to the capitol

[234] Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, July 24, 1991, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 69 (Winter 1991-1992): 450-451; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Kathy Dickson, Director of Museums and Sites, interview by Jason Harris, June 25, 2020, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Bob Blackburn, “Battle Cry of History,” 24-25. Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, January 25, 1995, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 73 (Summer 1995): 255-256.

complex in 1997. The legislature was responsive to the historical society's ambitious plan for a new facility and willing to work with the agency to facilitate the project.[235]

The state provided planning money for the new expansion project while OHS completed intensive studies to determine space needs. Planning members visited several recent state historical centers and ultimately drew inspiration from the Atlanta History Center, Minnesota History Center, the Virginia Historical Society, and the National Archives. The study results were released in January 1998 and proposed a new 215,000 square-foot museum and research center at the cost of $56,000,000. The project included $10,000,000 in private funds, with the remainder coming from the state. Ultimately, the legislature requested a location on the northeast corner of the state capitol complex across the street from the Oklahoma Governor's Mansion as the site for the new center, and the board approved.[236]

As with other large projects, the OHS turned to the public for support. Newspapers, cultural organizations, and supporters across the state responded. As a result, the legislature passed a $32,000,000 bond issue to start construction. The Oklahoma History Center intended to bring the institution up to current archival and museum standards. The design, chosen through a competition, included four separate buildings interconnected with skylights and large public spaces for events and programs.

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[235] Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, January 22, 1997, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 75 (Summer 1997): 237-238; Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, April 23, 1998, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 76 (Fall 1998): 347-348; Bob Blackburn, “Battle Cry of History,” 26-28; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Dan Provo, interview; Chad Williams, interview.

[236] Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, April 23, 1998, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 76 (Fall 1998): 347-348; Bob Blackburn, “Battle Cry of History,” 27-29; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Dan Provo, interview by Jason Harris, June 26, 2020, Oklahoma Historical Society; Chad Williams, interview by Jason Harris, July 31, 2020, Oklahoma Historical Society.

The two west wings would house the museum exhibitions. The two east wings would house the archive, SHPO, museums and sites division, museum staff, ample events space, and the OHS administrative offices. Exhibit spaces were designed to meet Smithsonian standards, while the archival wing was constructed to meet criteria established by the National Archives. Groundbreaking for the new Oklahoma History Center took place on November 16, 1999. Construction and the move into the new facility was a six-year process. The new center opened on November 16, 2005. Upon completion, the Oklahoma History Center became an affiliate of both the Smithsonian and the National Archives. It was the first institution in the nation to become affiliates of both.[237]

Completion of the Oklahoma History Center reflected the continued use of the new business plan implemented by the board to leverage public and private support to achieve results. It brought a renewed focus to heritage tourism and preservation in the state and garnered national attention. The development of new exhibits following the *Historical Context Review* allowed the OHS to acquire new collections. It also enabled the OHS to reimagine the way they shared the story of Oklahoma with the public. New exhibits highlighted diverse groups and moved beyond the traditional story of Oklahoma history. One of the four new wings was dedicated to the Native American experience in the state and represented each of the thirty-eight federally recognized tribes associated with the state. In “Realizing the Dream," the African American experience in Oklahoma

[237] Bob Blackburn, “Battle Cry of History,” 28-29; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Dan Provo, interview; Chad Williams, interview.

would chronicle the extraordinary individuals, places, and events that shaped the Black life in the state from slavery through the twenty-first century.[238]

The "Military History" exhibit moved beyond battles and leaders and brought attention to individuals and the home front. While the Union and Confederate Memorials were still mandatory by legislation, Dr. Blackburn worked quietly with groups to ensure the new gallery space would meet legislative requirements. In the final design, the square footage assigned to the exhibits exceeded the previous space size in the former Wiley Post building. All the documents housed in the former memorial rooms were transferred to the archives for preservation. Exhibits now covered military history in the state from the 1830s through the present, with a large section devoted to the Civil War. The old Union and Confederate Soldier's Room, created by legislation decades earlier, transitioned from a memorial hall to an exhibition focusing on the individual and unique characteristics of Indian Territory during the war.

Today, museum visitors are exposed to the profound effect the conflict had on the civilian population and the tribes. One exhibit section, "The Terrors of War," chronicles the high cost of the war. "Our homes were burned. Our cattle driven away. Our hogs was killed. Our milk cows shot down. Our children cried for being hungry… Mothers set up all night to keep fires to keep us from freezing… Such was the terrors of War."[239] Exhibit content embraced the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry, who actively fought throughout the war in Indian Territory and suffered greatly at the hands of Confederate troops. The focus

[238] Bob Blackburn, "Battle Cry of History," 29-30; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Dan Provo, interview; Chad Williams, interview.
[239] Military History exhibit introductory quotes, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City.

shifted from General Stand Watie and his Confederate Indians to include the Indian Home Guard, several regiments of pro-Union Indians who bravely fought throughout the war and actively sought a restoration of alliance with the United States, only to be punished by the Federal government in 1866 with the Reconstruction Treaties resulting in a loss of territory and tribal sovereignty. The exhibit takes the visitor on the journey from tribal negotiations with the newly formed Confederate States through the Opothleyaholo Campaign that begins the war, through the first and second invasions of Indian Territory and the Battles of Honey Springs and both Cabin Creeks, to the closing of the war and its aftermath. Now visitors experience the war in Indian Territory rather than the shrine to the memorialization of the Lost Cause established decades earlier and adorned with relics and curios from across the country.[240]

Successful completion of the Oklahoma History Center helped spark a renewed interest in renovations and improvements at several other sites across the state. At Honey Springs Battlefield, the long steady march towards the construction of a visitors' center was finally within reach. A new sharp downturn in state revenue led to nearly a decade of significant budget cuts despite the success. From 2009 to 2018, the society's budget was reduced by nearly fifty percent. The OHS was not alone in its troubles. Countless historical societies and state preservation organizations across the nation faced similar obstacles. Within state government, the OHS even faced calls to abolish the OHS Board and transfer portions of the organization to the Department of Tourism to achieve

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[240] Introductory quote in the Civil War exhibit at the Oklahoma History Center by Emma Blythe Sixkiller. For more information on the civilians Civil War in Indian Territory see Mary Jane Warde, "Now the Wolf Has Come: The Civilian Civil War in Indian Territory," in *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 71 (Spring 1993): 64-87; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Dan Provo, interview.

"efficiency" in government. In reality, it was an attempt to rob the agency of its state appropriation. The attempt was thwarted when countless editorials were published throughout the state and legislative offices received numerous calls from constituents calling on their representatives to save the OHS. The community partnerships established in the 1980s and before generated the needed response. It also helped keep the OHS moving forward despite its significant revenue loss.[241]

The approaching Civil War Sesquicentennial offered an opportunity for a renewed focus on Civil War-related sites. The society identified several projects for the Sesquicentennial including completion of the Honey Springs Visitors Center, acquisition of acreage at the Cabin Creek Battlefield, potential repairs and renovations at Fort Gibson to the W.P.A. constructed log stockade, digitization of the OHS Archive's Civil War-related archival materials, and an expansion of programming to include a Civil War Teacher's Institute and a Civil War in the West symposium. [242]

During the multi-year budget crisis, the OHS partnered with the Cherokee Nation to help transition Hunter's Home into an 1850s living history farm. Hunter's Home, formally known as the George Murrell Home, is Oklahoma's last remaining Antebellum plantation house. To move beyond the "old house museum" mentality and enable the site to focus on the types of work done at the plantation, staff are transitioning the forty-five-acre property to a living history farm. The house originally belonged to Minerva Ross, family member of principal chief John Ross, and her husband George Murrell, from

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[241] Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Dan Provo, interview; Bob Blackburn, "Battle Cry of History," 33-34
[242] Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, January 26, 2011, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 89 (Summer 2011): 252; Minutes of the Meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, April 27, 2011, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 89 (Fall 2011): 379; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview..

Virginia. The site is now dedicated to telling the Cherokee story in Oklahoma and includes livestock, crops, and demonstrations on the daily life of family members and the enslaved. The role of slavery in the plantation was incorporated into the everyday story of George and Minerva Murrell. In 2020, "Voices of Hunter's Home: Enslaved People" reinforced that the plantation was built by slavery and sought to provide a voice to the enslaved. According to Jennifer Frazee, a historical interpreter at Hunter's Home, it was a way to give voice to those who were not seen or heard.[243]

In June 2015, the OHS would open a new visitors center at Fort Towson. The 6,000 square-foot facility received a grant from the United States Department of Transportation Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) through the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. The Act, signed into law in December 1991, provided highway and transit funding and emphasized collaborative planning. A portion of the act included provisions for acquiring and interpreting historic roadways, transportation routes, and waterways that played a crucial role in the history and development of the United States. Fort Towson, located along the Red River, qualified for the federal investment. As part of the collaborative process developed in the 1980s and 1990s, the OHS also received funding from the Kirkpatrick Foundation. In 1999, the 1838 wreck of the steamboat *Heroine* was discovered in the Red River near Fort Towson. The OHS and the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M completed an

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[243] Bob Blackburn, "Battle Cry of History," 35; Dave Fowler, Regional Director, Director of Hunter's Home, Oklahoma Historical Society, interview by Jason Harris, July 27, 2020, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Jennifer Frazee, Historical Interpreter Hunter's Home, Oklahoma Historical Society, interview by Jason Harris, July 27, 2020, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Kathy Dickson, interview; Chad Hunter, "Hunter's Home Focus Shifts to 'Living History Farm." *Cherokee Phoenix* June 23, 2020, https://www.cherokeephoenix.org/news/hunters-home-focus-shifts-to-living-history-farm/article_72bc8338-2b7e-562a-a4d8-1e89960904f3.html.

excavation of the earliest western riverboat studied to date. The *Steamboat Heroine* exhibit in the new visitor's center helped the OHS secure a Maritime Heritage Grant Program Award from the National Park Service. Exhibit topics in the new center cover the establishment and history of the fort, daily life for frontier soldiers in the west, Choctaw removal, and more. In addition, exhibits focus on the Civil War in Indian Territory when the military post served as the headquarters for Confederate forces and the Stand Watie's surrender.[244]

When the OHS acquired the military post in 1960, all that remained were remnants of buildings and partial foundations. The Civil War Centennial drove early efforts to preserve Fort Towson and open the seventy-two-acre site to the public. In 1972, the temporary visitors center opened with minimal exhibits. The new facility was designed to meet current museum and archival standards. The new exhibits placed the post's role in the context of the war in general but focused primarily on the relationship to the Choctaw Nation and its citizens to the conflict. The majority of the interpretation is limited based on the part Fort Towson played in the war. Much like the Oklahoma History Center exhibits, the new interpretation extended beyond the battlefield and its leaders and includes the Reconstruction period and rebuilding the Choctaw Nation following the conflict.[245]

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[244] Catherine M. Wood and Lynda Ozan, "Fort Towson," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, Amended 2016); "Fort Towson," *Mistletoe Leaves,* 46 (June 2015): 1; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Kathy Dickson, interview; John Davis, Regional Director for OHS, Fort Towson Historic Site, interview by Jason Harris, July 14, 2020, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library.

[245] Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, October 22, 2014, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 93 (Spring 2015): 123; Catherine M. Wood and Lynda Ozan, "Fort Towson," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, Amended 2016). *Mistletoe Leaves,* 46 (June 2015): 1; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Kathy Dickson, interview; John Davis,

With the Sesquicentennial approaching, the OHS and Friends of Honey Springs, the sites nonprofit support group, started working with the United States Department of Agriculture to secure a rural economic development grant to construct the visitors center at the Honey Springs Battlefield with the hopes of completing the project in time for the battles 150th anniversary in July 2013. In April 2010, Dr. Blackburn announced to the OHS Board of Directors that Ryan McMullen, director of the USDA Rural Development Service in Oklahoma, with the assistance of OHS staff, submitted an aid package comprised of loans, grants, and stimulus funds to complete the 6,000 square foot visitors center. The plan included roughly $650,000 in USDA loans to be paid out over forty years. As the project moved forward, the Friends of Honey Springs took on the responsibility of the loan debt. The OHS Board of Directors endorsed the proposal in April, and in July the Friends of Honey Springs officially approved the project. The friends worked with OHS Museums and Sites Director Kathy Dickson and OHS Executive Director Bob Blackburn to finalize the request and complete the application process. This was the first time the society and a friend's group collaborated this extensively on a project. In addition, it was the first time in the society's history that a support organization took federally subsidized loans to complete a project relying on earned income generated by the site to make payments. The Friends group officially voted to authorize the group's president to enter into a memorandum of understanding to facilitate a lease agreement and construct the proposed visitors center. With the MOU

Regional Director for OHS, Fort Towson Historic Site, interview by Jason Harris, July 14, 2020, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library.

completed in July, the OHS and Friends moved forward with their application to the USDA.[246]

Delays in the process prevented the construction of the Honey Springs Visitors Center in time for the 150th anniversary of the battle. Construction and bid documents were completed in late December 2014, with construction awarded to Zenith Construction Company. With the Sesquicentennial winding down, construction at the site finally started in June.[247] An article in *Mistletoe Leaves* cited the collaboration between local, county, state, and federal agencies as key to the project's success. Ryan McMullen, a strong advocate for the project and USDA state director, reported, "…with plenty of creativity and enough partners, it's still possible to make big things happen in small towns."[248] Construction of the main visitors' center building took just over a year, and in September 2016, the Friends of Honey Springs and OHS officially dedicated the new facility. Lisa Mensah, the undersecretary for rural development for the USDA, attended the event and highlighted the extensive collaboration that made the project successful. While the construction was complete, the installation of the main exhibits and research

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[246] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, April 27, 2011, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 89, No. 3 (Fall, 2011): 380; Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, April 28, 2010, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 88, No. 3 (Fall, 2010): 254; Bob Blackburn, "Battle Cry of History," 35; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Kathy Dickson, Director of Museums and Sites, interview by Jason Harris, June 25, 2021, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Memorandum, "Memorandum of Understanding Between the Oklahoma Historical Society and the Friends of Honey Springs Battlefield concerning the construction and operation of the Honey Springs Visitors Center," July 19, 2010, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library.

[247] Minutes, Friends of Honey Springs Battlefield Park, Inc. Visitors' Center Project Public Meeting, March 28, 2014, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Kath Dickson to Ronnie L. Jones, Area Specialist, USDA Rural Development, April 17, 2014, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Architectural Design Group, Inc, "Visitors Center at Honey Springs Battlefield Project Manual, December 8, 2014, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library.

[248] OHS, "Construction Underway at Honey Springs Battlefield Visitors Center," *Mistletoe Leaves* Vol. 46, No. 6 (June 2015): 7

library were delayed. At the dedication, Dr. Bob Blackburn announced the donation of an extensive library collection and noted that the new research library would be named after the late Dr. LeRoy Fischer, who had worked diligently on the project since its inception in the 1960s.[249]

As with exhibition development at the Oklahoma History Center and Fort Towson, the new exhibits moved beyond the battle and brought attention to the role of the Texas Road and the local community around Honey Springs. They examined the impact of the war on the tribes both during and after the end of the hostilities and the chronicled the heavy toll paid by civilians from the bloody divisions within the tribes. In addition, exhibits follow the position of the freedmen and chronicle the rise of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns. The visitor's center is scheduled to complete the final installation of exhibits in the late fall of 2021 following countless contract and COVID-19 delays. In 2020 the park installed fifty-six new trail markers extending interpretation beyond the visitor center walls. Drawing heavily on firsthand accounts, these outdoor interpretive panels illustrate the engagement across battlefield sections where events occurred. Interpretive panels also illustrate life in the surrounding community before the engagement and place it into the context of the Texas Road's role in Indian Territory. Lastly, new interpretive trail signs help the visitor understand how the battlefield relies on archaeology, primary sources, letters, diaries, and more to help visitors share the story from the past today.[250]

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[249] OHS, "Improvements at Honey Springs Battlefield," *Mistletoe Leaves* Vol. 47, No. 10 (November 2016): 5; Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, October 26, 2017, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 95, No. 1 (Spring, 2017): 119.

[250] Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Kathy Dickson, Director of Museums and Sites, interview by Jason Harris, June 25, 2021, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Adam Lynn, Director of

To help build a stronger base of support and offset substantial state budget cuts, the OHS began working directly with tribal nations with specific ties to historical sites to prevent their closure. The budget challenges prompted by significant reductions in funding from the state legislature led the OHS to look at a series of closures and reductions in service. The OHS ultimately decided that the properties might be better cared for under new ownership for some sites. In 2009, the Cherokee Nation provided $50,000 to help preserve Sequoyah's cabin, Hunter's Home, and Fort Gibson Historic Site. "The Cherokee story is a major part of history predating Oklahoma statehood," Principal Chief Chad Smith said. "By working together, we can share this history with those who live here and visit here."[251] In the last decade, the Cherokee Nation has continued to support OHS efforts at Fort Gibson and Hunter's Home. In November 2016, the tribe purchased Sequoyah's cabin from the state, returning it to the Cherokee Nation and placing it under their cultural preservation plan. Fort Gibson and Hunter's Home remain Oklahoma Historical Society sites but are supported in part by an annual gift to the society.[252]

Honey Springs Battlefield, interview by Jason Harris, June 30, 2020, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Adam Lynn, Director of Honey Springs Battlefield, interview by Jason Harris, September 29, 2021; John Davis, Regional Director, Oklahoma Historical Society, interview by Jason Harris, July 14, 2020, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; John Davis, Regional Director, Oklahoma Historical Society, interview by Jason Harris, October 1, 2021. Oklahoma Historical Society "Exhibit Plan for the Honey Springs Battlefield Visitors Center," 2017, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Honey Springs Battlefield, "Trail Signs Proofs," Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library.

[251] CN Communications, "Cherokee Nation Helps Oklahoma Preserve Cherokee History," *Cherokee Phoenix*, December 22, 2009, https://www.cherokeephoenix.org/culture/cherokee-nation-helps-oklahoma-preserve-cherokee-history/article_ea29ee8b-3b5e-5bc0-9b1e-e9216e6c207d.html; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Kathy Dickson, Director of Museums and Sites, interview by Jason Harris, June 25, 2021, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library.

[252] Bob Blackburn, "Battle Cry of History," 36; "Sequoyah's Cabin to Remain Open Through Partnership," *Mistletoe Leaves,* 47 (November 2016): 6; Lindsey Bark, "CN Buys Sequoyah's Cabin From State," *Cherokee Phoenix*, https://www.cherokeephoenix.org/news/cn-buys-sequoyahs-cabin-from-state/article_35e57498-a7cf-5123-a79f-631232078927.html; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Kathy Dickson, Director of Museums and Sites, interview by Jason Harris, June 25, 2021, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library.

In 2017, the OHS worked with leadership in the Chickasaw Nation to facilitate the transfer of Fort Washita to the tribe to maintain services for the public and ensure its continued operation. On September 28, 2010, a fire erupted at the reconstructed barracks resulting in a total loss. The fire was started by three college-age students who broke into the closed facility overnight and lit toilet paper rolls on fire in a storage room. Ultimately the three were charged and received a deferred sentence. Two were ordered to pay $10,0000 in restitution, while the third student was ordered to pay $1,000. Fort Washita is deeply connected to the history of the Chickasaw Nation following their removal to Indian Territory. The yearlong negotiations included a transfer of the site and preserved many of the public programs held annually. As of 2021, the Chickasaw Nation is working on plans to reconstruct the barracks building as well as additional structures on-site and update the visitors center. Until the property is fully invested in trust for the tribe, the site will continue to operate in its current condition. Fort Washita was the third OHS property transferred to the Chickasaw Nation. In 1993, the OHS transferred the Council House Museum and Chickasaw Governor Douglas H. Johnston's home known as the Chickasaw White House to the Chickasaw Nation for operation and preservation under their cultural properties divisions.[253]

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[253] Bob Blackburn, "Battle Cry of History," 36; "Fort Washita Transferred to the Chickasaw Nation," *Mistletoe Leaves,* 48 (November/December 2017): 7; "Fire Destroys Fort Washita Barracks," *Mistletoe Leaves* 41 (November 2010): Vallery Brown, "Trial Moved for Oklahoma Teen Accused of Burning Fort Washita Barracks," *Daily Oklahoman,* March 24, 2011, https://www.oklahoman.com/article/3551242/trial-moved-for-oklahoma-teen-accused-of-burning-fort-washita-barracks; "Pair get deferred sentences in Fort Washita fire case," *Durant Daily Democrat,* December 25, 2011. 1; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Kathy Dickson, Director of Museums and Sites, interview by Jason Harris, June 25, 2021, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library.

The Oklahoma Historical Society's development has been a cycle of rapid expansion and growth followed by periods of ambition thwarted by funding. In general, the development of the society follows national trends of prosperity tied to special one-time funding associated with federal programs, local preservation efforts, and celebrations tied to historic anniversaries. The society worked diligently to preserve both the non-native and American Indian history of the state collecting federal records related to the tribes, oral histories among early post-Indian Territory settlers, and material culture related to both. The birth of the society was tied to growing efforts to memorialize Civil War battlefields and the feeling of urgency in preserving the heritage of the past due to urbanization and technological advances from the Gilded Age and Progressive Era.

The rise of the OHS's "Temple of History" marked a significant change in the society as it moved into a formal authoritative role in Oklahoma history. Tied to memorialization, the new permanent home offered the organization the opportunity to grow and expand, establishing itself among the nation's cultural institutions. In the 1930s, the W.P.A. helped the society move beyond the walls of the Wiley Post building in Oklahoma City and into preservation across the state. The historical marker program developed in the 1940s and implemented in the 1950s and beyond brought formal recognition to historical places.

Over time, the society acquired historical sites throughout the state, including those with ties to the Civil War comprising Fort Gibson, Fort Towson, Fort Washita, Hunter's Home, Honey Springs Battlefield, and Cabin Creek Battlefield. Through the 1970s, exhibit content followed the traditional curio and relic display with little interpretation. In the 1980s, an effort was made to improve the story of Oklahoma

through exhibits and the reconstructed appearance of life at historical sites. In the late 1990s, the society reimagined the "Temple of History" as the center for Oklahoma. Exhibit content was completely redesigned. The story of the Civil War moved beyond leaders and battles and focused on the individual. The role of both Native and African Americans became prominent. And the story of Reconstruction in the territory and its role in the loss of tribal sovereignty and the opening of the territory to non-Indian settlement became more prevalent.

At historic sites, interpretation of the Civil War also shifted to the individual and the site's role in the overall experience of the war and its aftermath. At Hunter's Home, the role of slavery in the early period of the plantation was incorporated into the everyday story of George and Minerva Murrell. In 2020, the exhibit "Voices of Hunter's Home: Enslaved People" reinforced that the plantation was built by slavery and sought to provide a voice to the enslaved. According to Dave Fowler and Jennifer Frazee, extensive research is in progress to fully incorporate the enslaved's lives at the site from what records exist.

After decades of effort by countless OHS staff and supporters across the state, the Honey Springs Battlefield visitor's center and new interpretive panels were finally completed. COVID-19 delays have prevented the final exhibit installation. In addition, exhibit construction for the renovation of the post's hospital into a new visitor at Fort Gibson has slowed due to the pandemic leaving changes in interpretation for a later discussion. Nevertheless, the transition from curios and relics to informative exhibit content supported by voices from the past provides a new understanding of Oklahoma and its Civil War for visitors today.

CHAPTER V

MARKERS, MONUMENTS, AND THE ROADSIDE CIVIL WAR

> *"There are some painful references on these monuments, and I think we live in a time when we need to be mindful of the unity we have"*
>
> \- Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin, Jr.

The OHS marker project served as the primary interpretive venue for many Civil War-related topics in the state outside of the legislated Union and Confederate memorial halls at the OHS's Wiley Post building in Oklahoma City until the 1960s. Much like early memorials placed in the public landscape by the UDC and other groups, the historical marker programs across the country provided an avenue for public commemoration at the community level to recognize people, places, and events. This public memory reflected contemporary social and political relationships at the time of the individual marker's creation. As cultural conditions change socially, ideologically, and politically, these shared memories often shift, leaving these semipermanent reminders of the past. Who is

Represented in this “shared” memory has evolved from a predominantly white memory to a more inclusive representation of the Civil War in Oklahoma, including Native and African American experiences over time. However, this representation is still not fully integrated across all aspects of public history. The historian’s view of the past changes when they consider new evidence. It is an evolving continuum of events defined through research resulting in changing interpretation. However, the public's perception of history evolves more slowly. With the creation of accessible historical markers, collective public memory is manifested in a physical place by fixed markers based on the predominant perspective of their time.[254]

At this point of interaction between people and the landscape, public perception is created through narrow interpretations of the past. By their very nature, historical markers are projections of collective cultural values and decidedly particular versions of history created by the few for the many. The creation of a monument depends on the relationships of those erecting the marker, and by acceptance, presents the public with what is perceived as an uncontested and approved interpretation history. The very language of the marker is, by default, intended to be worthy of public remembrance. For historians looking backward, what is not remembered can be just as important.

Oklahoma’s historical marker program developed shortly after World War II and aimed to highlight a diverse array of historical topics for the public. Oklahoma historian and *Chronicles of Oklahoma* editor Muriel H. Wright, OHS board member General

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[254] This chapter draws from the author’s previous work and includes updated interpretations relevant to this study. For more information, see Jason T. Harris, “Combat, Supply, and the Influence of Logistics during the Civil War in Indian Territory,” masters thesis, University of Central Oklahoma, 2008.

William. S. Key, and society director George Shirk played a pivotal role in working with the legislature to secure the initial state investment in the project. In a private-public collaborative partnership, the society sought to promote local history, notable historic sites, and historical events in Oklahoma. In 1949, to reach the increasingly mobile traveler, the Oklahoma legislature appropriated $10,000, a significant investment for its time, to develop a system of highway markers to identify and highlight historical sites and events across the state. [255]

State Representative John E. Wagner worked directly with Dr. Charles Evans, secretary of the OHS, to help establish and fund the Oklahoma marker program. Key, Shirk, and Wright initially developed a list of 100 specially selected historical sites for consideration in preparation for the passage of the legislation without knowing how many might be selected. Each site included a brief history outlining its historical value. At their February 1949 meeting, the OHS board of directors resolved to petition the legislature in support of House Bill 267 to appropriate the $10,000 needed to develop a marker program and proposed the legislation vest authority for selecting the markers with the society. By summer, General Key reported that the legislature had passed the legislation and appropriated the funding for the project to be used over the next two fiscal years. The statute stipulated that the society works with the Oklahoma Highway Commission to erect aluminum markers with steel supports set in concrete. Later that fall, a proof was presented to the board along with a narrowed list of fifty sites already selected for markers. This original list included six markers associated with Civil War sites in

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[255] Blackburn, Bob L., "Battle Cry for History: The First 125 Years of the Oklahoma Historical Society," 12

Oklahoma.[256] Over the next serval decades, the number of markers increased dramatically as the state's semi-centennial approached in 1957. By the nation's bicentennial in 1976, more than 250 roadside markers dotted the Oklahoma landscape. Today, there are more than 660 markers across Oklahoma showing the widespread popularity of the marker program.

This effort by the OHS was part of a national movement to identify and memorialize historical persons, places, and events across the nation. Virginia claims the oldest program, erecting its first marker in 1927, although Pennsylvania placed its first bronze plaque mounted on a large stone in 1914. South Carolina launched its program in 1936, and Tennessee soon followed in 1940.[257] Throughout the 1950s, many states developed marker programs with the explicit goal of promoting tourism. Thousands of Americans stopped along highways and roads each year to visit the countless markers, plaques, and stone monuments that dot the landscape. For some, the causal encounters with these officially adopted historical markers is the only history consumed. For others, they are simply a stop along the greater journey. Frequently, these roadside markers provide no meaningful context. Instead, they convey a brief statement of imposed fact from the public memory of the past.

Moreover, elitism usually dominates that memory because of the process and cost involved with erecting these permanent monuments. In many ways, these markers are

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[256] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, February 24, 1949, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 27, No. 1, (Spring 1949): 133; Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, May 26, 1949, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 27, No. 2, (Summer 1949): 230; The full list of the fifty original proposed sites is available in the July 28, 1949, Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

[257] Jennifer Dickey, "Cameos of History" on the Landscape: Changes and Challenges of Georgia's Historical Marker Program," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 42., No. 2, (May 2020): 35.

semipermanent testimonials to poorly constructed public history that are often in need of repair. If the public utilized these markers as their primary source of history, they would quickly conclude that we are a military nation due to countless markers dedicated to conflict across the United States. The markers are quick to highlight who we, the public, should support or disdain for their actions in the past. Limited in words, these markers are, at best partial stories of the individual, event, or history of a place and are often devoid of context. Because of their very nature, often created at a very local level by a group of like-minded individuals, they reflect the value of the community or its inhabitants rather than a broader consensus narrative. This is partly due to the marker's insular creation and only limited public review of the historical narrative.

One could argue that historical markers are at the heart of history for the public because of their widespread accessibility. And as public history, they should pass the same accountability, perspective, and truth tests that all historical work seeks to achieve. To matter, they must ask or address pertinent questions, be interesting, and remain factual. In many cases, the countless historical markers across the American landscape are erected by individuals who believe that if a house or building is old, it is historical, and many fall victim to ancestor worship. Rather than connecting historical places and events to others in context, they provide fragmented knowledge in visual sound bites. Reasonable interpretation, whether in a written publication, exhibit panel, or historical marker, must be engaging, accurate, and demonstrate the significance of the site, event, or few select individuals memorialized. This chapter will focus on all the markers installed and approved for installation by the Oklahoma Historical Society directly associated with the Civil War in Oklahoma. It is just a fraction of the state’s extensive

historical marker's erected during the decades-long program. These markers were created by a diverse group of individuals but almost universally focused on the topics that overwhelmingly celebrate the Confederacy.[258]

While the legislature initially funded the project with a $10,000 appropriation to be used over two years, continued expansion largely fell to private funds to erect state-approved markers. Unfortunately, the state legislature has never authorized funds for the program’s maintenance. In the mid-1980s, a $1.2 million-dollar federal highway grant helped replace, repair, and improve existing markers; however, the program remains a privately funded interpretive opportunity centered on local history. The society reviews and approves privately funded markers that commemorate people, places, and events of local, state, and national significance twice yearly. As of 2021, historical markers in Oklahoma are funded by the applicant. The two most common markers are free-standing cast aluminum markers manufactured by Sewah Studies in Marietta, Ohio, and red granite markers created by Willis Granite in Granite, Oklahoma. Applicants may work with other vendors with approval from the society. The OHS works with the state department of transportation for approval of marker placement on state roads. For

[258] Though not a complete list of works, individuals interested in the topic of statewide historical markers should consider. See Carroll P. Cruggs, *Georgia Historical Markers;* Michael Hill, ed., *Guide to North Carolina Highway Markers*; George R. Beyer, *Guide to State Historical Markers of Pennsylvania*; Bill Gulick, *Roadside History of Oregon*; Francis L. and Roberta B. Fugate, *Roadside History of New Mexico*; Peter S. Jennison, *Roadside History of Vermont*; Derek H. Alderman, “”History by the Spoonful” in North Carolina”; Jennifer Dickey, ““Camoes of History” on the Landscape;” David Lowenthal, “Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory;” Virginia Conservation Commission, *State Historical Markers of Virginia: Colonial, Revolutionary, and Nineteenth-Century*; Office of State History, *A Guide to the Historical Markers of New York State*; Ellen Schultz and Deborah Kelly, *Assessment of State Historical Marker Programs: A Report for the New Jersey Historical Commission*; and Muriel H. Wright, George H. Shirk, and Kenny A. Franks, *Mark of Heritage*.

applicants to document their submission, a narrative history with supporting documentation is required to indicate the topic's significance with cited factual sources.[259]

As of July 2021, the Oklahoma Historical Society had forty-four historical markers related to Oklahoma's Civil War, a significant increase over the initial six when the program launched. The assortment of markers and their topics provide a unique glimpse at how the act of commemorative place-making has changed since the programs beginning in 1949. The Civil War Centennial expanded the list of recognized historical sites in Oklahoma considered significant. While not all sites gained recognition through a marker, the list was developed by Muriel Wright and Leroy Fischer, professor of history at Oklahoma State University, to identify locations for further marker placement.[260]

Oklahoma's markers originally intended to capture the values and customs of the state's unique cultural landscape that included Native American roots, the development of the frontier into a modern world (from the non-Indian perspective), and a uniquely African American story, albeit one suppressed by Jim Crow and the Lost Cause ideology that dominated the twentieth century. These markers include textual information located in a public space to honor and remember a singular person, event, or place and are placed strategically within the landscape for the public. They are intended to be both symbolic and create an emotional response by enshrining the past of those who erected the monument as true without complication. In the case of the Civil War markers approved by the OHS, they attempt to create a reconciliatory statewide identity through an

[259] Criteria for Historical Markers, Oklahoma Historical Society application website, www.okhsitory.org/about/markerprogram, accessed July 23, 2021.
[260] See Muriel H. Wright and LeRoy H Fischer, "Civil War Sites in Oklahoma," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 44, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 158-215.

established historical common ground that ultimately grew to enshrine the memorialization of the Confederacy through the marker program. The interplay between smaller local groups and larger institutionalized constructs of the past resulted in a variety of presentations of social memory and interpretation from location to location. In the case of Oklahoma's marker program, what is underrepresented is just as important and perhaps even more so than what has been enshrined. While there have been changes in state policy for marker instillation, the OHS is ultimately responsible for the narrative presented by their approval and placement of the markers. Analyzing the current markers and identifying significant gaps that need to be addressed reveals how the narrative can expand to include the diverse experiences of the residents of Indian Territory at the time of the war and during Reconstruction.

Most of Oklahoma's Civil War markers trace the footsteps of warring armies as they fought to determine the outcome of the conflict with the details and context lost over time. While "individual battles swayed elections, shaped political decisions, determined economic mobilization, brought women into the war effort, and influenced the decision to abolish slavery as well as recruit former slaves in large numbers as soldiers," that expanded social history was relegated to books and museum exhibitions rather than placed squarely in front of the public as they explored the historical landscape through markers.[261] To analyze the OHS markers related to the Civil War, it is helpful to examine them in three separate categories: individuals, places, and events. Markers dedicated to individuals are meant to call attention to individuals worthy of recognition. These

[261] Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, *Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1993), 14.

markers highlight an individual's prominent role in shaping the history of the state. When it comes to Oklahoma's Civil War markers, the narrative is universally based on the celebration of the Confederacy's legacy in the state.

General Douglas Hancock Cooper

Located thirteen miles east of Madill at Fort Washita, the first Cooper marker proclaims, "When the Civil War began, Cooper's friend, Confederate President Jefferson Davis, appointed him Choctaw-Chickasaw agent for the Confederacy. As commander of the Choctaw-Chickasaw Confederate mounted riflemen, he saw much action. He later was promoted to commander of the Indian Territory Military District, C.S.A., and was named Superintendent of Indian Affairs by President Davis."

Douglas H. Cooper was a prominent figure in Indian Territory. Serving as a United States Indian agent, Cooper developed a close working relationship with both Choctaw and Chickasaw leaders and was actively involved in the Confederate war effort. This marker highlights Cooper's relationship with the Choctaw and Chickasaw without explaining the close attachment he formed with the tribes prior to the war. It also notes his participation in the Civil War without discussing his multiple defeats on the battlefield. Instead, it highlights the fact that Cooper was promoted commander of Confederate forces in Indian Territory, which occurred in the late winter of 1864. After his surrender, he assisted the Choctaw and Chickasaw in negotiating the Treaties of 1866.

In 1966, the Oklahoma Historical Society erected a granite marker at Fort Washita, expanding the interpretation by noting, "Cooper was appointed U. S. Agent to the Choctaws, 1853, and to the Chickasaws, 1856. Under his supervision the two

agencies were consolidated, and office was located at Fort Washita." The majority of the marker still projects a heroic interpretation of Cooper the Confederate. The marker describes Cooper as "[K]ind and sympathetic by nature, generous to a fault, he was an honest man of noble impulses, and born and bred a gentleman," and notes that "[W]ith outbreak of war between the states, Cooper was designated by his friend Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, to be Choctaw – Chickasaw Agent." The text also addresses his role as a military commander, proclaiming he "saw action in many hard battles. Recognition of his military ability led to his being promoted to commander of Indian Territory Military District, C. S. A." While approved by the Oklahoma Historical Society, this granite marker was developed and sponsored by the Julia Jackson Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. In this memorial, his role as Confederate leader is highlighted at the expense of his extensive work with both the Choctaw and Chickasaw before and after the war follows the Lost Cause ideological tradition of memorializing southern commanders. That is not to say Cooper is not worthy of recognition. He was a veteran of the Mexican War, led Native American militias against raiding Comanches, and continued to work with the Chickasaw and Choctaw after the war.[262]

[262] The Collection of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Oklahoma Division. M2012.094. Manuscripts. 1899-2000. Box 40. Oklahoma Historical Society, Research Center, Oklahoma City. For more information on Douglas Cooper, see the Muriel H. Wright, "General Douglas H. Cooper, Confederate States of America," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 32 (Summer 1954): 142-184; Muriel H. Wright, "Colonel Cooper's Civil War Report on the Battle of Round Mountain," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 39 (Winter 1961-1962): 352-397; Douglas Cooper, "A Journal Kept by Douglas Cooper," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 5 (December 1927): 381-390; *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* entry, https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=CO051. To date, no full-length manuscript has explored the life of Cooper.

Pikey’s Crossing

Located at the State Highway 4 bridge crossing the South Canadian River, this marker notes the location of Pikey’s Crossing on the river. It calls attention to the fact that “he was elected as a Representative to the Chickasaw House before and after the Civil War. During the Civil War, Ben fought for the Confederacy, serving as Captain of Company G in Shecoe's Chickasaw Battalion Mounted Volunteers.”

While the marker references Benson Pikey’s service as Captain of Company G, Shecoe’s Chickasaw Battalion of Mounted Volunteers, it fails to connect it to any particular time or place in the war. Other than listing in *The History of the Five Civilized Tribes in the Confederate Army*, a typewritten manuscript containing the statistical information of Indian Tribes engaged in service for the Confederate States of America, Pikey’s role in the war has been forgotten. He is remembered in the Chickasaw Hall of Fame for his notable service in the Chickasaw House of Representatives, where he served as speaker of the house before the war and his successful 1,000 plus acre ranching operation. The marker memorializing a river Crossing established by Ben Pikey dedicates a third of the text to his service without providing any significance. In 2004 Senate Concurrent resolution 78 was introduced, directing the OHS to install a new marker; however, the legislation failed to advance. The attempt shows the continued efforts by lawmakers to legislate history within the state. The Chickasaw Nation erected its own marker, greatly expanding the narrative of Pikey and his contribution to the tribe.[263]

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[263] Benson Pikey, “Chickasaw Hall of Fame,” June 13, 2021, https://hof.chickasaw.net/Inductees/2013/Benson-Pikey.aspx. Tami Althoff, “Controversial Bridge Remains Without Name,” *The Oklahoman* May 13, 2006, https://www.oklahoman.com/article/1843088/controversial-bridge-remains-without-name, accessed June

Watie-Ridge

No Native American figure garners as much attention during the Civil War years as Stand Watie. The historiography of Watie is extensive. His memorialization as a Confederate war hero is lauded on monuments to his service within the OHS marker program, and others erected across the state. In 2020, the Cherokee Nation removed two monuments dedicated to Watie and the Confederacy from their capitol square. They were erected in 1913 and 1921 by Confederate heritage associations when the capitol building was under county, not tribal, control. Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin, Jr., noted, "[T]here are some painful references on these monuments, and I think we live in a time when we need to be mindful of the unity we have here on the courthouse Capitol Square."[264] The removal highlights attempts by the Cherokee Nation and others to reconcile the war internally even today. The historical marker near Gove, Oklahoma, notes Stand Watie's military service in the Confederate Army and focuses on signing the removal treaty. It reads, “Watie and his cousin, John Ridge, were signers of the 1835 treaty that brought about the removal of the Cherokees from Georgia to Indian Territory. Ridge was killed by opponents of removal, but Watie escaped and became a general in the Confederate Army during the Civil War.”

A second maker located at his grave in Polson Cemetery provides additional details. “Stand Watie, a leader of the pro-removal faction of Cherokees...was the first Indian commissioned in the Civil War as a general officer. At the close of the conflict, he

15, 2021. Senate Joint Resolution 78, *“*A Concurrent Resolution Designating Pikey’s Crossing; directing the OHS and DOT to cause certain markers to be placed on certain bridge, and directing distribution,” introduced May 24, 2004.

[264] Lindsey Barker, “Cherokee Nation Removes 2 Confederate Monuments from Capitol Square,” *Cherokee Phoenix* Jun 16, 2020.

commanded all Confederate troops in the Department of Indian Territory. In May of 1865, he surrendered to Union troops near Fort Towson, the last Confederate general to lay down his arms." A third marker located in Doaksville, currently a protected historical site near the current community of Fort Towson, marks the location of Watie's surrender to Federal troops at the end of the war. It simply reads, "Stand Watie's Surrender, Here at Doaksville, June 23, 1865, Brigadier General Stand Watie, Cherokee Indian, was the last Confederate general to surrender."

Early works often place Watie squarely in the Lost Cause narrative by focusing extensively on his wartime service while avoiding discussing the war he waged against the civilian population or the massacres he inflicted upon African American troops. While he proved to be an able commander, he also demonstrated he could be ruthless on the battlefield. Watie and his men were responsible for countless attacks upon the civilian population.[265] In September 1864, Watie and his men were responsible for slaughtering roughly one hundred twenty-five men from the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry. This massacre at Flat Rock is worthy of its own memorialization and marker but remains unmarked and often overlooked in the literature.

The Federal army's largest hay operation was situated at Flat Rock. Flat Rock Creek is a small tributary of the Grand River that branches out into the open prairie, creating pools connected by thin threads of water along the creek. The lagoons, lined with willows and brush, provided sanctuary for the men working in the hot summer sun. At the camp, 125 men, from the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry and a detachment of the 2nd

[265] For an excellent study of the Civil War and its effects on the Civilian population in Indian Territory see Mary Jane Warde's *When the Wolf Came: The Civil War in the Indian Territory.*

Kansas Cavalry were stationed at the camp under Captain Edgar Barker. Watie and nearly 2,000 mounted men attacked the Union troops at Flat Rock. In a desperate move, Captain Barker made lead them in a desperate charge against the Confederate line with all his mounted men hoping to break through and ride to Fort Gibson for reinforcements. The Black troops and the dismounted cavalrymen remained behind to fight their way to the safety of the timber along the Grand River. In their desperate gamble, Barker and fifteen men escaped through the chaos and immediately raced towards Fort Gibson.[266]

As Barker raced for reinforcements, 1st Kansas Colored Infantry rallied under Lieutenant Thomas B. Sutherland. They prepared to make their stand, knowing the chances of escaping were slim. The mounted Confederates repeatedly charged the federal position. With their ammunition exhausted from two hours of intense fighting, Sutherland gave one last order for men to save themselves. The troops darted from a ravine and ran in every direction as the Confederate artillery opened fire with grapeshot. Many hid in shallow lagoons and brush. Almost immediately, one of the most horrific slaughters in Indian Territory commenced. One Confederate soldier reportedly said, "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."[267] Across the prairie, Confederates slaughtered Union soldiers

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[266] Edgar A. Barker, Report, September 20, 1864, OR, Series 1, Volume 41, Part I, 771-772; Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 437-438; R.M. Gano, Report, September 23, 1864; John K. Graton, Letter, September 29, 1864, John K. Graton Correspondence, MS913.02, Microfilm Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas; James M. Williams, Letter, September 161864, James M. Williams Collection, Military History Collection, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas; Records of Troops Movements, M594, Roll 213, Microfilm Division, National Archives; Britton, *Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 244; Cottrell, *Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 98; Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 153.
[267] As quoted in Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 154.

where they found them. Watie’s men hunted down every man possible and set fire to an estimated three thousand tons of hay as well as a government hay-mowing machine before moving north towards the Texas Road.

Samuel Checote

Located on the Creek Council House Square in Okmulgee, this historical marker erected for Samuel Checote, a prominent Muscogee (Creek) politician and chief, contains just four lines of text. It denotes half of its text to his service for the Confederacy, noting that “he [Checote] served as Lieut. Col. of First Regt. Creek Mounted Vols., C.S.A., during the Civil War.” Samuel Checote was actively engaged in preaching Methodism through the Indian Mission Conference of the Methodist Church until the outbreak of the Civil War. Checote openly espoused support of the South, adopting its traditions, customs, and religion.

Checote served throughout the war seeing action and multiple engagements, including Watie's massacre at Flat Rock and the Second Battle of Cabin Creek. Following the war, he resumed preaching until his election to principal chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in 1867. The war was devastating for the tribes in Indian Territory. Much like leaders in other defeated states of the Confederacy, Chief Checote deplored mixing former slaves with tribal members. Eventually, bitter opposition from pro-Union members of the tribe led to the Green Peach War led by Ispiechie, the Supreme Judge of the tribe. Checote's success in suppressing the opposition allowed him to remain in office for twelve years, where he sought to instill moral and religious

changes.[268] While the marker mentions his military service and election as principal chief, it fails to address his deep support of southern philosophies nor the resulting internal war amongst Muscogee (Creek) factions following the end of the Civil War.

Each of these markers devoted to an individual is dedicated to Confederate leaders. In many cases, their role in the war is minimized in the language of the marker. This is partially due to the text limits. However, in each instance, it was enshrined in their memorialization. Douglas Cooper, Benson Pikey, Stand Watie, and Samuel Checote all had extensive relationships with the development of Indian Territory outside of service to the Confederacy. Nevertheless, this inherent tie to the South remained steadfast in the erection of their respective historical markers. Native Americans such as Opothleyaholo, who led pro-Union Indians north to Kansas at the outbreak of the war, are missing from the narrative. Currently, no historical markers are memorializing pro-Union efforts by tribal members or leaders within Oklahoma.

The original historical marker list created in 1949 identified several historical "places" across the state for inclusion. This diverse list is intended to highlight locations of significance whether historical structures remained or not, including cemeteries, former townsites, military installations and camps, stage stops, homes, prominent businesses, tribal capitols, and other executive structures, and buildings relevant to the development of Oklahoma's political system. Several "places" across the Oklahoma landscape provide a connection to Oklahoma and the Civil War through their text. Again,

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[268] O. A. Lambert, "Historical Sketch of Col. Samuel Checote, Once Chief of the Creek Nation," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 4 (September 1926): 272-277. For additional information on Samuel Checote, see Angie Debo, *The Road to Disappearance: A History of the Creek Indians* and John B. Meserve, "Chief Samuel Checote, with Sketches of Chiefs Locher Harjo and Ward Coachment," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 16 (December 1938).

these markers are heavily weighted towards memorialization and celebration of the Confederacy. Those that are not ignore the history that complicates a reconciled consensus.

Fort Wayne

Two separate markers memorialize Fort Wayne. Both provide limited background on the establishment of the post. Fort Wayne was established to protect the Texas Road connecting frontier military installations in Indian Territory. The 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. The other beginning in Saint Louis ran southwest to Springfield, Missouri, and past Fort Wayne on upper Spavinaw Creek to Salina, where it joined the other. The military post, initially established in 1838, was abandoned just four years later. Once closed, the Cherokee Nation acquired it. The former post served as a gathering place for Stand Watie and his followers throughout the post-removal period. At old Fort Wayne, Watie formed his regiment of Cherokee volunteers for the Confederate war effort.[269]

The first marker is concise, including just four lines of text. It indicated the post was established in 1839 and named after General "Mad" Anthony Wayne. The remainder of the text highlights its use by Watie to organize the Cherokee Mounted Rifles and its capture at the Battle of Fort Wayne on October 22, 1862. The second marker expands the

[269] For more on Fort Wayne see Grant Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier, 1830 – 1860* and Robert W. Frazer, *Forts of the West: Military Forts and Presidios, and Posts Commonly Called Forts, West of the Mississippi River to 1898.*

narrative and places it in the context of frontier development. It reads, "Fort Wayne was originally intended as a link in the great line of forts extending north and south to afford protection on the frontier of the unknown West. It was soon realized that such extensive precautions were not necessary, and the … improvements were given to the Cherokee Nation and were in use until after the War Between the States." This marker's reference to the Civil War as the "War Between the States" highlights a continued application of the Lost Cause ideology.

Despite its occupation by soldiers and dragoons, no substantial or permanent structures were constructed at the site. While the first marker notes that Union forces captured the post in the fall of 1862, the engagement was quick. General Douglas Cooper put up only limited resistance and lost a baggage train with thousands of pounds of powder, four artillery pieces, and two caissons. Following the Union victory, General James Blunt continued his march. Throughout the war, the Federal army in Indian Territory was significantly better armed and supplied. The loss of just four artillery pieces at Fort Wayne was problematic since the Confederacy rarely shipped such items west to the Trans-Mississippi Theater.[270]

Confederate Cemetery

Located on the east side of Atoka at the Atoka County Museum and Confederate Cemetery, this marker simply denotes the presence of the burial site. When the cemetery was dedicated, and the marker placed, historian Muriel Wright incorrectly believed these

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[270] Edwards, *The Prairie Was on Fire,* 29-36; Douglas H. Cooper, Report, October 22, 1862, OR, Series 1, Vol. 13: 332-336; Stand Watie, Report, October 22, 1862, OR, Series 1, Vol. 13: 337; James G. Blunt, Report, October 25, 1862, OR, Series 1, Vol. 13: 325-328; United States War Department, Company Returns, Howell's Texas Battery CSA, R109, Microfilm Division, National Archives.

graves were related to the Confederate defeat at the Battle of Middle Boggy on February 13, 1864, during Colonel Phillips' winter raid into the Choctaw Nation. The marker simply reads, "The cemetery contains graves of Confederate soldiers who fought in the Civil War." While en route from Fort Smith to Fort McColloch, several soldiers from the 19th Arkansas Infantry fell ill and died from a measles outbreak during the spring of 1862. In 1998, Gwen Walker at the Atoka County Museum identified several troops and placed new headstones within the cemetery. In addition, a new granite marker was added to the cemetery attributing the loss of men to the measles outbreak. The marker's location is an excellent opportunity to discuss the harsh reality that the majority of soldiers in the Civil War perished from illness rather than battle. The presence of human remains makes the site worthy of attribution as a cemetery, but the events at the site had no outcome on the war. More importantly, it represents how the narrative and memorialization of a "place" can change over time. Visitors to the site now see the progression of a shifting narrative that was updated with new evidence.

Chahte Tamaha

Despite significant history outside of the American Civil War, the Chahte Tamaha's historical marker located on the east side of Bokchito dedicates half of its text to the Choctaw Nation during the war. Armstrong Academy, established by the Choctaw in 1845, was located at Chahte Tamaha, and hosted the Choctaw National Council for twenty years. The marker reads, "Chahte Tamaha served as the Confederate capital during the Civil War. Delegates to a meeting of the United Nations of Indian Territory met here at the beginning of the Civil War to ally with the Confederacy."

The site's history outside of Armstrong Academy has received little recognition or attention in the historical literature. Even the Armstrong Academy's website provides little detail. As of July 15, 2021, it indicates the academy was closed for the duration of the war and utilized as a Confederate hospital. It states, "the United Nations Indian Territory delegates (Cherikee[sic], Chickasaw, Creek, Choctaw, Seminole and Caddo) met there with the confederacy to plan war strategies." The original structure was destroyed by fire in 1919 and today no structures remain. The marker fails to address the narrative of why the Choctaw Nation was so supportive of the Confederacy or how the treaty of alliance with the South ultimately effected the tribe during Reconstruction.

Fort McCulloch

Located west of Kenefic, the marker dedicated to Fort McCulloch provides more context and depth than most Civil War markers within the state. Fort McCulloch was constructed during the war in Indian Territory and was occupied only briefly. The narrative of the text addresses when, where, and why the post was constructed. The marker reads, "[B]rigadier General Albert Pike built Fort McCulloch in 1862 as a major Confederate stronghold in Indian Territory. The post was named for Brigadier General Ben McCullough, who was killed in the Battle of Pea Ridge. During the Civil War, the fort was home to 3,000 soldiers and eighteen pieces of artillery. The post was abandoned soon after Pike was relieved of his command in the fall of 1862." Beyond the contents of the marker, it is essential to know that Pike established the fortifications in the Choctaw Nation following the Confederate defeat at the Battle of Pea Ridge in March 1862, as a defensible position following his abandonment of Fort Davis. He deemed Fort Davis in the Cherokee Nation too vulnerable to attack. Fort McCulloch, located 150 miles to the

south, placed his troops out of reach from the Union army. Rather than construct permanent structures, Pike's men built earthworks for protection. Following Pike's resignation in July, the post was used sporadically throughout the war.[271]

Fort Washita

Located on Oklahoma Highway 199, thirteen miles east of Madill, Fort Washita is a significant site in the historical development of Oklahoma. Originally established to protect Chickasaw and Choctaw citizens, the post was a waypoint for travelers heading to California gold fields, troops dispatched to Texas and Mexico during the war with Mexico, and as a base of operations for Confederate troops during the Civil War.[272] The site for Fort Washita was selected by the post's first commander, and later President of the United States, Zachary Taylor. The marker advises, "US Army troops manned the fort from April 23, 1843, until it was abandoned to Confederate forces on May 1, 1861. After the Civil War, the fort was never again used as a military installation, but the post office remained open until May 1880." Abandonment of military posts in Indian Territory is one reason slaveholding factions among the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole nations cited for allying themselves with the newly formed Confederate government. It also prompted some tribal leaders to waiver in allegiance to the Federal government for fear that they would be unprotected.

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[271] For more information on Fort McCulloch, see William Corbett, "Confederate Strongholds in Indian Territory: Fort Davis and McCulloch" in *Early Military Forts and Posts in Oklahoma*; W. B. Morrison, “Fort McCulloch,” in *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*; E. E. Dale and Gaston Litton, *Cherokee Cavaliers: Forty Years of Cherokee History as told in the Correspondence of the Ridge-Watie-Boudinot Family.*
[272] For more information on Fort Washita, see Robert W. Frazer, *Forts of the West: Military Forts and Presidios, and Posts Commonly Called Forts, West of the Mississippi River to 1898*.

Fort Cobb

Located on Oklahoma Highway 9 in western Oklahoma, Fort Cobb was established just before the outbreak of the Civil War. Fort Cobb had a relatively short lifespan. Established in 1859, the post was abandoned just over a year later when federal forces left Indian Territory at the outbreak of the Civil War. Texas troops quickly seized the post but departed soon after. Outside of this initial abandonment and occupation, Fort Cobb remained vacant for most of the war. Once Fort Sill was established in southwestern Indian Territory, the post was permanently abandoned. No buildings or foundations remain today.[273] Fort Arbuckle, another Oklahoma military post established in 1851, indicates that it was abandoned at the outbreak of the war along with Fort Cobb, Fort Washita, Fort Towson, and Fort Gibson. It has no other connection to the war.[274]

Manard

Located south of Tahlequah, this marker is labeled Manard; however, records indicate it refers to an engagement at Bayou Menard roughly seven miles east of Fort Gibson. By the end of 1861, thousands of refugee Indians had arrived in Kansas. The 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. The marker simply reads, "the settlement was the site of a Civil War skirmish on July 27,

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[273] For more information on Fort Cobb see, Richard T. Jacob, "Military Reminiscences of captain Richard T. Jacob," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*; William B. Morrison, *Military Posts and Camps in Oklahoma*; and Muriel H. Wright, "A History of Fort Cobb," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*.
[274] For additional information on Fort Arbuckle see Richard T. Jacob, "Military Reminiscences of Captain Richard T. Jacob," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*; James C. Milligan and L. David Norris, "Keeping the Peace: William H. Emory and the Command at Fort Arbuckle," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*; W. B. Morrison, "Fort Arbuckle," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma;* William B. Morrison, *Military Posts and Camps in Oklahoma.*

1862, in which Federal troops and the Indian Home Guard routed Confederate forces." It is one of the few markers dedicated to a Union victory.

Wanting to return the pro-Union refugee Indians from Kansas to their homes where they could sustain themselves, Commissioner of Indian Affairs William P. Dole recommended an invasion of Indian Territory using federal troops stationed in Kansas. On June 28, 1862, the first invasion of Indian Territory headed south with refugee Indians and sought to drive Confederate troops south and occupy Fort Gibson and the Cherokee capitol. The expedition was laden with problems. On 18 July, Union Colonel Fredrick Solomon acted and arrested Colonel William Weer in a clear case of mutiny. Solomon reported, "[T]he 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 conference with his fellow officers, Solomon argued, "[B]y 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."[275]

The Indian Home Guard moved to a new position along Horse Creek and established Camp Wattles after the arrest.[276] After marching to Tahlequah and Park Hill

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[275] Frederick Solomon, Report, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 476-477; Frederick Solomon to Corps Commanders, Indian Expedition, Letter, July 18, 1862; Frederick Solomon, Report, July 25, 1862.
[276] Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume 1, 1861-1862,* 309-311; Ramp and Ramp, *The Civil War in the Indian* Territory, 15.

in late July, Major William A. Phillips ordered his men down three separate roads that converged at Bayou Menard, near Fort Gibson. As Phillips' men marched, south the center column ran headlong into Colonel Thomas F. Taylor's 1st Cherokee Regiment. Fighting immediately erupted as the two federal flank columns arrived. Quickly overwhelmed, the routed Confederates fled toward Fort Gibson, leaving nearly 100 dead and wounded on the field. Colonel Phillips captured an additional twenty-five prisoners.[277] The fight at Bayou Menard kept Confederate forces in the area in check, allowing Colonel Solomon's retreat to Kansas.

Park Hill

Located on the south edge of Tahlequah, several prominent progressive Cherokee families settled near the Cherokee capital at Park Hill. The text of the marker is brief, stating, "before the Civil War, Park Hill was the center of culture and learning in the Cherokee Nation." Almost all of the residences at Park Hill were destroyed during the Civil War by one side or the other, including Principal Chief John Ross' plantation Rose Hill. Hunter's Home, the only remaining antebellum plantation house in Oklahoma, survived the war. Park Hill was also home to the Cherokee Female Seminary, where the Cherokee Nation offered students a high school education.[278] The marker fails to note is what "culture" was centered at Park Hill. Many of the prominent families residing in Park

[277] Smith Christie, Letter, November 27, 1862, John Ross Papers, Folder 1202, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma.; 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; William A. Phillips, Report, July 27, 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13: 181-182; Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume 1, 1861-1862,* 310-312; Ramp and Ramp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory,* 16.
[278] For more information on the Male and Female Cherokee Seminaries see, Brad Agnew, "Legacy of Education: The History of the Cherokee Seminaries;" Devon A. Mihesuah, *Cultivating the Rosebuds: The Education of Women at the Cherokee Female Seminary, 1851-1909*.

Hill had deep cultural and economic ties to the South as well as slaves. They were primarily mixed blood, well-educated, tribal leaders, who often married Anglos.[279]

Fort Towson

Located on U.S. Highway 70 at the east edge of the current community of Fort Towson is a marker dedicated to one of Oklahoma's early military posts. Fort Towson was actively used during Indian Removal and the Mexican War before its abandonment in 1854. Douglas Cooper utilized the former post as an Indian agent until the outbreak of hostilities. During the Civil War, General Samuel B. Maxey selected the fort as his headquarters. Half of the marker's text is dedicated to the posts used by the Confederacy. At Doaksville, just outside of Fort Towson, Stand Watie lay down his arms as the last Confederate general to surrender. Again, the historic site with such a rich and expansive role in the development of Indian Territory and the federal government's interaction with the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations celebrates its ties to the Confederacy and the fact that it is the location of the last surrender.[280]

Goodland Mission

Located one mile south of Hugo, and a relatively short distance from Fort Towson, is a pair of markers dedicated to Goodland Mission. The first church and school

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[279] For more information on the culture of slavery in the Cherokee Nation, see Patrick N. Minges, *Slavery in the Cherokee Nation: The Keetoowah Society and the Defining of a People, 1855-1867;* Michael Roethler, *Negro Slavery Among the Cherokee Indians, 1540-1866*; Theda Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540-1866*; Tiya Miles, *Ties that Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom*; Tiya Miles, *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story*; Fay Yarbrough, *Race and the Cherokee Nation: Sovereignty in the Nineteenth Century*.

[280] For additional information on Fort Towson, see Grant Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier*; Kenneth E. Lewis, "Archaeological Investigations at Fort Towson, Choctaw County, Oklahoma, 1971," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*; Patrick B. McGuigan, "Bulwark of the American Frontier: A History of Fort Towson," *Early Military Fort and Posts in Oklahoma.*

were built in 1850. The first marker includes only a brief mention of Choctaw troops drilling on the campus. A second Goodland Mission marker outlines the history of the mission and school beginning in 1848 but does not mention the "Choctaw soldiers drill on campus." The mission does not receive any recognizable treatment in any literature or reports found in the official records for the war. As a result, one could conclude the line was added simply to have a tie to Civil War events in the area. Other more appropriate locations for the military drill are found in the same general area, including Fort Towson. Southeastern Oklahoma is referred to as "Little Dixie" because of it social, cultural, and political connections to the South. By 1900, eighty-seven percent of the non-Indian residents of Indian Territory were southern. Little Dixie remains a term of pride in the area. Founded in 1968, the LIFT Community Action, formerly known as Little Dixie Community Action Agency, supports education, transportation, tourism, economic development, and more, showing how this affinity for the area's connection to the past continues through to the present. LIFT officially changed the name of the agency in August 2021.[281]

Rose Hill

Located two miles east of Hugo, Rose Hill was the antebellum plantation home of Colonel Robert M. Jones, the wealthiest citizen of the Choctaw Nation. This marker celebrates Jones and his planation, stating, "at one time, he owned 500 slaves to farm the land along the Red River [and] his mansion was decorated with crystal chandeliers

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[281] For more on Little Dixie, see Michael Doran, "The Origins of Culture Areas in Oklahoma, 1830-1900," PhD diss, University of Oregon, 1974. "About LIFT," accessed September 25, 2021, https://liftca.org/about-us/.

imported from Europe.” Unlike the prominent Cherokee homes along Park Hill and throughout the Cherokee Nation, Rose Hill survived the war because of its location deep in the Choctaw Nation. Jones, a mixed-blood Choctaw, was an exceptional entrepreneur and operated large plantations, trading stores, and a sugar plantation in Louisiana. Jones was an ardent secessionist and served as a delegate to the Confederate Congress in Richmond for the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations, having been elected president of the "United Nations of the Indian Territory." Following the war, Jones was instrumental in negotiating the Choctaw Treaty of 1866. Rose Hill was just one of several large plantations. The two most prominent included Lake West with some five thousand acres and Rocky Comfort with nearly ten thousand acres. Jones utilized his own steamboats for shipping goods to his warehouses in New Orleans.[282]

New Springplace Cherokee Mission

Located three miles north of Oaks, this marker for the Moravian Church reads, "the old mission was closed during the Civil War after missionary James Ward was ambushed and killed. Prominent Cherokee families such as Adair, Fields, Ridge, Vann, and Watie attended the mission." No additional information is available on this site. *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* only briefly mentions New Springplace in their entry on Moravians stating, “By the end of 1841 there were seventy-two Cherokees associated with the Moravians. Another mission, called New Springplace, south of Beattie's Prairie, developed in 1842 near the present site of Oaks, in Delaware

[282] For additional information, see David Baird, *Peter Pitchlynn: Chief of the Choctaws*; Michael Bruce, “Our Best Men are Fast Leaving Us’: The Life and Times of Robert M. Jones,” *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*.

County. In charge there were Gilbert Bishop and James Ward." The entry goes on to say, "The Civil War brought destruction to all but New Springplace, and after the conflict it was reopened by Rev. E. J. Mock as a "preaching station," a site for religious services, without a school."[283]

Fort Coffee

Fort Coffee is located east of Spiro on the banks of the Arkansas River and was established in 1834. Because of the "relative peace in the area" was quickly abandoned and given to the Choctaw Nation. The Choctaw Council turned the abandoned post into the Fort Coffee Academy for Boys. The historical marker at Fort Coffee outlines the establishment and transition to civilian use and reads, "Confederate forces used the barracks during the Civil War. However, Federal troops overran the post in October of 1863 and burned the main buildings." Fort Coffee was initially composed of one-story hewn logs and was constructed by soldiers in the 7th Infantry. The Choctaw Nation added additional buildings after 1842 for the boy's academy. Though abandoned and turned into a school, Fort Coffee represents the transition of the Choctaw Nation into a nation prepared for war with its civilian use pushed aside for training and garrisoning troops. While its demise is directly attributed to the war, the lack of personal narrative at a historical site of this type begs the question of how to incorporate the antebellum period in Indian Territory into the narrative of history. Today, the site of the military post is on private property.[284]

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[283] "Monrovians," Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture, accessed July 12, 2021, https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=MO018.
[284] For additional information, see Grant Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier, 1830 – 1860*; Robert W. Frazer, *Forts of the West: Military Forts and Presidios and Posts Commonly Called Forts, West of the Mississippi*

Creek Council Ground and North Fork Town

Located at Eufaula, the marker for the territorial community of North Fork Town features just two lines of text. "From 1836, this was an important center on the Texas Road in the Creek Nation. Albert Pike [Confederate Commissioner to the Indians] secured treaties between the Creeks, Chickasaws, and Choctaws and the Confederacy here in 1861." That is the extent of the historical narrative the public is provided. These treaties brought the "American" war to the Indian Nations. However, with large factions of pro-Confederate Indians, the institution of slavery and ideology of the South was also theirs. A separate marker for the Creek Council Ground focuses solely on Pike's treaty with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation noting that "Pike met with Creek leaders…to sign a treaty in which the Creeks pledged their support to the South in the Civil War." However, these leaders did not speak for the entire nation. Opothleyaholo would gather pro-Union Indians and flee the territory in search of protection from the United States in Kansas. The waters of Lake Eufaula now cover the community of North Fork Town. Besides serving as a meeting place for early treaty negotiations, North Fork Town served as a main supply base during the war. In addition, a company of Creek volunteers was raised and stationed here at various times during the conflict. Much like Tahlequah in the Cherokee Nation, this community was active.[285]

River to 1898; Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., and Lonnie E. Underhill, "Fort Coffee and Frontier Affairs," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma.*

[285] For more information on Albert Pike and the tribes see, Dean Trickett, "The Civil War in the Indian Territory," Parts I – IV in *Chronicles of Oklahoma.* Trickett details the efforts of Pike to negotiate nine separate treaties with tribes in Indian Territory for the Confederacy and examines Opothleyaholo's retreat to Kansas. See also Kenny Franks, "The Implementation of the Confederate Treaties with the Five Civilized Tribes."

Fort Davis

Located one mile north of Bacone College in Muskogee, General Pike, who signed the treaties of alliance with the pro-Confederate Indians, established Fort Davis in November 1861 to garrison troops. It was named for Confederate President Jefferson Davis, who had served in Indian Territory during his military career. Fort Davis is one of the few military posts established by the Confederacy during the war. The post briefly functioned as headquarters for Confederate operations in Indian Territory, and troops from the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations served at the post with white soldiers from Arkansas and Texas. Fearing a Union attack, General Pike moved troops south into the Choctaw Nation and established Fort McCulloch. In late 1862 Federal troops under Colonel William A. Phillips occupied then burned the post.[286]

Fort Gibson

Fort Gibson, the earliest military post constructed in Indian Territory, has two different historical markers in two separate locations. Fort Gibson was first constructed by Colonel Mathew Arbuckle in 1824. At the time it was built, it was the westernmost military installation on the frontier. One of the two markers deals predominantly with the post and its relationship to the war, highlighting that "in the twenty-six years before the Civil War, more than a hundred West Point graduates served at Fort Gibson, including Confederate President Jefferson Davis." The post renamed Fort Blunt was occupied by

[286] For additional information, see William P. Corbett, "Confederate Strongholds in Indian Territory: Forts Davis and McCulloch," in *Early Military Forts and Posts in Oklahoma*; Grant Forman, “Fort Davis,” *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*.

federal troops during the Civil War. Another marker, located at the Fort Gibson, explicitly identifies the brick oven "constructed with the new bakery erected at Fort Gibson about 1863 to supply the garrison with fresh bread."

Initially established in 1824, Fort Gibson was constructed to protect the United States' southwestern border from Mexico and the Plains Indians. Fort Gibson's extensive history is tied directly to the evolving narrative of American history across the Nineteenth Century. It was established following the Louisiana Purchase to protect the nation's western frontier. During the 1830s and 1840s, it served as a terminus on the route to Indian Territory for forcibly removed tribes such as the Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), and others. It was the point of departure for numerous expeditions west, including Washington Irving. As the frontier pushed west, its importance as a military installation waned. The Cherokee Nation petitioned Congress to remove the post, and in 1857 the War Department abandoned it, transferring the installation to the Cherokee Nation. They established the community of Kee-too-wah at the former post; however, this small village would not last long. Once the Civil War erupted, Fort Gibson was reoccupied and served as the dominant base of operations for Federal forces throughout the war. The post also served as a gathering point for pro-Union factions of Indians. Following the war, the post remained active until its final abandonment in 1890.[287]

[287] For additional information, see Brad Agnew, *Fort Gibson: Terminal on the Trail of Tears*; Grant Forman, *Fort Gibson: A Brief History*; Richard C. Rohrs, "Fort Gibson: Forgotten Glory," in *Early Military Forts and Posts in Oklahoma*; Robert W. Frazer, *Forts of the West: Military Forts and Presidios, and Posts Commonly Called Forts, West of the Mississippi River to 1898.*

Webbers Falls

Located on U.S. 64 at the west end of the Arkansas River Bridge is a marker for Webbers Falls. This small community, where Chief Walter Webber operated one of several salt works in the area, witnessed several small engagements during the Civil War. The area also contained several farms and plantations. This marker states that, “the village of Webbers Falls was burned by federal troops in the Civil War in April 1863.” Colonel William Phillips at Fort Gibson was in a precarious position during the spring of 1863. The Union army was preparing a large wagon train from Kansas to supply the post. Aware that Confederate troops were gathering to attack the train, Phillips went on the offensive, hoping to take the war to the enemy. On March 20, he reported that they “drove a lot of stock from the Arkansas Valley to keep the rebels from getting it… [and] had a fight at Webber’s Falls” advising that many wounded men drowned in the river.[288]

A few weeks later, Colonel Phillips took roughly 600 mounted men from the three Indian regiments and the 6th Kansas Cavalry, crossed the Arkansas River, and started south to find the enemy. At daybreak, he found Stand Watie and his troops at Webber's Falls and, with total surprise, opened fire on the enemy. In a quick fight, they killed fifteen and wounded about the same number of Confederates. Caught off guard, Watie was completely routed. Phillips reported that “Dr. [Rufus} Gillpatrick…was slain by a small force of the dispersed rebels that came out of the cane. Dr. Gillpatrick had gone to dress the wounds of a rebel soldier.”[289] Watie and his men abandoned most of their

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[288] Frank Moore, *The Rebellion Record; a Diary of American Events* Vol. 7, (New York: G.P. Putnam or D. Van Norstrand, 1864-1868), 179-180.
[289] William A. Phillips, Report, April 26, 1863, *OR*, Series I, Volume 22, Part 1, 314.

supplies as they fled. Later that summer, Union troops would again return to the area and burn the town of Webbers Falls and surrounding buildings. The devastation to communities across the Indian Territory during the war was significant. This is one of the few markers that provide a glimpse, if only briefly, of that devastation.[290]

As historical marker programs developed across the country, local civic organizations and others quickly erected countless memorials across the landscape dedicated to battle sites. Oklahoma's program was no different. Many early historical markers were erected to celebrate Civil War battlefields as the nation prepared to mark the Civil War Centennial.

Battle of Round Mountain

Located four miles west of Yale, this marker is dedicated to the first engagement in Indian Territory. It reads, “the first battle of the Civil War in Oklahoma was fought between a group of loyal Creeks under Opothleyaholo and Confederate forces led by Colonel Douglas H. Cooper. Some scholars believe this engagement took place in Tulsa County.” In the late fall of 1861, bands of pro-Union Indians, mainly Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole joined with Opothleyaholo near North Fork Town on the Canadian River. 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.

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

Many were women and children, along with escaped slaves. Fearing that Opothleyaholo would align himself with Unionists in Kansas, Cooper gave chase.[291]

By mid-November, Cooper gathered some 1,400 men, including both Native American and white troops. They departed Fort Gibson on November 15, 1861, moving towards Opothleyaholo's camp.[292] By the end of the first day, they located fleeing Indian's trail. Opothleyaholo's followers set fire to the prairie, hoping to mask their route and destroy forage soldiers who followed. On November 19, Cooper's men spotted smoke near the Red Fork of the Arkansas River and attacked. Nearly 500 Texans charged the campsite only to find it abandoned. However, the Confederates quickly discovered Opothleyaholo's scouts. Cooper's men followed, hoping to locate the main camp. Near dusk, the Texans discovered the main camp spread along a timber-lined stream. As they approached, a devastating volley erupted from the cover of the trees where Opothleyaholo's men waited patiently. The sudden barrage quickly halted the cavalry's advance. Unable to regroup, the Texans retreated. As they fell back, Opothleyaholo's men gave chase, protecting the civilians in the camp.[293]

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[291] Steve Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 1995): 21; Whit Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2001): 3.

[292] 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.

[293] William A. Quayle, Report, January 1862, Special Microfilm Collection, Roll IAD-5, Oklahoma Historical Society, Archives Division, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Robert A. Young, Report, November 30, 1861, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 8, 15; 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; 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; William Coffman, Letter, November 25, 1861, 9th Texas Collection, Harold B. Simpson Research Center, Hillsboro, Texas; Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 4.

Colonel Cooper ordered additional troops forward to support the Texans at the first signs of battle, but darkness engulfed the battlefield as the Union Creeks disappeared into the night. As they withdrew, the prairie was again set on fire, this time threatening Cooper's supply train. As dawn broke, the Confederate soldiers discovered the abandoned camp. Cooper reported minimal losses during the engagement at Round Mountain. Opothleyaholo left no records.[294]

Battle of Chustenahlah

Located four miles north of Skiatook is another marker for the initial engagements at the outbreak of war. It states, "this site, 3.5 miles N.W. is where Col. Jas. McIntosh, 2nd Ark. Mtd. Rifles routed loyal Union Indian forces Dec. 26, 1861. The Battle opened with fire from the Indian line on Patriot's Hill. 2 Mi. S.W. the loyal "Union" Indians finally fled to Kansas." Following the Battle of Round Mountain, Cooper and Colonel James McIntosh planned a campaign to destroy Opothleyaholo's band. In late December, they moved with over 2,000 men in two separate columns towards the fleeing refugees. Colonel McIntosh's column left Fort Gibson and by Christmas crossed the Verdigris River as planned. As they set up camp, some 200 mounted men appeared around a half-mile away. McIntosh quickly ordered his men back to camp for safety. When he received dispatch arrived from Cooper reporting delays, he moved west toward Shoal Creek and Chustenahlah. On December 26, Opothleyaholo's scouts sighted the approaching enemy

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[294] Douglas H. Cooper, Report, January 20, 1862, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 8, 5-14; Bates, *A Texas Cavalry Officers Civil War: The Diary and Letters of James C. Bates*, 27-33; Griscom, *Fighting with Ross' Texas Cavalry: The Diary of George L. Griscom, Adjutant, Ninth Texas Cavalry*, 5-6.

and alerted the camp, allowing time to establish a defensive position along a rocky, tree-covered hill overlooking the creek.[295]

As the Confederates advance forded the stream, Opothleyaholo's men opened fire. The Texans immediately moved toward cover while McIntosh's main force arrived and prepared for an attack on the ridge. The Texans charged the slopes, breaking Opothleyaholo's line. They fell back several miles, but the Texans again overran their position, scattering Opothleyaholo's men across the prairie. Many fleeing pro-Union Natives were hunted down throughout the night. In their haste, the refugees abandoned their camp leaving precious supplies behind. The Confederates captured 160 women and children, 20 Blacks, 30 wagons, 70 yokes 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 them camp throughout the winter.[296] Later that evening, Watie and 300 men from the Second Cherokee Mounted Rifles reached the battlefield while Opothleyaholo fled north.[297]

The Confederate column moved north the next day with Watie in the lead. After traveling about twenty-five miles, Watie's men spotted two wagons that had been set afire before the cavalry could arrive. Soon another round of fighting began. Watie's men

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[295] Walter P. Lane, Report, December 26, 1862, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 9, 30-38; H.L. Taylor, Report, December 26, 1862, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 8, 29; Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 33.
[296] H.S. Bennett, Report, no date, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 8, 30-31; William Gipson, Report, December 28, 1861, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 8, 29-30; Sam Love, Letter, December 30, 1861, Sixth Texas Collection, Harold B. Simpson Research Center, Hillsboro, Texas; James M. McIntosh, Report, December 26, 1862, *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,* Volume 1, Part 1, 538; ; James M. McIntosh, Report, January 1, 1862, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 8, 22-25; W.C. Young, Report, no date, OR, Series 1, Volume 8, 26. 9
[297] H.S. Bennett, Report, no date; William Gipson, Report, 28 December 1861; Sam Love, Letter, 30 December 1861; James M. McIntosh, Report, 26 December 1862; W.P. Lane, Report, 26 December 1861; James M. McIntosh, Report, 1 January 1862; W.C. Young, Report, no date; Cottrell, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 34.

fought through ravines and rough terrain, forcing the loyalists back for more than an hour. Watie reported no losses and captured another seventy-five women and children and thirty pack horses. That evening McIntosh and Watie decided Opothleyaholo, and his fleeing band were no longer a threat to Confederate operations. The refugees fled up the Verdigris River Valley towards Kansas across the frozen prairie without food and nearly naked.[298]

Battle of Locust Grove

The next marker, located on Oklahoma Highway 33 on the east side of Locust Grove, memorializes the Battle of Locust Grove during the First Federal Invasion of Indian Territory. The marker reports, "on July 2, 1862, federal troops under Colonel William Weer surprised a Confederate encampment here. The Southerners led by Colonel J. J. Clarkson surrendered, but heavy fighting continued throughout the day in nearby woods between Union troops and Confederate soldiers who escaped the raid." In late June 1862, the First Federal Invasion of Indian Territory sought to return thousands of refugees back to Indian Territory. Federal soldiers located Confederate troops under Stand Watie at Spavinaw Creek and Colonel James Clarkson and his Missourians at Locust Grove during the expedition. Wanting to strike before the enemy could unite, the expedition moved south in two columns along the Texas Road.[299] Local residents informed Colonel Weer, leading the Union column, that the Confederates moved south and that Colonel John Drew and his men were at Park Hill and Tahlequah, uncertain of

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[298] Stand Watie, Report, December 28, 1861; E.C. Boudinot, Report, 28 December 1861, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 8, 32-33; Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 13-14.
[299] McBride, *Opothleyaholo and the Loyal Muskogee*, 195; James G. Blunt to William Weer, Letter; Thomas Moonlight, General Orders Number 21, June 5, 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 13, 418-419; William Weer to Thomas Moonlight, Letters, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 13, 430-431,434, 441, 458-461;.

their allegiance to the Confederacy.[300] Colonel Weer's troops moved down the Verdigris River to strike.

In the early evening of July 2, Weer moved with 300 men from the 10th Kansas Infantry, 9th Kansas Cavalry, and a section of Rabb's 2nd Indiana Battery to attack Colonel Clarkson at Locust Grove. Moving across the open prairie, the column arrested the local men to prevent the enemy from learning of their advance.[301] At daylight on July 3, the Federal troops opened fire, waking Clarkson and his men. Caught by surprise, they only mounted minimal resistance.[302] This minor skirmish was one of the first defeats for Confederates in Indian Territory. Clarkson's routed men retreated to Tahlequah, spreading fear along the way. The ensuing panic opened schisms between the Indians and their governmental leaders. Many began raising questions about the Confederate government's ability to protect them, sending many Unionists to Federal lines.[303]

Wichita Agency

Located on U.S. 62, eight miles west of Anadarko, is a marker dedicated to the westernmost engagement in Indian Territory. The Wichita Agency was established in 1859 to serve "the Wichitas and exiled tribes from Texas, including Caddo, Anadarko, Tawakoni, Waco, and Ionie." In one of several Union-led massacres in the territory, the marker reports that "Federal Indian forces attacked the agency on the night of October 23,

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[300] Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory*, 12; Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 61.
[301] 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.
[302] Michael W. Buster, Report, July 10, 1862, *Supplement OR*, Volume 2, Part 2, 466-468.
[303] Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, 132; Cooke Report, July 6, 1862; Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory,* 12.

1862, before the federal troops all but exterminated the Confederate Tonkawa tribe in a bloody massacre nearby. The attacks closed the agency's work until after the Civil War when it was moved to Anadarko." This marker rightfully calls the attack a massacre and highlights the viciousness of the Civil War in Indian Territory.

In 1861, Confederate Commissioner Albert Pike negotiated two treaties with the chiefs and leaders of eleven tribes at the Wichita Agency near Fort Cobb. These treaties offered protection and support for the tribes from the newly formed Confederate government in Richmond. On October 23, 1862, a contingent of Union Indians, including Delaware, Shawnees, Osages, Seminoles, and Cherokees traveled from Kansas and attacked the agency killing its employees and burning its buildings. Mathew Leeper, the Indian Agent, escaped. Several hours later, this same force massacred a pro-Confederate Tonkawa camped nearby.[304] The attack at the Wichita Agency and the nearby Tonkawa campsite shows the ruthlessness of the war in Indian Territory. These two massacres, committed at the hands of Union soldiers, are just two of many that would follow over the next four bloody years of conflict. Unfortunately, little evidence remains in the written record regarding the attack.

Cabin Creek

Several markers are devoted to the memorialization of Cabin Creek Battlefield. The site, home to numerous skirmishes and two large battles, sits along the Texas Road between Federal outposts in Kansas and Fort Gibson in the Cherokee Nation. This site at

[304] Muriel H. Wright and LeRoy H. Fischer, “Oklahoma Civil War Sites,” *The Chronicles of Oklahoma,* 44, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 166.

Cabin Creek was one of the few fordable locations for miles forcing wagon trains and soldiers to frequent the site.

The First Battle of Cabin Creek was fought July 1 and 2, 1863, where Cabin Creek crossed the old Fort Gibson Military Road. At this engagement, Colonel James Williams and the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry participated in their first significant engagement in Indian Territory. Although, the Battle of Honey Springs is often listed as their first significant action. The victory at Cabin Creek, and the additional Union reinforcements that followed, directly led to the victory at Honey Springs. On September 18, 1864, the second battle occurred when 2,000 Confederate troops under Brigadier General Stand Watie captured a 130-wagon federal supply train carrying $1,500,000 in goods. This was the last significant Civil War engagement in Indian Territory.

One of the markers states, “Emplacements can still be seen where cannons were set to defend the crossing of Cabin Creek. There are many unmarked graves of soldiers who died when General Stand Watie's Confederate troops captured a Federal supply train on September 18, 1864. Earlier, in July 1863, the Confederates were defeated in a small skirmish here.” The reference to the July 1863 “skirmish” deemphasizes the major victory that helped ensure the Federal army remained in Indian Territory and blatantly ignores the role of the 1st Kansas in this victory. The second marker also addresses the Second Battle of Cabin Creek on September 18, 1864, reporting "a Confederate force of 2,000, mainly Gen. Stand Watie's Indian Brigade, intercepted from a Union supply train en route from Kansas to Ft. Gibson. The Convoy of 130 wagons with supplies worth $1.5 million was captured after a heavy engagement." While the Federal troops lost their

supply train, they remained in the field, and the battle did not alter the war's course in Indian Territory.

The Battle of Honey Springs

Located six miles northeast of Checotah is the site for the largest Civil War battle in Indian Territory. This engagement, covered extensively in its own chapter, has one battlefield marker that is especially worthy of examination. It paints a picturesque scene reading, “This battlefield… extends south over the countryside more than two and a half miles to Honey Springs on Elk Creek,…Beautiful, clear flowing Honey Springs can be seen about one and a half miles east and north of Rentiesville, McIntosh County." However, the importance of the interpretation falls later in the text. “On a rise of ground several hundred feet north of the springs was a Confederate commissary depot where large stores of flour, pork, and other supplies in a big warehouse were destroyed by the Confederate troops to keep them from falling into the hands of the enemy.”

This marker is the original aluminum marker placed for the engagement and is remarkable because it refers to Federal forces as the “enemy.” The marker fails to mention the fact that Union soldiers pushed Confederate troops from the field in a decisive victory that ensured occupation of the Cherokee Nation. The marker also fails to mention that the engagement included Native American troops on both sides or that the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry was involved in the battle. Amongst the other supplies destroyed by Confederate troops in the warehouse were 400 pairs of handcuffs. David Griffith, a black slave to Confederate Major J.A. Carrol, stated he “heard the southern officers say that the handcuffs were…to be put on colored soldiers they expected to

capture" and "southern officers…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."[305] Interpretation at the Honey Springs Battlefield visitors' center now tells an entirely different story highlighting the critical role they played in the Union Victory. One must ask why this marker remains when the public has access to a more complete narrative now.

The Battle of Middle Boggy

Located on US 69 near the bridge over Middle Boggy Creek is a marker dedicated to the engagement at Middle Boggy and is written from an overwhelmingly Confederate perspective. The marker recounts that "Captain Adam Nail's Company A of First Choctaw and Chickasaw Cavalry and a detachment of the Twentieth Texas Regiment was suddenly attacked by Federal forces." The marker goes on to report that "the Confederates, though poorly armed, made a firm stand in a hot fight of thirty minutes in which forty-seven of their men were killed and others wounded." However, the engagement at Middle Boggy is more complex. Again, the marker has the opportunity to explore the complex relationship between the war and the civilian population. The marker highlights the overwhelming Union victory and calls attention to the horrendous actions of the troops.

Boggy Depot, located along the Texas Road, was a station on the Butterfield Overland Mail Route and an important town for the Choctaw Nation. Boggy Depot

[305] Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 123; Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, 282-283.

served as the Choctaw Capitol from 1858 – 1860. Throughout the war, it served as a principal Confederate supply depot and stronghold. In 1864, the Union army went on the offensive and pushed south into the Choctaw Nation for the first time to deliver a devastating blow to Confederate forces. In January 1864, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation offering pardons to any tribe willing to cease hostilities. Phillips included his own letters writing to the Chickasaws, "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."[306] He pleaded with Seminole Chief John Jumper to "accept it soon [defeat], [so] you may be preserved; if you do not, you and your people will be blotted out in blood."[307]

By mid-January, Phillips began finalizing his plans for the upcoming campaign. Union victories across the country boosted soldiers' morale before they departed. Before they departed, soldiers received a circular with instructions. It stated any man deserting would be arrested and shot, and Phillips warned his men to aim and shoot carefully, implying prisoners would slow their progress. Phillips called on the soldiers to make their footsteps severe enough to crush the civilian population's will to continue the war.[308] Early on February 1, nearly 2,000 men headed south. The expedition moved quickly, hoping to penetrate deep into Confederate territory. The column marched day and night, covering 105 miles in four days. Confederate forces fell back as Union forces advanced.

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[306] William A. Phillips to Governor Colbert, Letter, February 15, 1864, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 109-110; Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire,* 90.
[307] William A. Phillips to Chief John Jumper, Letter, February 15, 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 24, part 1, 111; Ernest I. Darling, "Lincolns Message to Indian Territory," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 63 (Fall, 1985): 186-192.
[308] General Order No. 3, January 31, 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 191-192; *Itinerary of the Indian Brigade,* No date, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 111-112; Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory,* 61.

Cooper moved his headquarters from Fort Towson to Fort Washita and slowly began organizing his troops to halt the federal advance. Cooper sent orders for all troops within the Indian Territory to converge on Fort Washita. Writing to Colonel E. P. Turner, General McCulloch proclaimed, “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…I cannot do much.”[309]

Phillips’ column continued to advance without encountering resistance and ordered the 1st Indian Regiment to advance towards Boggy Depot on February 10. Three days later, a scout located a Confederate camp on the edge of a clearing near Middle Boggy Creek. Major Charles Willets organized the 14th Kansas Cavalry for an attack. He formed opposite the enemy camp and, within minutes, charged from the timber with cavalry. Willet’s men took the Confederates entirely by surprise. Vastly outnumbered, they offered little resistance and scattered across the open prairie. The fighting ended within minutes, with nearly half the Confederates killed. Following Colonel Phillips’ orders, no prisoners were taken. Nearly fifty dead were left on the field, with their throats cut from ear to ear. Willets reported no losses. Phillips continued to move south after the victory at Boggy Depot. Over the course of a month, Phillips covered some 400 miles and reportedly killed 250 enemy soldiers without the loss of a single man. 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

[309] *Itinerary of the Indian Brigade,* No Date; R.T. Thompson, Letter, February 5, 1864, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 249; William A. Phillips to John .Thayer, Letter, February 8, 1864; D.H. Cooper to Henry E. McCulloch, Letter, February 15, 1864, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 970; Henry E. McCulloch to E.P. Turner, Letter, February 15, 1864, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 34, Part 2, 969; Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory,* 65.

north. Despite their success, pro-Confederate defiance to federal authority in the territory remained strong, and the death and destruction left in his wake only reinforced the resolve of the southern sympathizers.[310]

Pleasant Bluff and the Sinking of the *J. R. Williams*

Located on Oklahoma Highway 9, four miles east of Stigler, lies the only historical marker dedicated to a "naval battle" in Oklahoma. The marker reads, "on June 15, 1864, Confederate forces led by Brigadier General Stand Watie captured and sunk the Union steamboat *J. R. Williams* on the Arkansas River. The cargo was valued at $120,000. Southern troops included Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles in what is known as the most inland naval battle of the Civil War." The marker rightfully highlights one of the most unusual battles in Indian Territory during the war but fails to provide the context needed to understand why the Federal government sought so desperately to send supplies via steamboat to Fort Gibson.

In the early summer of 1864, thousands of pro-Union refugee Indians came to Fort Gibson for protection putting significant pressure on Union supply lines. On June 15, an additional 5,000 refugees arrived from Kansas, bringing the total to more than 16,000. Union commanders attempted to remove some of the burdens of supplying Fort Gibson overland by sending a steamer up the Arkansas River. Fort Smith, also located along the Arkansas River, routinely received supplies via the river. General Curtis

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[310] *Itinerary of the Indian Brigade,* No Date; William A. Phillips, Report, February 16, 1864; John M. Thayer, Report, February 24, 1864, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 108; Warren Day, Letter, February 23, 1864, Day Letters, M175, Manuscript Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas; Hervey Buckner, Letter, February 22, 1864, Hervey Buckner Collection, Box 96.47, Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Edwards, *The Prairie Was on Fire,* 92.

understood that weather limited navigation up the Arkansas to a few weeks a year, but the prospect of quickly carrying large quantities of supplies in a relatively short period impelled an attempt.[311]

In June, heavy rainfall filled the Arkansas River. The *J.R. Williams* was filled with cloth, cotton, blankets, harnesses, boots, 1,000 barrels of flour, fifteen tons of bacon, and more. Just twenty-four men under Lieutenant A. B. Cook were assigned to escort the ship. Once unloaded, the ship was scheduled to return with salt and lime. Stand Watie quickly learned of the *J.R. Williams* voyage. He took 300 men and three artillery pieces to Pleasant Bluff along the Arkansas River and used the timber along the river to conceal their positions patiently waiting for the ship. Around 4:00 p.m., the *J.R. Williams* steamed within range, and Captain George W. Grayson fired a warning shot across its bow. When the ship refused to stop, Confederate troops quickly opened fire, disabling the boat and forcing the pilot to ground the ship on a sandbar near the north shore. Within minutes, Confederate artillery drove the Federal soldiers from the ship. Jumping overboard, they made their way to the shore taking shelter in the timber. Secure on their side of the river; Lieutenant Cook decided to hold his position until reinforcements arrived. Much 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 small boat forcing Lieutenant Cook to retreat towards Fort Smith.[312]

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

[312] Douglas H. Cooper, Report, June 17, 1864, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 1011-1012; Warren Day, Letter, June 18, 1864, Day Letters, M175, Manuscript Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas; Stand Watie, Report, June 17, 1864, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 1012; Stand Watie, Report,

Watie used the yawl to ferry soldiers over and secure the *J.R. Williams* before using ropes to pull the ship across the river and unload their bounty. A party Muscogee (Creek) and Seminoles quickly left the camp with supplies. Left with a few men, Watie attempted to unload the cargo throughout the night, but Colonel John Ritchie and 200 Union troops soon arrived. Ritchie found Watie's troops still at the steamer and opened fire. Neither could muster the strength to drive the other away. Finally, Watie ordered the ship burned. Even though most of the supplies aboard the *J.R. Williams* were destroyed, Watie's shocking attack on the steamer excited southern sympathizers and forced the federal garrison at Fort Gibson to receive via the Texas Road.[313]

Battle of Backbone Mountain

Located on Oklahoma Highway 112, one mile north of Oklahoma Highway 120, lies another historical marker dedicated to the site of several skirmishes. It reads, "Union forces, led by Major General James G. Blunt, and Confederate troops, commanded by Brigadier General William L. Cabell, skirmished here in September of 1863. On July 27, 1864, a Choctaw battalion under the command of Captain Jackson McCurtain defeated federal troops nearby." Nevertheless, the series of skirmishes are merely skirmishes in much more extensive operations. The marker highlights the importance of the local community in enshrining their geographic location for posterity. In each case, the skirmish was brief. The loss of life should not be underestimated; however, each skirmish

June 27, 1864, *OR,* Series 1, Volume 34, Part 1, 1013; Britton, *The Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865*, 237; Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War,* 400-401; Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire*, 115; James D. Morrison, "Capture of the *J.R. Williams,*" *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 41 (Summer 1964), 107-108; Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory,* 85-86.

[313] Stand Watie, Report, June 17 and 27,1864; Britton, *Civil War on the Border Volume II 1863-1865,* 237; Cottrell, *Civil War in the Indian Territory,* 93-95; George W. Grayson. G. W. Grayson, *A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy*, 83-84; Rampp and Rampp, *The Civil War in the Indian Territory,* 88-89.

failed to influence the campaigns as they continued. This marker emphasizes the importance of ensuring greater context. In 1863, Blunt's campaign led to the capture of Fort Smith and its occupation by Federal forces for the remainder of the war. By broadening the narrative to be more inclusive of the more extensive campaign, the public audience can gain a more fully developed picture of the importance of these minor skirmishes.

While countless historical markers dot the American landscape, it is essential to view them and their narrative as an evolving story of local history constructed at a specific time with a distinct perspective. Are they an obsolete holdover from efforts launched decades ago to claim ownership of history, or can they still be a tool for engagement with the public? Each year new markers are erected across Oklahoma and the United States. New marker trail guides and commercial marker guidebooks appear each year. For many marker locations, their placement denotes a site of violence and trauma. They are locations that can foster public dialogue and provide historical perspective if they are willing to share the complicated narrative of the war in Indian Territory and how it shaped the development of both individuals and the territory in Reconstruction.

Markers are places the public and history can intersect. They have the potential to create a better understanding of our collective experience within the context of the geographic location events occur. The experience of visiting the location of an event or historic site can serve as a backdrop for everyday conversations. While the vast majority of Oklahoma's markers were erected during the Jim Crow era, public historians can expand the narrative to include the contributions and suffering of the civilian population,

the personal stories of conflict, and the contributions of various minorities, who were the majority population at the time of the conflict, as they experienced the war in what is now Oklahoma.

Public historians can, with effort, transform our Civil War marker system into a diverse narrative of personal remembrance, allowing those who understand that the conflict was not a monumental historic event with grand armies marching across fields of battle. Instead, it was the multi-year struggle of the countless individuals, both at home and in military service, to survive four gruesome years of conflict while conflicting political perspectives battled for supremacy. Historians can help the public understand that the intersection of these conflicting cultures took a heavy toll on individuals and families. Ultimately, we can provide those who explore the past through markers the context needed to understand the event that still shapes the American cultural landscape and offer a narrative that motivates them to investigate more.

To facilitate this change in Oklahoma, we should reevaluate each individual marker removing those that no longer stand the test of historical accuracy. The Oklahoma Historical Society already markets the Fort Towson, Honey Springs, Fort Gibson, Hunter's Home historical sites as a "Civil War" trail in many ways. By outlining the crucial events of the war, the society can work collaboratively with the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations to refocus the marker program on the personal story of what the war meant for the individuals living in Indian Territory and for the individuals who experienced the war. With a renewed focus, the marker program can help fully establish an "Oklahoma Civil War Trail," helping tourists,

visitors, and the public engage with this period in our history. By continuing to ignore existing makers, we pay a disservice to those who sacrificed during the conflict.

CHAPTER VI

HALLOWED GROUND: HONEY SPRINGS BATTLEFIELD

> *"They [the Confederates] received a lesson which in my opinion, taught them not to despise on the battlefield, a race they had long tyrannized over as having no rights which the white man was bound to respect."*
>
> *- Colonel James M. Williams*

This chapter examines the battlefield preservation movement in Oklahoma by focusing on the Oklahoma Historical Society's development of Honey Springs Battlefield. The success at Pea Ridge and Wilson's Creek led to efforts in Oklahoma to create the Honey Springs National Battlefield Park, the site of the largest Civil War battle in the state. This engagement, which secured the Federal occupation of Indian Territory in 1863, involved some 9,000 Union and Confederate troops, including many Native and African Americans. The historic site's development reflected contemporary social and political relationships at the time of its initial creation; however, significant changes in interpretation changed the narrative at Honey Springs to become more diverse over

time and expanded to place the battle within the context of the war more fully. The early Oklahoma historians Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer and Muriel Wright and the Oklahoma Historical Society identified over one hundred Civil War engagements in the state. Whether small or large, these events directly shaped the lives of the participants and the residents in the surrounding countryside. Out of these hallowed grounds, the OHS currently owns and operates two battlefield locations marking three of the most significant battles in Oklahoma. Oklahoma's battlefield preservation followed national preservation models as it evolved until ultimately federal, state, and local collaboration led to the construction of a new visitors' center and significant improvements in how Honey Springs is memorialized for its visitors.

Indian Territory was neither fully Union or Confederate, nor was it a border state. Nevertheless, the territory and its people suffered no less than those in the east as tribal factionalism led to alliances with both the United States and the new Confederacy. Despite their involvement with the conflict, the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations did not memorialize their role in America's Civil War. Instead, white migration brought regionalized perspectives into the state and applied them to the war in Oklahoma. In Indian Territory, post-war reconciliation took a different form than the rest of the United States. Intratribal reconciliation proved to critically shape Civil War memory as each tribe experienced devastation within their borders and all worked to rebuild homes and communities. Unlike their counterparts in the South, who united around a collective memory of sacrifice and loss, or in the North where they celebrated the moral cause of abolition and preservation of the Union, tribal nations split their loyalties. They inflicted brutal and extensive damage upon each other.

For those in Indian Territory, Reconstruction was a time when Native Nations reestablished tribal traditions and customs and rebuilt their governments under the newly established Treaties of 1866 that formally ended the Civil War and emancipated the enslaved. Through Reconstruction and up until allotment, the site of battles such as Cabin Creek, Honey Springs, Middle Boggy, Webbers Falls, and Massard Prairie were known to tribal members but remained unmarked. Honey Springs, the most significant and most decisive battle and site of a Confederate depot, continued as a small community along the Texas Road and eventually overlapped the All-Black town of Rentiesville.[314]

At the outbreak of the Civil War, some 70,000 residents from a number of tribes including the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole nations called the eastern half of Indian Territory home. Each of these tribes actively participated in the war, providing troops to both the United States and Confederacy. By the end of the war, over ten thousand Native Americans took up arms for the Confederacy while the United States recruited over five thousand troops from various tribes. Factionalism stemming from Indian Removal bitterly divided the Cherokee and Muscogee (Creek) Nations while the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations overwhelmingly supported the South. Opposing armies devastated large swaths of territory, particularly the Cherokee Nation. The war led to a large-scale territorial loss, loss of sovereignty, and a battle over the

[314] Rentiesville, founded in 1903, is one of fifty All-Black towns in Oklahoma. The original townsite was developed on twenty acres owned by William Rentie and an additional twenty acres owned by Phoebe McIntosh. Today, Rentiesville is one of thirteen remaining all-Black towns remaining in Oklahoma. Following emancipation and the extension of tribal citizenship, even if contested, the recently freed African Americans settled in All-Black towns for safety, financial protection, and the creation of cohesive cultural communities. For more information on Oklahoma's All-Black towns, see Norman Crockett, *The Black Towns*; Norman Crocket, "Witness of History, Booker T. Washington Visits Boley," in *Chronicles of Oklahoma*; Karla Slocum, *Black Towns, Black Futures: The Enduring Allure of a Black Place in the American West*; Hannibal B. Johnson, *Acres of Aspiration: The All-Black Towns in Oklahoma*.

enrollment of the recent freedmen as citizens. Because of the diverse composition of the soldiers fighting in Indian Territory there are multiple perspectives at play when examining the memory of Honey Springs.[315]

War brought destruction to the landscape and left behind the scars of violence and terror. While residents, veterans, and others sought to establish tranquil military parks at battlefields across the east and south with monuments to the horrors of war, Honey Springs in Indian Territory returned to everyday use. Following the war, veterans and their families returned to the site of the battle at Honey Springs as visitors via the Texas Road. Eventually, the expansion of the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad just west of the battlefield led to the abandonment of the Honey Springs community. In the 1920s, the federal government-built U.S. Highway 69, ending the use of the Texas Road. Since the battlefield property was held by private citizens, it remained inaccessible as the few buildings in the area fell into disrepair and disappeared from the landscape.[316]

For Honey Springs, memory would fall to a growing number of historians. The growing memorialization of battlefield parks resulted in thousands of monuments and stone markers. While erected in the early years of each park's existence, Gettysburg, Chickamauga and Chattanooga, Vicksburg, Shiloh, and Antietam contain more than

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[315] Whit Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire,* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2001),132; Carolyn Johnston, "The Panther's Scream is Often Heard" Cherokee Women in Indian Territory during the Civil War," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 78 (Spring 2000); 84; Donald A. Grindle, Jr., "Red vs Black: Conflict and Accommodation in the Post Civil War Indian Territory, 1865-1907," *American Indian Quarterly* (Summer 1984): 212; Tom Franzmann, "Peculiarly situated between rebellion and loyalty': Civilized Tribes, Savagery, and the American Civil War," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 76 (Summer 1998): 145-148; Mark A. Lause, *Race and Radicalism in the Union Army,* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 129.

[316] LeRoy H. Fischer, "The Battle of Honey Springs," *Oklahoma Today* 20 (Winter 1970): 7; Fischer, "The Honey Springs National Battlefield Park Movement," 515.

5,200 combined monuments.[317] Honey Springs battlefield remained unmarked for decades as the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole Nations worked towards rebuilding and reconciliation internally.

In September 1940, the General Forrest Chapter United Daughters of the Confederacy of Muskogee placed the first monument at Honey Springs to "honor the Confederate Soldiers of the Honey Springs Battle." At the dedication, presided over by the chapter president Mrs. Hugh Lewis, Oklahoma historian Grant Forman addressed the crowd before the event closed with the playing of Taps.[318] Cabin Creek Battlefield would not receive its first monument until 1961, when the Vanita Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected a monument to General Stand Watie's victory at Second Cabin Creek on September 19, 1864. The Oklahoma Historical Society installed a highway marker on U.S. Highway 69 several miles away.[319] These attempts by hereditary groups associated with the Confederacy are a reminder that the Lost Cause ideology was still deeply embedded in local heritage efforts.

The approach of the Centennial ushered in a renewed interest in the Civil War. In a decentralized effort, each participating state-established individual commissions to work with the National Civil War Centennial Commission established by Congress in 1957. In Oklahoma, success at Pea Ridge and Wilson's Creek led to calls for action to establish a battlefield park within the state. That interest was largely led by historian LeRoy Fischer, a Civil War historian, and professor at Oklahoma State University. Dr.

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[317] Sellars, "Pilgrim Places," 31.

[318] "Historical Notes," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 19, no. 1 (March 1941): 100. Mrs. Lewis's name has not been identified to date.

[319] LeRoy Fischer and Kent Ruth, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Cabin Creek Battlefield,* Mayes County, Oklahoma, Oklahoma Historical Society, 1971.

Fischer argued that Honey Springs was the single most crucial battle in Indian Territory. The battle involved both white and Native American troops and African Americans who played a prominent role in the victory. After capturing the Confederate commissary at Honey Springs, Colonel Thomas Moonlight reported finding "some 500 pairs of shackles…which were designed to be placed on the limbs of our negro soldiers." He went on to praise the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry, saying, "be it said to the memory of the 1st Kansas Colored they behaved with mark humanity and kindness to the wounded, who but a few hours before had to worry to place the yoke of slavery for ever on their necks if it were within their power."[320] In his official report Colonel James M. Williams, commander of the First Kansas, recorded "they [the Confederates] received a lesson which in my opinion, taught them not to despise on the battlefield, a race they had long tyrannized over as having no rights which the white man was bound to respect."[321]

In October 1962, the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce hosted a dinner to discuss the development of Honey Springs into a national battlefield site. Community members from surrounding areas and the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission and Oklahoma City Civil War Round Table attended the meeting. The group also agreed that the example set by the neighboring states provided the best avenue forward for achieving their goal. The OHS and local partners decided at that point that they would petition the state of Oklahoma to purchase tracts identified with the battle. As planning for the July 17, 1963, centennial commemoration began, Henry B. Bass, OHS board member and

[320] "Wartime Reminiscence of Thomas Moonlight," unpublished manuscript, Thomas Moonlight Collection, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut.
[321] James M. Williams, Report, July 30, 1863, James M. Williams Collection, Military History Collection, Manuscripts Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

chair of the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission, argued that Honey Springs was a significant historical resource worthy of preservation and concluded that they would work collectively to help establish Honey Springs as a national battlefield park and NPS recognition. [322]

Bass and Fischer actively sought broad support within Oklahoma for the development of the park. With the centennial anniversary of the battle approaching, articles highlighting the importance of the action and efforts to preserve the battlefield ran in the *Muskogee Daily Phoenix.* The Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission worked with the Oklahoma Department of Highways to make the theme of the official 1963 highway map the Civil War in Indian Territory, emphasizing the engagement at Honey Springs for distribution to the public across the state to travelers. Their efforts culminated in a memorial celebration at the Oktaha Cemetery, near the battle site, on July 17, 1963. The day before, Nettie Wheeler led a bus tour of the area highlighting historic sites near Muskogee, followed by a ceremonial dinner. At the dinner, commission chair Bass urged the purchase and preservation of the battlefield as a state park with the ambitions of creating a national battlefield, noting both the battle's historical importance and the role that the related tourism created by the park could play.[323]

Numerous hereditary groups such as the Sons of Confederate Veterans, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Sons of Union Veterans, and Daughters of Union

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[322] Fischer, “The Honey Springs National Park Movement,” 520-522. Honey Springs Newspaper Clipping, *Muskogee Daily Phoenix*, October 14, 1962, Honey Springs Collection, Box 1, Oklahoma Historical Society.

[323] Fischer, “The Honey Springs National Park Movement,” 521; Clippings on Honey Springs commemorations events, Muskogee *Times-Democrat,* July 16, 1963, and *Daily Phoenix,* July 17, 1963, Honey Springs Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

Veterans converged on the remote cemetery to mark the anniversary of Oklahoma's largest Civil War battle. Chickasaw Nation tribal member E. B. "Hugh" Maytubby presided over the warm July morning memorial. The president of the local Muskogee Nathan B. Forrest Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, placed a wreath at the memorial honoring both the Union and Confederate dead who had sacrificed that day one hundred years before. Oklahoma Congressional Representative Ed Edmondson spoke briefly, observing that the memorial event would be remembered as the first step in establishing a permanent national battlefield park. In his address to the crowd, historian Dr. LeRoy Fischer emphasized the battle's importance in the Union's attempt to win the war in Indian Territory and labeled the victory the "Gettysburg of the West." Though the accessible area was limited, Warren Ray led visitors on a tour of the battlefield. The centennial ceremony at Honey Springs prompted further action by the commission, OHS, and community members. In December, the commission adopted a resolution urging the state to acquire the battlefield and establish it as a National Battlefield Park. The Oklahoma City Civil War Round Table also adopted several resolutions addressed to the state of Oklahoma and called on the legislature to act on the development of Honey Springs.[324]

The Historic Preservation Act of 1966 provided a turning point in expanding access to funding projects at the OHS. George Shirk, president of the OHS board, was named the state historic preservation officer by the governor in 1967, and the agency gained access to beneficial matching grants. In 1967, the Oklahoma Historical Society acquired the first tract of land at Honey Springs and, the board of directors for the OHS

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[324] Fischer, "The Honey Springs National Park Movement," 521-524. Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview..

voted unanimously to actively sponsor and encourage the creation of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park as a national memorial. Throughout the spring, a public relations campaign describing the battle, stressing its importance, and recommending the purchase by the state prompted support from individuals and organizations across Oklahoma.[325]

In February, sixty advocates for the park's development met with Governor Dewey F. Bartlett to discuss acquisition by the state of battlefield property then in private hands. Days later, Representative Vol H. Odom introduced House Bill 279, calling for the appropriation of $25,000 to purchase portions of the battlefield. State Senator John D. Luton and other legislators co-sponsored the legislation and helped gain the support necessary to pass it into law. The new law authorized the Oklahoma Historical Society, as a state agency, to purchase property to establish the state battlefield park at Honey Springs. Over the next year, OHS Field Deputy Elbert L. Costner and Administrative Secretary Elmer L. Franker worked with the state attorney general's office to make land purchases, including 160 acres on the southern portion of the battlefield, including the Honey Springs site spring and Confederate camp. This purchase was the first parcel for the proposed 2,993-acre site.[326]

The Oklahoma Historical Society board of directors created the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission to formalize plans for the nearly 2,400-acre park to meet the new mandate. The OHS board directed George H. Shirk, president of the society, to

[325] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, January 26, 1967, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 46, No. 1 (Spring, 1967): 99-100; Fischer, "The Honey Springs National Park Movement," 526-528.

[326] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, January 26, 1967, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 46, No. 1 (Spring, 1967): 99-100; Fischer, "The Honey Springs National Park Movement," 526-528; Oklahoma Historical Society Appropriations for 1967, House Bill 279, May 8, 1967, Oklahoma Session Laws, 1967.

appoint the commission with the duties of developing, operating, maintaining, establishing policy, and fundraising for the new park. The commission included television broadcasting pioneer James C. Leake, professor of history at Oklahoma State University LeRoy H. Fischer, Representative Vol H. Odom, Senator John D. Luton, Muscogee (Creek) Nation Chief W. E. McIntosh, Nettie Wheeler, Warren Ray, early Oklahoma Civil War historian Jess C. Epple, Phil Harris, historian Earl B. Pierce, Mabel McLain, philanthropist Henry B. Bass (who chaired the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission and represented the state on the national commission), and Wendell E. Howell. The board formalized plans for establishing a state historic site bounded on the west by the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad, on the south by the all-Black town of Rentiesville, and to the north Oktaha to include the area primarily involved in the Battle of Honey Springs. The board further resolved that the park's establishment represented a public purpose in preserving a place or event of importance for both Oklahoma and Civil War history under Title 53 of Oklahoma Statutes. [327]

The newly formed commission's initial priority for Honey Springs was acquiring land to expand the site to include the full breadth of the battle and seeking a historic designation for the newly developing park. Early plans included the park's nomination to the newly established National Register of Historic Places and recognition of the site as a historic landmark. In September 1970, the site was listed on the National Register by the Department of the Interior. Once the official designation as a historic landmark was

[327] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, October 24, 1968, *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Winter 1968): 481; Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, January 25, 1968, *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (January 1968): 103; Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, April 24, 1969, *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (Spring 1969): 481; Fischer, "The Honey Springs National Park Movement," 527-528.

complete, the commission moved forward with additional land acquisition through annual appropriations to the OHS. The main battle site along Elk Creek was selected as the area of highest priority for preservation because of its significance in the battle. By 1972, the society had secured 450 acres for just under $100,000. The commission next expanded the battlefield site east of the main Confederate line and north of the federal line.[328]

As the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission worked to establish the historic site, an archaeological study of the area was planned to locate and identify known structural ruins and unknown cultural resources for the battle and the site's pre-Civil War history. Dan McPikem, an anthropologist with the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, conducted the initial survey while Charles D. Cheek and Garrick A. Bailey with the University of Tulsa completed the more intensive survey in the hopes of locating the Confederate powder house, other structures, and establishing an ethnohistory of the area. The archaeologists examined probable building remains during the investigation. The team identified six structures in the final report, with most dating to the post-Civil War period. They included the remains of a house and inn, blacksmith shop, and a smokehouse constructed by local resident Buck Rogers during the 1870s and the residence of Delilah Drew and the location of her toll bridge over Elk Creek south of the engagement. The remains the archaeologists examined remind us that Honey Springs was more than a battlefield. It was a community along the Texas Road that offered travelers a resting place, it was home to individuals who carried on after the war, and it remained an active

[328] Minutes of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission, February 17, 1972, Oklahoma Historical Society.

crossing along the Elk Creek until ultimately displaced by the construction of U.S. Highway 69. In the final report, Cheek noted the location of an additional toll bridge on the north branch of the creek belonging to the McIntosh family. The report's findings prompted the park commission to continue acquiring property for inclusion within the site's boundaries, including sections of the Texas Road.[329]

The Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission's ability to purchase additional acreage easily was about to hit a roadblock. As the commission expanded south and east, they identified a nine-acre tract owned by Ms. James F. Jones. After meeting with Ms. Jones, she refused the commission's offer, having lived on the property by herself following the death of her husband. Additional landowners also began to refuse to sell their property in 1974 and 1975 due to a rise in land values caused by inflation in the 1970s. In 1974, the United States faced double-digit inflation because of rising food prices, rising energy prices, and the end of the Nixon era wage-price control programs. Historian Thomas Borstelmann describes the 1970s as a time when “the nation’s core institutions seemed to break down as eth United States…sank into a mire of economic decline [and] political corruption” as rising oil costs, inflation, and a slowing economy resulted in the new dilemma of stagflation. Increasing land prices made it difficult for the commission to continue acquiring the designated battlefield acreage.[330]

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[329] Minutes of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission, February 17, 1972, and March 17, 1973, Oklahoma Historical Society; Charles D. Cheek, *Honey Springs, Indian Territory Search for a Confederate Powder House, an Ethnohistoric and Archaeological Report,* (Oklahoma Historical Society: Oklahoma City, 1976), ii, 11, 130.
[330] Alan S. Blinder, “The Anatomy of Double-Digit Inflation in the 1970s,” in *Inflation: Causes and Effects,* ed. Robert E. Hall (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982): 261-282; Thomas Borstelmann, *The 1970s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012): xi.

In 1973 newly appointed commission chair Q. B. Boydstun recommended exploring the acquisition of the needed property through the power of eminent domain, specifically raising the precedent established under *US v. Gettysburg Electric Railway*. After consideration, the majority of the members supported use of the process. The commission contacted state Attorney General Larry Derryberry's office for an opinion on the application of condemnation through eminent domain for the acquisition of property for the battlefield park. Upon approval, the commission again approached Ms. Jones to negotiate an agreement. With the threat of condemnation now in place, she sold her property to the commission with the stipulation she be allowed to remain in her longtime home on a one-acre tract south of Honey Springs for the duration of her life. This forced sale made condemnation through eminent domain a powerful tool for the commission as they continued their work.[331]

As the commission continued to add additional properties to the site, they determined the time had come to develop a master plan for the state park. The commission worked with the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department to develop a plan for the historic site that included nature trails and a recreational area. In 1977, the final study was presented to the commission by G. Gage Skinner and recommended that the historical society construct access roads and a visitors' center with campsites within the park's boundaries but outside of the core historic areas. They also recommended focusing interpretive programs on the battle, history of the Texas Road, and Honey Springs's role as a stage stop. Though the history by this time expanded to include both

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[331] Minutes of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission, March 17, 1973, February 25, 1975, and July 6, 1977, Oklahoma Historical Society; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview..

Native and African American roles and perspectives, this was the first time it was extensively included in the recommended interpretative planning. The feasibility study provided some direction for the commission. To identify resource locations within the park, they conducted an aerial survey. The commission approved both black and white photographs and infrared images hoping that the mass burial contained approximately 150 white and Indian Confederate soldiers interred by General Blunt in unmarked graves. Union troops buried at the site would later be reinterred in the Fort Gibson National Cemetery. While the survey provided a valuable resource for planning, it failed to locate the mass grave.[332]

Despite the previous study completed by the University of Tulsa, the commission contracted with the Oklahoma Archaeological Survey at the University of Oklahoma to survey the park area and determine the locations of both prehistoric and historic sites. The commission specifically sought the location of the Texas Road, Elk Creek bridge, and Confederate graves on the battlefield site. The nearly 2-year survey failed to identify the location of a mass Confederate burial, reporting that the location may be overgrown with brush and unidentifiable. They were successful in identifying the location of the Texas Road through the park and locating the toll house bridge crossing over Elk Creek. Once the survey was complete, the commission began preparing an interpretive proposal for the park with the OHS. Staff from the society, including Executive Director H. Glenn Jordan, David Robinson, and staff from the Historic Sites and Museum Division, worked to complete the draft plan based on previous surveys, Pea Ridge and Wilson's Creek

[332] Minutes of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission, April 6, 1976, and July 6, 1977, Oklahoma Historical Society; Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, *The Honey Springs Battlefield Park Feasibility Study*, (Oklahoma City: Department of Tourism and Recreation, 1977), 50, 55-57, 77-79.

National Battlefield Parks planning documents, and the OTRD feasibility study for review by the commission. The interpretive plan opposed reconstructing structures within the battlefield or park boundaries due to a lack of information or photographs on their original construction while recommending interpretive outlooks at several locations, construction of a split rail fence, and signage denoting visitor location within the historic area.[333]

The committee reviewed the proposal and investigated additional options for interpretation at Honey Springs. The group continued to support the construction of a dedicated visitors center, trails through the historic area, and road access for vehicles. The commission started working with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation as early as 1977 to develop access roads from U.S. Highway 69 located just west of the park. The route would lead visitors from the highway through the All-Black community of Rentiesville into the battlefield site. The route predominantly followed existing county roads, and new construction was limited to park access. The project began in 1979 and was completed in less than a year. Commissioners also hoped to provide a paved access route from the north via Oktaha. Unlike access from the south, much of the proposed northern route remained in private hands. Again, the state approached property owners to negotiate the sale of the property. Initially, negotiations with landowners stalled, leading

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[333] Minutes of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission, January 5, 1980, and January 24, 1981, Oklahoma Historical Society; Catherine H. Yates, Don G. Wyckoff, Timothy G. Bough, and Johen A. Harrington, Jr., *A Survey of the Prehistoric and Historic Sites in the Honey Springs Area, McIntosh and Muskogee Counties, Oklahoma* (Norman: Oklahoma Archeological Survey, 1981); Folder 14. Misc. Correspondence, Notes, and Agreements (1of 2), 1979-1981, Honey Springs Battlefield Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; H. Glenn Jordan, *Honey Springs Battlefield Park: 'An Interpretive Proposal,'* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1981), Honey Springs Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Honey Springs Battlefield Commission, "Progress Report," Box 3, Honey Springs Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

the commission to approach the state attorney general's office to initiate eminent domain proceedings as they had done previously with Ms. Jones. As legal proceedings began, the commission opted to seek access from landowners again by obtaining the right of entry through road easements rather than condemnation. The residents initially responded favorably. In the negotiated agreement, the OHS gained an access route for the connecting roadway while leaving most of the large tracts in place. Despite successfully reaching an agreement, problems soon emerged in 1980. Several property owners refused to sign the documents arguing the easements were too restrictive, would negatively affect land use, and would provide a route for trespassing and illegal hunting. The commission successfully negotiated a deal with some property owners to trade acreage within the core battlefield park for the land of less significance. Despite the offer, several residents still refused, leading the commission to begin condemnation proceedings and eminent domain on the Dearmore, Perkins, and Woodward properties to establish the roadway. These condemnation proceedings would not be the only ones initiated by the commission and the state.[334]

The inability of the commission to reach a negotiated settlement with all of the landowners needed to establish the main battlefield park also proved problematic. Beginning in 1977, the state initiated eminent domain proceedings with many landowners, including Jo Ann Gambrell, Hill, Sydney Tulley, and Robert Martin. The

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[334] Michael Roberts, Memo, Honey Springs Battle Site, dated May 10, 1982, Historic Sites Division, Oklahoma Historical Society; Minutes of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission, July 6, 1977, April 14, 1978, June 23, 1979, January 24, 1980, and May 28, 1980, Oklahoma Historical Society; Misc. Correspondence, Notes, and Agreements, Box 3, Honey Springs Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Landowner List, Folder 12, Honey Springs Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; McIntosh County Land Records, Folder 13, Honey Springs Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview..

initiation of the condemnation proceedings pressured Gambrell to sell her property to the OHS. The state won its litigation cases with Martin and Tulley. In response, both filed lawsuits in 1984 against the state of Oklahoma for damages claiming they had not received full compensation. While they lost their case, making it more difficult for the commission to acquire additional properties within the designated park boundaries. Calls from angry constituents and negative press elicited a negative response from the state legislature. The legislature openly condemned the OHS for their actions at Honey Springs leading to a legislative response. The Oklahoma House of Representatives passed House Concurrent Resolution 1032, calling for an end to the OHS condemnation proceedings and eliminating the annual appropriation of funds to the agency to purchase the land needed to establish the historic site. The House also introduced HB1451 reducing the OHS appropriations related to property purchases, further restricting their ability to move forward with acquisitions at Honey Springs or other historical society sites across the state.[335]

According to Dr. Bob Blackburn, long-time Executive Director at the OHS, the condemnation proceedings and land acquisition through eminent domain remained a sore subject with the legislature and community for some time. The Honey Springs site had grown to over 700 acres but still fell far short of the nearly 3,000 acres designated in the historic district. The Park would continue to add additional properties but at a much slower pace. The abrupt change in support from the legislature caused the commission to

[335] Minutes of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission, April 14, 1978, January 13, 1979, and January 14, 1984, Oklahoma Historical Society; Beverly B. Borthick, "Memo to the Oklahoma House of Representatives Speaker Jim Barker concerning Honey Springs Battlefield Park," May 29, 1984, Honey Springs Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Oklahoma Senate, *Journal of the Senate, Second Extraordinary Session and Second Regular Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature of Oklahoma, 1983-1984*, HB1519 Approved May 30, 1984, 797. HCR1032

reevaluate its project planning. In July 1987, the commission met and adopted a new three-point plan to establish the battlefield park. The commission actively sought support from the National Park Service in planning, designing, and completing the park. The commission also sought to reestablish trust and support from the local community and elected officials as they transitioned from public to private funding for battlefield preservation and a future visitors center.[336]

Since the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the various federal programs to assist with preservation through the Department of the Interior and NPS intended to build strong collaborative relationships between state and local constituents. Established by the OHS, the commission included several dedicated members with a passion for both Oklahoma and Civil War history, including Dr. LeRoy Fischer and Jess C. Epple. Other committee members were community leaders from areas outside of Honey Springs, legislators, and Henry Bass, former Centennial Commission chairman. The commission operated relatively independently without public consultation or direct oversite by the OHS as they worked to establish the battlefield park via their mandate. They also moved forward without the significant involvement of local communities such as Checotah in developing the planned site or sharing its potential economic development for the town. The OHS undertook a reasonably substantial marketing campaign to help facilitate the enabling legislation to establish the battlefield park and bring general awareness to the history of the battlefield. However, the commission's independent operation without public feedback meant that few local residents understood the continuing goal of creating

[336] Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Minutes of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission, July 12, 1986, Oklahoma Historical Society.

the historic site. This also contributed to problems with land acquisition. The lack of dialogue between the commission and community members led residents to support the landowners over the state in the eminent domain proceedings. The commission's previous actions were intentional and blindly focused on the establishment of the battlefield park. A newly approved plan sought to remedy the failure of local engagement and directly include locals in most of the planning, implementation, and fundraising moving forward.[337]

The newly devised commission plan focused on gaining local support for the park's development. The initial efforts during the 1960s relied heavily on local support before transitioning to a small group effort led by outsiders. Over time, this cost the commission and the OHS essential relationships with the local community. The commission planned to use the 125th anniversary of the Battle of Honey Springs in 1988 to renew their historic community focus and engage with reenactors and others who enjoyed Civil War history. In the 1980s, historical reenacting grew as a hobby and exploded in popularity across the nation. *Oklahoma Today* described the evolving pastime, noting "reenactors make history their playground" as individuals attempt to make personal connections to the past through their own lived experiences. According to the article, some fifteen thousand spectators from Oklahoma and nearby states attended the Civil War reenactment at Honey Springs in 1991.[338] Popular with audiences and individuals alike, Civil War reenactments found new life in the late 1980s and 1990s.

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[337] Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Minutes of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission, July 12, 1986, Oklahoma Historical Society.

[338] Maura McDermott, "The Pretenders," *Oklahoma Today* 42, no. 5, (September/October 1992): 38.

During the Civil War Centennial, numerous reenactments took place across the United States. As the hobby became more popular with thousands of reenactors, new vendors sprang up across the nation, producing increasingly accurate clothing, camp equipment, and reproduction weapons. For many participants, reenactment provides both public entertainment and leisure at the same time. Whit Edwards, the former director of Special Projects at the OHS, argued that commemorative reenactments bring attention to the struggles endured by Americans during the Civil War. Critics often find fault in the hobby because reenactments often vary dramatically in size from the original battle, troop movements are unrealistic, and reenactors often inaccurately depict soldiers from the era. In addition, reenactment provides a false sense of authenticity for an imagined past where war is glorified, and the human tragedy is displaced by comradery, excitement, and a sense of individual preservation of the past tied to personal heritage. While reenactments can be problematic, they also bring extensive coverage by the media, are typically well attended, and help bring increased awareness to a large audience.[339]

In an effort to bring attention to the site, reengage the local community, and build a broader base of support, the commission decided to mark the 125th Anniversary of the Battle of Honey Springs with a reenactment in 1988. The commission realized that the event would be a considerable undertaking and exceed their capabilities, so they requested assistance from the Oklahoma Historical Society. It would be the OHS's first attempt at hosting a reenactment. The society and commission began planning well in

[339] Whit Edwards, "To Reach a Wider Audience: Public Commemoration of the Civil War in Indian Territory, in *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory*, ed. Bradley R. Clampitt (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 175-177. For more on contemporary thoughts on reenacting as a hobby, see Robert L. Hadden, *Reliving the Civil War: A Reenactor's Handbook* (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 1999).

advance. The OHS board approached the legislature for assistance in commemorating the event and received an additional $10,000 appropriation. The commission and OHS worked diligently to plan the event assigning staff and volunteers to several committees and roles.[340]

And as part of the planning, the OHS and the commission collaborated with several state and local agencies helping to establish what would become long-term relationships to benefit the park. The Oklahoma Department of Transportation erected signage along Interstate 40 and U.S. Highway 69 while the Oklahoma National Guard set up tents for the public and provided water trailers for spectators and participants. As part of the commissions' renewed effort to work with local communities, they partnered with the city of Checotah for security, medical assistance, and fire service at the event. Local residents provided much of the hay needed to care for the reenactor's horses at the event. To garner public support for the event, the society launched an extensive marketing campaign with press coverage across the state.[341]

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[340] Minutes of the Oklahoma Historical Society July 29, 1987, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 65, No. 4 (Winter, 1987-1988): 442-443; Colonel Martin A. Hagerstand, Memo, "Memo to the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission Members Concerning the Proposed Committee Organization of the 1988 Reenactment of the Battle of Honey Springs," February 2, 1988, Honey Springs Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview..

[341] Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.. Minutes of the Oklahoma Historical Society July 29, 1987, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 65, No. 4 (Winter, 1987-1988): 442-443. Colonel Martin A. Hagerstand, Memo, "Memo to the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission Members Concerning the Proposed Committee Organization of the 1988 Reenactment of the Battle of Honey Springs," February 2, 1988, Honey Springs Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society. The *Mistletoe Leaves*, a publication of the Oklahoma Historical Society, published a list of participants who supported the 125th Anniversary Reenactment in their August edition following the event. OHS, "Participants Who Helped Support the 125th Anniversary of the Battle of Honey Springs," *Mistletoe Leaves,* 19 (August, 1988): 6. OHS, "Honey Springs Attracts Media Attention, *Mistletoe Leaves,* 19 (August, 1988): 1. Whit Edwards, "To Reach a Wider Audience: Public Commemoration of the Civil War in Indian Territory, in *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory*, ed. Bradley R. Clampitt (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 175-177.

Despite drawing only a few hundred reenactors, the reenactment commemorating the 125th Anniversary of Honey Springs would draw record public participation. Visitors witnessed musket, artillery, and cavalry demonstrations in addition to participating in several historical talks. A commemorative program provided visitors a brief but informative overview of the battle and its role in the Civil War in Indian Territory. To help build stronger ties to the community, activities were also held in Checotah throughout the day, including Native American dancers, crafts, and food.[342] Amid this fair type of atmosphere, a significantly more important took place. At the memorial event on July 16, the OHS dedicated a new granite marker at the site commemorating the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry and their role in the engagement at Honey Springs, marking a distinct departure from the historical memorialization of Confederate icons within Oklahoma. The marker recognized the role of the 1st Kansas at Honey Springs as the first Black regiments to play a crucial role in a Union victory. The granite memorial enshrined General James G. Blunt's praise of the unit in his official report, "The First Kansas particularly distinguished itself, they fought like veterans, and preserved their line unbroken throughout the engagement. Their Coolness and bravery I have never seen surpassed. They were in the hottest of the fight and opposed Texas Troops twice their number, whom they completely routed." The regiment, composed primarily of escaped slaves from Arkansas, Missouri, and Indian Territory, mustered into service on January 13, 1863, and saw action across the four-state region.[343]

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[342] OHS, "More than 20,000 Witness State's Largest Living History Event," *Mistletoe Leaves* 19 (August ,1988): 4-5; Oklahoma Historical Society, *Battle of Honey Springs: 1863 – 1988, Official Program*. Honey Springs Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

[343] "1st Regiment Kansas Colored Volunteers," historical marker, presented by the Community Heritage Recognition Committee, July 17, 1988, Honey Springs Battlefield, Checotah, Oklahoma. For more on the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry see Michael E. Carter, *First Kansas Colored Volunteers: Contributions of*

At the Honey Springs event, reenactor camps were open to the public. Each day the audience could watch a short battle reenactment in the afternoon. The two-day event drew tremendous public support from residents across the state. More than 20,000 visitors attended the multi-day reenactment, far exceeding the expectations of the commission, community, or historical society. The incredible crowd helped local residents and the OHS see the possibility of growing heritage tourism for the community. As a result, local citizens and the community of Checotah became more active in developing the site and planning future reenactments. Whit Edwards, the special projects coordinator for the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, argued that living history events had the potential of helping make historic sites attractions for the state. Edwards transferred from OTRD to the Oklahoma Historical Society to help launch living history programs across the agency. The commission and OHS planned another reenactment just two years later, with over 400 reenactors participating. Again, they relied heavily on local support and collaborative partnerships with other agencies and organizations to ensure a successful event. As Civil War reenacting continued to grow as a hobby, so did participation at Honey Springs events.[344]

The large crowds at the 1988 event created a renewed interest by local residents, the surrounding communities, and local legislators to establish the Honey Springs Battlefield Park. Under its most recent project plan, the commission sought to build upon this renewed interest and formalize local participation in a more meaningful long-term

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Black Union Soldiers in the Trans-Mississippi West; Ian M. Spurgeon, *Soldiers in the Army of Freedom: The 1st Kansas Colored, the Civil War's First African American Combat Unit*; Gregory J.W. Urwin, *Black Flag Over Dixie: Racial Atrocities and Reprisals in the Civil War.*

[344] Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; OHS, "More than 20,000 Witness State's Largest Living History Event," *Mistletoe Leaves* 19 (August, 1988): 4-5; Oklahoma Historical Society, *Battle of Honey Springs: 1863 – 1988, Official Program*. Honey Springs Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

way. In November 1988, the commission established the nonprofit Honey Springs Park Foundation with the sole mission of creating a state battlefield park. The foundation's creation was a significant step in transitioning from a commission to a nonprofit support organization for establishing the park. Initially, commission members served as the organization's board of directors. To help build a solid relationship with the local community, Emmy Stidham of Checotah, a longtime advocate of the project, was selected as the foundation's president. Stidham was incredibly active in regional social organizations and devoted significant time to improving the quality of life in her community. Two other longtime supporters, and commission members, were also added to the foundation's executive council, including Dr. LeRoy Fischer as secretary and Colonel Hagerstrand as vice president. The foundation immediately set up a fund to support the site and moved forward with organizing the reenactment at Honey Springs with OHS scheduled in July 1990. However, the foundation was short-lived and was replaced in 1991 with the Friends of Honey Springs Battlefield Park as the OHS began developing 501(c)(3) nonprofit support groups for sites across Oklahoma. Despite its short duration, the foundation proved to be the bridge to local support moving beyond the commission and incorporating local involvement.[345]

Unlike the previous commission who operated under their mandate from afar, the newly formed nonprofit was designed to have a broad membership and appeal to both local and statewide residents. All the commission's membership and assets were transferred to the new friend's group. Their new mission focused on programming,

[345] Minutes of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Foundation, November 22, 1988, and May 10, 1989, Museums and Sites Division, Oklahoma Historical Society; Friends of Honey Springs Battlefield, "Bylaws," Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library.

fundraising, and the establishment of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park visitors center. The support group would be based on membership and contribution of annual dues. The new body was governed by a board of twenty-five directors serving three-year terms and included a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer elected to one-year terms. To help facilitate the establishment of the park and visitors center, the Friends of Honey Springs established the power to hold, sell, lease, mortgage property, and incur debuts and borrow money. This last clause in the organization's by-laws would prove instrumental in helping finish the visitors center.[346]

In 1988, Congress recognized the need to reevaluate the protection of Civil War battlefields after successfully protecting Stuart Hill at Manassas. On July 21, 1990, the Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan introduced the American Battlefield Protection Program on the anniversary of First Manassas, advising that the program would provide a cooperative approach to preservation. Unlike previous federal projects, Congress designed the initiative to identify at-risk sites and to work with state and local officials to secure their protection. The program was designed for the Department of the Interior to take a leadership role in identifying threatened battlefields and provide technical assistance through NPS to assist state and local organizations in preservation efforts.[347]

The ABPP initially focused on twenty "priority" sites before Congress authorized a Civil War Sites Advisory Commission in 1990 to determine the protection status of

[346] Minutes of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Foundation, September 11, 1991, Oklahoma Historical Society; Friends of Honey Springs Battlefield, "Bylaws," Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library.

[347] Civil War Sites Advisory Commission and the National Park Service, *Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1993): 34-36.

Civil War sites across the United States. NPS offered technical assistance with earthwork surveys, mapping, site planning, and National Register documentation through the program. In 1991, the Oklahoma Historical Society decided to actively patriciate in the American Battlefield Protection Program. Honey Springs Battlefield was one of the sites that received initial funding for assistance to complete planning. This initial support led to several commission surveys and final reports that contributed to the site's master planning.[348]

The Civil War Sites Advisory Commission visited over 350 battlefields in preparation for the release of their report. The commission identified 384 sites and assigned them to four classes. In their assessment, the commission determined 235 of the sites remained in good condition and were largely unaltered, sixty-four were significantly altered with poor integrity, and that seventy-one retained little or no historical character. Ultimately, the commission concluded that two-thirds of all sites studied would face threats to their integrity within the next decade. At the time of the report, Honey Springs in Oklahoma was designated a Class B site with roughly 600 protected acres.[349]

To restructure and provide more direct oversite to the project, the OHS dissolved the Honey Springs Battlefield Commission in 1991 and transferred the project to a board subcommittee under the Historic Sites Committee. One of the committee's first actions was active participation in ABPP and the completion of a protection plan study. In 1991,

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[348] "American Battlefield Protection Program," *CRM Bulletin* 13 (No. 5, 1990): 1-2; Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, 1990, Public Law 101-628, November 28, 1990. *Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields,* 35; Minutes of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors, July 14, 1991, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 69 (Fall 1991): 335.

[349] Civil War Studies Act of 1990, Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, Public Law 101-628, 16 USC 1a-5, November 28, 1990. *Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields*, 12, 13, 16-17, 22-24, 41-42.

the Oklahoma Historical Society and the recently formed Friends of Honey Springs completed the Battlefield Protection Study for Honey Springs Battlefield in cooperation with the American Battlefield Protection Program. The OHS adopted the basic design plan for Prairie Grove Battlefield Park. To facilitate the study, landowners, OHS staff, the Friends of Honey Springs, and NPS Chief Historian Ed Bearss toured the site in September 1991. Nearly 250 local landowners, representatives from the Friends of Honey Springs Battlefield Park, and others attended a public meeting discussing the project. The meeting served as the ideal forum for connecting to the public and helped encourage landowners to support the project. The ABPP identified Honey Springs because of its significant effect on the war in Indian Territory and the role of the First Kansas Colored Infantry and Federal Indian Regiments in the battle. By the 1990s, the Civil War interpretation at the OHS and across the country was in the process of fully integrating those who had long been without a voice in Civil War memory. In 1989, *Glory* hit theatres across the country, bringing national attention to the role African American soldiers played in the war and helping to discuss slavery's role in the war to the general public.[350]

While the OHS had acquired some 600 acres of the battlefield, the study concluded that most of the site remained in private hands. The park's National Register nomination identified 2,993 acres in the historic district. The battlefield study reported that the site spanned an increasing number of privately held tracts of land. In 1968, when

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[350] Minutes of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission, January 18, 1991, Oklahoma Historical Society; Minutes of the Oklahoma Historical Society, July 14, 1991, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 69 (Fall, 1991): 335; Oklahoma Historical Society in cooperation with the American Battlefield Protection Program, "Battlefield Protection Study: Honey Springs Battlefield Park, Oklahoma," October 3, 1992, revised March 24, 1992, ix-x, 26, 33-36, 95-96.

the National Register nomination was prepared, the battlefield was located on just thirty-eight privately held tracts. Over time, the number increased dramatically to 119 as larger plots were subdivided with the owners' death. While the majority remained as grazing land or under cultivation, the number of homesites had increased dramatically. The study outlined resource protection strategies and endorsed easement, lease, and memorandums of understanding with agricultural use properties when the acquisition was not feasible due to funding. In their analysis, the report concluded that much of the land within the battlefield park boundary faced threats from development, detracting from the battlefield's integrity. Utilizing a property ranking system, the acreage was divided into tiers of priority for protection. The report also proposed revising the National Register form to include the area where the two forces first initially clashed and submission of a nomination for the battlefield as a National Historic Landmark. As a result, the NPS listed Honey Springs as one of four priority sites for the Southwest Region leading to federal assistance as a partner in the ABPP program.[351]

The Battlefield Protection Study created for Honey Springs was adopted as the Oklahoma Historical Society and Friends of Honey Springs guidepost. The cooperative approach outlined by the previous commission and the ABPP program would prove fruitful for the park's development. The new study outlined preservation steps as the group moved forward. Despite progress made by the OHS, legislative funding still proved problematic, forcing the agency to rely on private funds, grants, and potential

[351] Minutes of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Commission, January 18, 1991, Oklahoma Historical Society; Minutes of the Oklahoma Historical Society, July 14, 1991, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 69 (Fall, 1991): 335; Oklahoma Historical Society in cooperation with the American Battlefield Protection Program, "Battlefield Protection Study: Honey Springs Battlefield Park, Oklahoma," October 3, 1992, revised March 24, 1992, 437-43.

federal investment. In addition, the acquisition of land through condemnation and eminent domain left many local landowners distrustful despite the society's creation of a locally focused nonprofit support group and work with the community of Checotah. The Friends of Honey Springs remained active growing collaborative partnerships with local businesses and focusing on planning the 130th Anniversary of Honey Springs reenactment in 1993. That same year the friend's group also launched an advocacy campaign seeking support from state and federal legislators. Growing support led the Oklahoma Congressional delegation to submit legislation to transition Honey Spring into a National Park Service site in 1994. The Southwest Regional Office of the National Park Service and the Oklahoma Historical Society worked with the ABPP to develop the Congressional Briefing for both Honey Springs and The Washita Battlefield, site of the 1868 Battle of the Washita where United States troops under Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer attacked the winter camp of Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians capturing some women and children while destroying countless lodges and slaughtering hundreds of their horses. The joint battlefield legislation was simply not taken up; however, the Washita Battlefield National Historic Site was created independently in November 1996.[352]

In 1966, the Washita Battlefield was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Oklahoma Historical Society secured portions of what many considered the original battlefield. On November 12, 1997, Congress established the Washita Battlefield

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[352] Minutes of the Friends of Honey Springs, Annual Meeting, July 16, 1994, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library. Minutes of the Friends of Honey Springs Board of Directors, July 18, 1992, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library. Southwest Regional Office of the National Park Service and Oklahoma Historical Society, *Honey Springs Battlefield Park, Rentiesville, Oklahoma and The Washita Battlefield Park, Cheyenne, Oklahoma: A Briefing Prepared for the Oklahoma Congressional Delegation,* March 17, 1994, Honey Springs Battlefield Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

Nation Historic Site as part of an "Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act" encompassing some 150 plus pages of changes, boundary adjustments, exchanges, and more.[353] The Washita Battlefield National Historic Site opened its new visitors center to the public on August 25, 2007. The site's purpose statement reads, "The purpose…is to preserve and protect the site of the "Battle of the Washita" including the natural, cultural, topographic, and scenic resources; and to promote an understanding of the attack an importance of diverse perspectives related to the struggles that transpired between the Southern Great Plains tribes and the U.S. Government."[354] The NPS sites the Washita Battlefield as the location where the post-war U.S. army began the process of launching a "total war" campaign against the Southern Plains Indians by striking winter camps, destroying property, and attacking communities when they were most vulnerable. At the Washita Battlefield, the NPS adopted the policy of constructing visitor centers away from the battle site. In the new center, they incorporated both Native and Anglo perspectives.[355]

In October 1993, the OHS utilized their new planning study to prepare and submit an Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) grant request through the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. The act, signed into law in December 1991, provided an overall approach to highway and transit funding and emphasized

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[353] Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996, H. R. 4236, U.S.C. 104-333, passed November 12, 1996

[354] National Park Service, "Foundation Document Overview: Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, Oklahoma," (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office): 2.

[355] For more information on the Battle of the Washita and its preservation see, Sarah Craighead, "Civic Engagement with the Community at Washita Battlefield National Historic Site;" Charles Brill, *Custer, Black Kettle, and the Fight on the Washita*; Jerome Greene, *Washita: The U.S. Army and the Southern Cheyennes, 1867-1869*; Stan Hoig, *The Battle of the Washita: The Sheridan-Custer Indian Campaign of 1867-1869*; Richard G. Hardorff, *Washita Memories: Eyewitness Views of Custer's Attack on Black Kettle's Village*.

collaborative planning. A portion of the act included provisions for acquiring and interpreting historic roadways that played a vital role in the history and development of the United States. The Texas Road, running through Indian Territory and Honey Springs, met the requirements for the grant application. The Texas Road, or Military Road, was the primary north-south road through the Cherokee, Creek, and Choctaw Nations during the nineteenth century. During the Civil War, the thoroughfare played a crucial role in bringing supplies south from Fort Scott, Kansas, to Fort Gibson in the Cherokee Nation. Both the First and Second Battles of Cabin Creek and the Battle of Honey Springs took place along the pivotal transportation route. The OHS application requested $921,000 in federal funding and included a $230,000 state match to preserve and interpret historical sites along the Texas Road. The $1,152,000 project planned to use the majority of funds for Honey Springs since a large portion of the acreage still needed for the park included the Texas Road. The OHS planned to acquire over three hundred acres and connect various state-controlled portions of the battlefield, restore the road through the park, and establish walking trails through the grant.[356]

The Oklahoma State Legislature also responded to increased calls for action by creating the Battlefield Preservation and Development Study Commission to identify, preserve, and promote battle sites within Oklahoma. The commission included several House and Senate members, two Gubernatorial appointees, and representatives from the Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation,

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[356] Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, Pub. L. No. 102-240. For more on the Texas Road, see Grant Foreman, *Down the Texas Road*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936; Grant Foreman, "Early Trails Through Oklahoma." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 3, no. 2 (June 1925): 99 – 119; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Bob L. Blackburn, *Oklahoma Battlefield Preservation and Development Study Commission Report* (Oklahoma City: 1994), 8.

Oklahoma Department of Commerce, and the Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission. The commission endorsed the OHS's application for the ISTEA grant, called for authorization to transfer state property to the federal government to create a National Park Service site at Honey Springs Battlefield, recommended increased protection for historic property, and continued work towards preservation and development at Honey Springs and Cabin Creek Battlefield.[357]

By 1996 the commission had made some progress. They ensured the passage of important legislation needed to preserve Honey Springs and the Battle of the Washita site in Western Oklahoma. In addition, they sought and received funding to conduct a comprehensive survey of Oklahoma's Civil War and Indian War sites to document the locations and assess threats to their integrity. Over nine months, Dr. Mary Jane Warde and Tom Franzmann surveyed 158 Civil War engagements in Oklahoma, including Honey Springs, intending to identify priority battlefields for archeological work and completion of National Register nominations. Sites were ranked on integrity and condition of the site relative to its appearance at the time of the battle and threats to the site from either natural causes or development.[358]

As the commission continued to move forward with legislative efforts, the Oklahoma Historical Society and National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program worked collaboratively with the Center for Advanced Spatial Technologies at the University of Arkansas to create the Honey Springs Battlefield Park Master Plan. This historic park master plan intended to guide development and operations for the next five

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[357] Oklahoma Battlefield Preservation and Development Study Commission, Report, January 1994, 5-8, 18.
[358] Oklahoma Battlefield Preservation and Development Study Commission, Report, May 1996, 5, 20-25.

to fifteen years as the OHS and Friends of Honey Springs continued to establish a permanent park. The plan called for additional land acquisition, conservation easements, roadways, development of walking trails and parking, construction of a visitors' center, installation of a battlefield overlook, and more. Numerous staff with the OHS, ABPP, and NPS contributed to the plan. By the time of the plan's release, OHS controlled 957 acres of the battlefield. The document reiterated the need to protect the battlefield from continued subdivisions despite its rural location while providing visitors access to interpretation.[359]

The 1997 Master Plan developed a three-phase approach to moving forward. Phase one of the project included improved access to the developing park by visitors through implementing the ISTEA grant. The phase provided an access drive, parking areas, hiking trails, and a temporary visitors center with interpretive exhibits. Also, the OHS would utilize state-appropriated funding to construct a maintenance and operations building. To help meet public use requirements, the plan incorporated trailheads along the new tour route. Interpretive trails included the resting point for General Blunt's men before the engagement, the site of the initial clash of Union and Confederate soldiers, the central area of fighting along Elk Creek, the location of final fighting before the Confederate withdrawal, and a final loop leading visitors to the Honey Springs Depot location. The plan also called for developing a visitors' center near crucial parts of the battlefield that included a meeting room, restrooms, collections storage, and exhibits space.[360]

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[359] Honey Springs Battlefield Park Master Plan Report, 1997: 1 -2, 7.
[360] Honey Springs Battlefield Park Master Plan Report, 1997: 14 – 17.

Phase two focused on viewsheds and conservation of the battlefield. The report, funded by the ABPP, provided significant direction in improving the visual setting of the battlefield. A viewshed is defined as the area of land visible from a given location. Documenting viewsheds prevents the construction of buildings and other modern structures. Phase two also called for the development of a main hiking trail connecting the five interpretive trails from phase one in addition to parking improvements.[361] Phase three called for additional preservation of visual resources through easements. Pumpkin Ridge, an area overlooking large sections of the battlefield and Texas Road, was also slated for improvements. The master plan called for interpretation of the site from pre-history through the Civil War. Additional improvements to the trail system in phase three called for the construction of open shelters and the installation of picnic tables for visitor use to help meet "public use" requirements and make the site more user-friendly. The 1997 Honey Springs Battlefield Park Master Plan Report was a significant step towards establishing a public site with visitor amenities.[362]

The Friends of Honey Springs continued to hold events at the site to increase awareness, improve community relations, and maintain a media presence as they worked towards constructing a permanent visitor's center. In 2002, the OHS acquired and remolded a temporary classroom building to serve as a visitor's center and staff offices. The Oklahoma Historical Society implemented a three-year reenactment schedule to add Civil War reenactments at Honey Springs, Cabin Creek, and Middle Boggy. In addition, candlelight tour programs were established to bring certain aspects of the battle to life for

[361] Honey Springs Battlefield Park Master Plan Report, 1997: 19 – 20.
[362] Honey Springs Battlefield Park Master Plan Report, 1997: 21 – 22.

visitors. The public could tour several recreated historical scenes to understand better what soldiers and civilians in 1863 may have experienced. The OHS and the friend's group relied heavily on volunteer support throughout the 1990s and early 2000s to grow these programs under the leadership of Whit Edwards. At Honey Springs, staff hosted reenactor groups for musters, artillery school, and more. The Special Projects department of the Museums and Sites Division at OHS developed new programming and coordinated school day programs with more than 1,000 students at Honey Springs reenactments. The OHS made a concerted effort in these new programs to tell the story of the Civil War in the Indian Territory from multiple viewpoints. For the first time, staff and volunteers represented Native American, African American, and Anglo perspectives from the United States and Confederate perspectives. The legacy of the Lost Cause mentality that had dominated early markers at the site and exhibits at the OHS's main museum building in Oklahoma City had not materialized at Honey Springs since the park had not constructed a visitors' center or implemented public programming. Now, interpretation focused on the day-to-day lives of everyday individuals, the plight of the thousands of refugees across Indian Territory, and the hardships of life across the region throughout the war years. This more inclusive narrative was shared across OHS sites beginning in the late 1990s and expanding in the first decade of the twenty-first century.[363]

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[363] Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Kathy Dickson, Director of Museums and Sites, interview by Jason Harris, June 25, 2021, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, October 23, 2002, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 81, No. 1 (Spring, 2003): 121-125; OHS, "Middle Boggy Battle Reenactment Set for September 23-24, *Mistletoe Leaves* Vol. 37, No. 9 (September, 2006): 1; OHS, "Civil War Weekend at Fort Washita," *Mistletoe Leaves* Vol. 40, No. 9 (September, 2009): 5; OHS, "Boom! Artillery Practice Planned for Honey Springs," *Mistletoe Leaves* Vol. 38, No. 9 (September, 2009): 4.

With the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War approaching in 2011, the National Park Service and states across the nation looked to update interpretive plans, reexamine how they told the story of America's Civil War, and highlight the voices of those who had been left out. In 2008, the NPS released *Holding the High Ground: A National Park Service Plan for the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War*. They argued, "the National Park Service has not sufficiently used its sites to convey the true significance and breadth of America's Civil War Experience," citing both history and tradition for its failures. As the Sesquicentennial approached, historians, historical sites, museums, and the NPS recognized the conscious and unconscious history of how the war was remembered and memorialized for generations and sought to expand the perspectives and experience. At the time of its release, the OHS was actively incorporating these voices in exhibits at the Oklahoma History Center and its field sites across the state. In their plan, the NPS acknowledged the legacy of commemoration and reconciliatory efforts of veterans, noting that when conceived, an understanding of context was assumed and that for nearly a century, these traditions continued.[364]

The NPS and others recognized the Sesquicentennial as an opportunity to explore the conflict's continued relevance and expanding narrative in a more inclusive way for the public. It also provided an opportunity to address the lingering Lost Cause memorials erected at sites during their formative years. The plan called for a much broader approach to interpreting the Civil War. To accomplish this, the NPS plan called for a five-step action plan. Step one sought to redefine what a "Civil War Site" is by expanding beyond

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[364] National Park Service, *Holding the High Ground: A National Park Service Plan for the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War*, May 2008, 3, 7.

the battlefield and telling the entire story of the war. Step two called for acknowledging different perspectives for the wartime experience and meaning. The third step stressed the need for establishing a thematic context for interpreting the Civil War throughout the system. Step four focused on visitor experience and highlighted the need for those events from the past to connect to American culture today. Lastly, step five outlined how the NPS would evaluate and identify deficiencies and address them. The NPS plan also created an action plan for the Sesquicentennial through stewardship, education, and professional development.[365]

The release of *Holding the High Ground* provided an outline for improvement for historic sites and state historical societies across the nation. It identified growing challenges to historical interpretation at Civil War sites. It stressed the need to expand the story beyond the battlefield and the traditional narrative of the valiant soldier and their reconciliationist memory that had existed for a century and fostered continued racism by eliminating the African American experience. With the Honey Springs Battlefield Park still in development, it provided an opportunity for exhibits and trail markers to incorporate the growing expanded narrative that included Native and African American experiences. The Friends of Honey Springs and OHS continued to work together to facilitate the completion of the park and visitors center and saw the Sesquicentennial as an opportunity for renewed focus and legislative engagement. That same year the Friends of Honey Springs and the OHS met for a planning meeting to move the Honey Springs project forward as a Sesquicentennial "Legacy Project," concluding nearly five decades

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[365] National Park Service, *Holding the High Ground,* 22.

of work. As a result of the planning meeting, a preliminary architectural feasibility study was created outlining a 6,000 square foot facility at a total cost of $1,930,000.[366]

In May 2009, Senate Bill 1137 created the Oklahoma American Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission to assist the OHS and Oklahoma History Center in commemorating the Sesquicentennial and Oklahoma's participation in the Civil War. The new commission would serve through 2015 and consist of twelve members. The commission relied heavily on the staff at the Oklahoma Historical Society to develop and implement projects and programs. The staff advisory group developed the OKCW150 logo and branding and planned teacher institutes, exhibits, reenactment events, and a full line of merchandise. The OHS leveraged the Sesquicentennial to move the Honey Springs Battlefield project forward. The OHS would prioritize completing the Honey Springs visitors center, acquiring land at Cabin Creek Battlefield, and digitizing the society's archival material related to the Civil War. Ultimately, they would accomplish all three despite a lack of funding from the state due to repetitive budget shortfalls beginning in 2010.[367]

As the OHS and friends continued moving forward, the National Park Service released *an update to the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields: State of Oklahoma* under the American Battlefield Protection

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[366] Minutes, "Honey Springs Battlefield Planning Meeting," January 12, 2009, Honey Springs Battlefield, LeRoy H. Fischer Library, 1-3; OHS, "Honey Springs Battlefield Preliminary Architectural Feasibility Report, July 2010, Honey Springs Battlefield, LeRoy H. Fischer Library.
[367] An Act establishing the Oklahoma American Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, May 2009, c. 361, 1, eff. Nov. 1, 2009. Amended by Laws 2013, c. 227, 9, eff. Nov. 1, 2013. (passed May 29, 2009); Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, April 27, 2001, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 89, No. 3 (Fall, 2011): 380. Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, January 25, 2012, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 90, No. 2 (Summer, 2012): 254.

Program. Through the ABPP program, the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report identified seven battlefields in the state in 1993, including Honey Springs, Cabin Creek, Chustenahlah, Old Fort Wayne, Chusto-Talasah, Middle Boggy, and Round Mountain. According to this 2010, update Honey Springs' protected acreage expanded to 1,272 acres. Continued work by OHS and the NPS expanded the potential National Register land to 6,324 acres to include the line of federal advance down the Texas Road and the Confederate retreat towards Fort Smith. While threatened with continued subdivision, the land area remained little changed and remarkably intact.[368]

With the Sesquicentennial approaching, the OHS and friends group began working with the United States Department of Agriculture to secure a rural economic development grant to construct the visitors center at the battlefield with the hopes of completing the project in time for the battles 150th anniversary. In April 2010, Dr. Blackburn announced to the OHS Board of Directors that Ryan McMullen, director of the USDA Rural Development Service in Oklahoma, with the assistance of OHS staff, prepared an aid package comprised of loans, grants, and stimulus funds to complete the 7,000 square foot visitors center. The plan included roughly $650,000 in USDA loans to be paid out over forty years. For the project to move forward, the Friends of Honey Springs would take on the responsibility of the loan debt. The OHS Board of Directors approved the proposal in April, and in July, the Friends of Honey Springs officially approved the project. The Friends would work with OHS Museums and Sites Director Kathy Dickson and OHS Executive Director Bob Blackburn to finalize the request and

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[368] National Park Service, *Update to the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields: Oklahoma*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2010): 30-31.

complete the application process. The Friends group officially voted to authorize the group's president to enter into a memorandum of understanding to facilitate a lease agreement to construct the proposed visitors center. With the memorandum completed in July, the OHS and Friends moved forward with their application to the USDA to finally provide a visitors center allowing the carnage at Honey Springs and its effect on the outcome of the Civil War in Indian Territory to be interpreted for the public in the physical space where it occurred.[369]

Delays in the process prevented the construction of the Honey Springs Visitors Center in time for the 150th anniversary of the battle; however, in March of 2014, the Friends of Honey Springs filed a loan and grant application with the USDA Rural Development Service. Architectural Design Group completed construction and bid documents in late December, with construction awarded to Zenith Construction Company. With the Sesquicentennial ending, construction at the site finally commenced.[370]

In June 2015, the OHS announced that construction had finally commenced. An article in *Mistletoe Leaves* cited the collaboration between local, county, state, and

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[369] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, April 27, 2011, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 89, No. 3 (Fall, 2011): 380; Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, April 28, 2010, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 88, No. 3 (Fall, 2010): 254; Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Kathy Dickson, Director of Museums and Sites, interview by Jason Harris, June 25, 2021, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Memorandum, "Memorandum of Understanding Between the Oklahoma Historical Society and the Friends of Honey Springs Battlefield concerning the construction and operation of the Honey Springs Visitors Center," July 19, 2010, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library.

[370] Minutes, Friends of Honey Springs Battlefield Park, Inc. Visitors' Center Project Public Meeting, March 28, 2014, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Kath Dickson to Ronnie L. Jones, Area Specialist, USDA Rural Development, April 17, 2014, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Architectural Design Group, Inc, "Visitors Center at Honey Springs Battlefield Project Manual, December 8, 2014, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library.

federal agencies as key to the project's success. Ryan McMullen, a strong advocate for the project and USDA state director, reported, "…with plenty of creativity and enough partners, it's still possible to make big things happen in small towns," helping to reiterate the importance of collaboration incorporated by the OHS in the 1990s.[371] Construction of the main visitors' center building took just over a year. In September 2016, the Friends of Honey Springs and OHS officially dedicated the new building. Undersecretary for rural development for the USDA, Lisa Mensah, attended the event and highlighted the extensive collaboration between local, county, state, and federal entities. While the construction was finalized, completion of the main exhibits and research library continued. At the dedication, Dr. Bob Blackburn announced the donation of an extensive library collection and noted that the new research library would be named after the late Dr. LeRoy Fischer, who passed on March 11, 2014, who had worked diligently on the project since its inception in the 1960s. Dr. Fischer dedicated over forty years to the OHS, the development of Honey Springs Battlefield, and the study of Oklahoma history and serving on the faculty at Oklahoma State University in the history department.[372]

Since the dedication of the visitor's center, the OHS and Honey Springs staff continued to work on installing exhibits and outdoor trail markers. Like the NPS's *Holding the High Ground,* OHS incorporated differing perspectives into the exhibit design and placed the battle in the broader context of the war. While a temporary visitors center existed since 2003, the ability of the OHS to design and install new exhibits

[371] OHS, "Construction Underway at Honey Springs Battlefield Visitors Center," *Mistletoe Leaves* Vol. 46, No. 6 (June 2015): 7

[372] OHS, "Improvements at Honey Springs Battlefield," *Mistletoe Leaves* Vol. 47, No. 10 (November 2016): 5; Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, October 26, 2017, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 95, No. 1 (Spring, 2017): 119.

allowed them the opportunity to address the war in new ways without the removal of existing content and the potential for the public backlash that still plagues historical sites addressing the legacy of the Confederacy propagated by the Lost Cause. Outside of the battle itself, the recently completed exhibits focus on the role of the Texas Road and the local community around Honey Springs, the impact of the war on the tribes both during and after the end of the hostilities, and the heavy toll paid by civilians from the bloody divisions within the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations. Now exhibits follow the plight of the freedmen and chronicle the rise of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns due to emancipation in Indian Territory. The visitor's center is scheduled to complete the final installation of exhibits in the late fall of 2021, following countless COVID-19 delays.

In 2020 the park finished the installation of fifty-six new trail markers. Drawing heavily on firsthand accounts, these outdoor interpretive panels illustrate the engagement across sections of the battlefield. Interpretive panels also illustrate life in the surrounding community before the engagement and place it into the context of the Texas Road's role in Indian Territory. Lastly, new interpretive trail signs help the visitor understand how the battlefield relies on archaeology, primary sources, letters, diaries, and more to help share the story from the past for visitors today. The decision to extend history beyond the building and incorporate the narrative of the personal experiences of those who were engaged in the carnage at Honey Springs reminds visitors of the human component of

interpretation. Incorporating how we know about the past also allows the visitor to understand the creation of history for the public.[373]

More than fifty years have passed since the first steps were taken to establish a national battlefield park at Honey Springs. The successful creation of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park is the culmination of Civil War preservation efforts in Oklahoma thus far. Countless individuals, OHS staff, board members, and others have worked diligently to see the project completed year after year. The site, which now includes over 1,000 acres of the state-owned protected battlefield, offers exhibits, reenactments, and regular programming. This same model can be applied to the First and Second Battles of Cabin Creek. The OHS currently protects 96.6 acres at the site of the two engagements. Much like Honey Springs, preservation efforts began in 1961 when the Vanita Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy purchased the first ten acres within the core of the battlefield. In 2012, the Civil War Preservation Trust, Friends of Cabin Creek, and the OHS secured an additional 86.5 acres of the core battlefield through a battlefield protection grant and matching private funds. Currently, the site includes road access but lacks a visitors' center; however, the model provided by the long-time development of

[373] Dr. Bob Blackburn, interview.; Kathy Dickson, Director of Museums and Sites, interview by Jason Harris, June 25, 2021, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library. Adam Lynn, Director of Honey Springs Battlefield, interview by Jason Harris, June 30, 2020, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Adam Lynn, Director of Honey Springs Battlefield, interview by Jason Harris, September 29, 2021. John Davis, Regional Director, Oklahoma Historical Society, interview by Jason Harris, July 14, 2020, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; John Davis, Regional Director, Oklahoma Historical Society, interview by Jason Harris, October 1, 2021. Oklahoma Historical Society “Exhibit Plan for the Honey Springs Battlefield Visitors Center,” 2017, Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library; Honey Springs Battlefield, “Trail Signs Proofs,” Honey Springs Battlefield, Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer Library.

Honey Springs offers a route for expanding interpretation at Cabin Creek and creating a battlefield park with a staffed visitors center for heritage tourism.[374]

[374] LeRoy Fischer and Kent Ruth, "Cabin Creek Battlefield," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1971). Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, January 26, 2011, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 89, No. 2 (Summer, 2011): 252. Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, October 26, 2017, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 95, No. 1 (Spring, 2017): 119. Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, Oklahoma Historical Society, April 27, 2011, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Vol. 89, No. 3 (Fall, 2011): 379.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

"The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here."

– Abraham Lincoln

The American Civil War is one of the most studied periods in American history, with over 60,000 books in print covering topics from the political saga leading to the conflict to the lives of civilians, the enslaved, and soldiers in the field. Across the nation, hundreds of museums and historical societies preserve and interpret the Civil War for the public. Over 150 years later, the war still carries different and varying meanings for different segments of the public. The 1990s was a boon for historical sites as visitation exploded due to increased public programing as museum education expanded. The increase in activities for the public and museum interpretative programming for a public hungry for history related to the Civil War coincided with the motion picture *Glory,* released in 1989, and Ken Burns *The Civil War*, released in 1990. By making the

Civil War accessible, the film and documentary brought the war into the living rooms of millions.

The drive for public consumption of history and heritage sustains historic sites and museums across the country. However, there is a distinct difference between history and heritage. For some portions of the public, heritage denotes powerful sentiment and can stir vehement opposition to conflicting opinions. Within the Native American community, tribal citizenship and culture are defining characteristics, and many in the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations trace ancestral ties back well before tribal factionalism split the respective nations during America's Civil War. For African American descendants of the Freedmen in Oklahoma, the ongoing saga of enrollment in the tribes resulting from the Treaties of 1866 and emancipation in the Indian Territory remain a struggle. As recently as 2020, Cherokee Principal Chief Chuck Hoskins, Jr., issued executive order 2020-05-CTH calling for equal protection for Cherokee citizens addressing the exclusion of Cherokee of Freedmen descent. That same year, Hoskins successfully led the effort to remove two monuments from the Cherokee capitol square erected in 1913 and 1921 by Confederate heritage associations. In February 2021, the Cherokee Nation Supreme Court supported the decision and struck "by blood" from the Cherokee Nation's tribal laws and determined that Freedmen citizens have full rights as Cherokee citizens based on the Treaty of 1866.[375]

[375] Bean, "Who Defines a Nation," 117; Saunt, "Paradox of Freedom," 78; Report of John B. Sanborn, January 5, 1866, Serial 1248, 284.

For hereditary organizations and their descendants, pride in their direct lineage to participants in the Civil War is still a badge of honor. To them, the Civil War still stirs emotions as the defining moment in their cultural identity, driving them to be protective of their idea of "heritage." In many cases, their ancestors and their chapters of the Sons of Union Veterans, Daughters of Union Veterans, Sons of Confederate Veterans, and United Daughters of the Confederacy erected the thousands of monuments, markers, and memorials across Oklahoma and the nation. Some southern heritage organizations continue to advocate and stand firm for the faltering Lost Cause ideology as memorials to the Confederacy are removed across the state and nation. They proclaim the loss of "history" at the expense of embracing the growing expansion of the narrative to include those who were excluded at the cost of reconciliation. And in Oklahoma, this attachment to the "Lost Cause" heritage remains strong among specific segments of the population, both Anglo and Native American.

For others, such as Oklahoma's Native American population, the Civil War was the beginning of a methodical assault on tribal sovereignty and culture, ultimately leading to allotment, loss of rights, and opening the territory to non-Indian settlement. By signing treaties of alliance with the Confederacy and taking up arms against the United States, Commissioner of Indian affairs Dennis Nelson Cooley proclaimed the tribes in rebellion forfeited their annuities and lands in the territory and declared representatives must sign new treaties of peace containing a variety of stipulations including the abolition of slavery and incorporation of the freedmen into their respective tribe, loss of territory for the resettlement of additional Indian nations, assistance to the United States in maintaining peace with Plains Indians, preparation for the consolidation of tribal

governments into a singular government, and the stipulation that no white person except government employees or those authorized by the federal government would be allowed to reside among the Indians.[376]

For the emancipated, it was at first a joyous victory over their former status before new rights were stripped away. Only the Seminole Nation willingly provided "unconditional citizenship" to the former enslaved. Historian Claudio Saunt's "paradoxical nature of freedom" haunted both the Five Tribes and the Freedmen for over a century.[377] Emancipation within the territory ended slavery while precipitating the significant contraction of tribal sovereignty. As a result of the Treaties of 1866, each tribe conceded significant territorial losses to the United States, paving the way for the federal government to relocate other Indian Nations into the territory. Much like the rest of the South, the Indian Territory would grapple with race relations following emancipation. Unlike their former allies to the east, the Five Tribes wrestled with sovereignty and the extension of tribal citizenship rights to ex-slaves under the recently signed Treaties of 1866. According to Saunt, the ideology of freedom was both emancipatory and oppressive in the Indian Territory, because "in the name of freedom, the federal government fought to abolish tribal sovereignty, distribute Indian lands in severalty, and absorb Indians into the American republic."[378] As a result of land concessions, the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations lost the

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[376] Bailey, *Reconstruction in Indian Territory*, 58-59, 66; Christopher B. Bean, "Who Defines a Nation?" in *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory,* Ed. Bradley R. Clampitt (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 111-112; Gary L Roberts, "Dennis Nelson Cooley," in *The Commissioners of Indian Affairs*, ed. Robert M. Kvasnicka and Herman J. Viola (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 99-100.
[377] Saunt, "Paradox of Freedom," 93.
[378] Saunt, "Paradox of Freedom," 93.

western half of Indian Territory. Eventually, the Unassigned Lands at the heart of Indian Territory drew the attention of white settlers ending their hopes of formal territorial status and an Indian state.

The way we remember and connect personally to the past is a powerful element of our own identity. How the Civil War is remembered and interpreted for the public matters from small historic sites and museums to statewide and national organizations. The way these public organizations have presented this story has changed dramatically over time. The Oklahoma Historical Society is a statewide institution with the mission to "collect, preserve, and share the history and culture of the state of Oklahoma and its people." The Civil War in Indian Territory is just one spall part of this much larger narrative. Telling a comprehensive and inclusive story of a state and its citizens is a daunting task. Over the last 128 years, the institution wrestled with which story for what people they would share for their visitors. It is a continuously developing process that now includes thirteen museum sites, five historic forts and battlefields, and six historic homes. At these public places, the evolving narrative expanded over time to offer a richer, more inclusive Oklahoma.

In the late 1990s, the society reimagined the "Temple of History" as the center for the study Oklahoma adopting updated museum design. Exhibit content was completely reimagined. The story of the Civil War moved beyond leaders and battles and focused on the individual. The role of both Native and African Americans became visible to the public. The story of Reconstruction in the territory and its role in the loss of tribal sovereignty and the opening of the territory to non-Indian settlement became more dominant as an era in Oklahoma's history. At historic sites, interpretation of the Civil

War also shifted to the individual and the site's role in the overall experience of the war and its aftermath. At Hunter's Home, the role of slavery in the early period of the plantation was incorporated into the everyday story of George and Minerva Murrell. In 2020, "Voices of Hunter's Home: Enslaved People" reinforced that the plantation was built by slavery and sought to provide a voice to the enslaved.

In the vast literature regarding the Civil War, the western theater, and more frequently Indian Territory, were at one time overlooked because of their indirect relationship to the dominant campaigns in the east that led to the surrender of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox on April 9, 1865. The Civil War and Reconstruction in the Indian Territory is at long last gaining the attention they deserve as the West finds a home in the expanding literature on the Civil War. However, the war in the Indian Territory was no less traumatic for the roughly 70,000 residents from the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), or Seminole Nations that called the eastern half of what is now Oklahoma home. If veterans and the developing historical societies outside Oklahoma were memorializing their memory of the Civil War, who would create the public memory of the war for Indian Territory? Jeff Fortney argues that Native Americans, whose lives were shaped by the war, practiced self-silence regarding Civil War commemoration well into the twentieth century. Despite their sacrifices and service, these tribes reconciled the war internally and moved collectively in opposition to the continued threat from the

Federal government during Reconstruction and beyond rather than collectively commemorating this moment in their past.[379]

While competing views sought to rationalize and reconcile the conflict across the nation, Natives remembered the war as they reconciled internally but had no desire to commemorate it. For the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations, the Civil War's "unjustified and unavoidable hastening of US interference" in the politics and culture of the Five Tribes resulted in extensive land loss, reduction of tribal sovereignty, and the eventual end of tribal government in the postwar period. Instead, allotment and statehood brought "a colonialism of public memory that projected 'lost cause' mythology onto the Five Tribes."[380] If public memory was the result of colonialism projected onto the war in Indian Territory, whose memory was it?

Historian David Blight ultimately concludes that the prevailing view of the war was, and remains, the reconciliationists view where white North and South reconciled their losses with the Lost Cause construct of brave soldiers. Nevertheless, these forms of memory are more complicated within the Indian Territory and have yet to be written. They are the forms of memory imposed upon the war within the Indian Territory following allotment and the opening of the territory to outsiders beginning in 1889. They are the interpretation of memory that drove the collection, preservation, and sharing of Oklahoma's history for nearly a century because external experiences shaped the prominent voice of Civil War memory in Oklahoma and applied it to the territory and

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[379] Jeff Fortney, "Lest We Remember: Civil War Memory and Commemoration among the Five Tribes, *American Indian Quarterly* Vol. 36, No. 4, Special Issue: Native American Cultural Tourism: Spectatorship and Participation (Fall 2012), 525-544.
[380] Jeff Fortney, "Lest We Remember," 527.

future state. It fundamentally shaped the organization and development of the OHS, the state's public history institution, until more expansive narratives took hold.[381]

The Oklahoma Historical Society was created in the middle of the growing movement by veterans to memorialize the Civil War and the creation of numerous historical societies to capture the changing world that was perceived to be quickly disappearing because of the Gilded Age. Over time the Oklahoma Historical Society became the dominant voice for the narrative presented to the public to remember the Civil War in Oklahoma. The Gilded Age coincided in dramatic urban growth and the loss of newly won civil rights for African Americans with the rise of the Jim Crow South, including Oklahoma. On December 18, 1907, the state's new legislature quickly passed Senate Bill One, implementing segregation between "white and negro races" in the new state. The passage of segregation also ensured that the memory of the new state would be divided between the white "us" and the black "them" for decades.[382]

Why does this history of how we interpret the Civil War matter? Why is the story relevant to the larger narrative of the nation and culture as a whole? Memory reflects

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[381] David Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Pres, 2002), 134. David Blight, *Race and Reunion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 2-3. Whit Edwards, *The Prairie was on Fire,* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 2001),132. Carolyn Johnston, "The Panther's Scream is Often Heard" Cherokee Women in Indian Territory during the Civil War," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 78 (Spring 2000): 84. Donald A. Grindle, Jr., "Red vs Black: Conflict and Accommodation in the Post Civil War Indian Territory, 1865-1907," *American Indian Quarterly* (Summer 1984): 212. Tom Franzmann, "Peculiarly situated between rebellion and loyalty': Civilized Tribes, Savagery, and the American Civil War," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 76 (Summer 1998): 145-148. Mark A. Lause, *Race and Radicalism in the Union Army,* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 129.

[382] Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the First Legislature of the State of Oklahoma (Muskogee, Okla.: Muskogee Printing Co., 1909). For more information on Jim Crow and Discrimination in Oklahoma, See Phillip Mellinger, "Discrimination and Statehood in Oklahoma, *Chronicles of Oklahoma*; Arthur Tolson, "The Negro in Oklahoma Territory, 1889-1907," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*; Jimmie L. Franklin, *Journey Toward Hope: A History of Blacks in Oklahoma;* and Alaina E. Roberts, *I've Been Here All the While: Black Freedom on Native Land.*

current social and political relationships at the time of its creation and can give insight into the evolution of historical thinking and attachment to local heritage. How the OHS evolved to tell the story of Oklahoma during the time of the American Civil War over the last century chronicles how Oklahomans, at least those in a position to decide the status of preservation, viewed the conflict and made it available for mass consumption. It would be “their memory” that became the trusted source creation of the institutional history of the Civil War presented to the public. It would add to the broader public memory of the war and its aftermath for generations shaping how the residents, and its visitors, interacted with the Civil War in the state-sponsored public space of Indian Territory’s Civil War. While the role of the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry and slave-holding Indians were acknowledged, the interpretation remained preoccupied with the "Lost Cause" ideology demonstrated by the overwhelmingly pro-Confederate memorialization through historical markers and the blind fixation on how to incorporate the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations to America's Civil War rather than exploring their internal Civil Wars associated with national conflict.

The Oklahoma Historical Society's development has been a cycle of periodic rapid expansion and growth followed by years of ambition thwarted by lack of funding. In general, the development of the society followed national trends of prosperity tied to special one-time money associated with federal programs, local preservation efforts, and celebrations tied to historic anniversaries. Initially, the society worked diligently to preserve the state's white and Native American history collecting federal records related to the tribes, oral histories among early post-Indian Territory settlers and Natives, and

material culture related to both. It took decades before much effort was applied to African American history in the state.

With Senate Bill One, the Oklahoma legislature officially adopted the policy of segregation, firmly entrenching Jim Crow in Oklahoma. The rapid rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s and 1920s left many African Americans fearful, taking up residence in All-Black towns for safety and economic stability. Race relations in Oklahoma finally reached a tipping point in 1921. On May 31 and June 1, 1921, a white mob destroyed more than 1,000 homes and businesses in the Greenwood District, a vibrant African American community of 10,000, in Tulsa, after Dick Rowland was falsely accused of attempting to rape a white woman. At dawn on June 1, thousands of armed whites poured into Greenwood, looting homes and businesses before setting them on fire. The massacre led to the deaths of countless individuals, with estimates ranging from fifty to three hundred. The scars left from the assault were a public reminder for the residents of Greenwood and beyond as a symbol of racism within the state.[383]

The rise of the OHS's "Temple of History" marked a significant change in the society as it moved into a formal authoritative role in Oklahoma history. Tied to the memorialization, the new permanent home offered the organization the opportunity to grow and expand, establishing itself among the nation's cultural institutions. In the 1930s, the W.P.A. helped the society move beyond the walls of the Wiley Post building in

[383] For more on the Greenwood Massacre, see Scott Ellsworth, *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*; Robert N. Hower, *"Angels of Mercy": The American Red Cross and the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot;* Eddie F. Gates, *They Came Searching: How Blacks South the Promised Land in Tulsa*; Mare E. Jones, *Events of the Tulsa Disaster;* Tim Madigan, *The Burning: Massacre, Destruction, and the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*; Randall Kennedy and Alfred L. Brophy, *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation*; Randy Krehbiel, *Tulsa, 1921: Reporting A Massacre.*

Oklahoma City and into preservation across the state. The historical marker program developed in the 1940s and implemented in the 1950s and beyond brought formal recognition to historical places. Over time, the society acquired historical sites throughout the state, incorporating those with ties to the Civil War, including Fort Gibson, Fort Towson, Fort Washita, Hunter's Home, Honey Springs Battlefield, and Cabin Creek Battlefield. The "curio and relic" display with minimal interpretation lasted well into the 1970s. In the 1980s, an effort was made to improve the story of Oklahoma through exhibits and the reconstructed appearance of life at historical sites and to begin hiring professionally trained public historians. Finally, a narrative of history developed that included all as construction of new visitors' centers at sites and the development of the new Oklahoma History Center in the 1990s began the process of moving the OHS into the twenty-first century.

After decades of effort by countless OHS staff and supporters across the state, the Honey Springs Battlefield visitor's center and new outdoor interpretive panels were finally completed. Since the dedication of the visitor's center, the OHS staff continued to work on the final completion of exhibit components. COVID-19 delays have prevented the final exhibit installation, but the remaining components are on-site for installation over the winter at the time of submission of this dissertation. Like the NPS's *Holding the High Ground,* OHS incorporated differing perspectives into the exhibit design and placed the battle in the broader context of the war. The ability of the OHS to design and install new exhibits allowed it the opportunity to address the war in new ways which continue to evolve. Outside of the battle itself, the recently completed exhibits focus on the role of the Texas Road and the local community around Honey Springs, the impact of the war on

the tribes both during and after the end of the hostilities, and the heavy toll paid by civilians from the bloody divisions within the tribes. Now, they include the plight of the freedmen and chronicle the rise of Oklahoma's All-Black Towns.

The renovation of the Fort Gibson hospital into a new visitor with updated exhibits will enable the historic site to place the post into the region's development and chronicle how the war and its legacy shaped the surrounding area, including the Cherokee and Muscogee (Creek) Nations. The renovation at Fort Gibson has slowed due to the pandemic leaving changes in interpretation for a later discussion. The transition from curios and relics to informative exhibit content supported by voices from the past provides a new understanding of Oklahoma and its Civil War for visitors today at historical society sites across the state. This voice and assertion of memory have been molded and shaped by the development of the Oklahoma Historical Society itself. While significant work has been completed, much remains.

The introduction of the historical marker program in the 1940s allowed the OHS to reach beyond its walls and engage an increasingly mobile population. The society's historical marker program remains active, but many markers for Civil War topics are woefully dated and harken back to their Lost Cause roots. With the creation of public historical markers, our collective memory is manifested in a physical place that can influence public memory. It is the point of interaction, outside of historical sites, of people and the landscape. By their very nature, historical markers are projections of collective cultural values and decidedly particular versions of history created by the few for the many. Unfortunately, many of the current markers no longer represent the cultural views and values of today. The creation of a monument depends on the relationships of

those erecting the marker and, by its acceptance, presents the public with an approved "official" interpretation. The very language of the marker is, by default, intended to be worthy of public remembrance. As historians looking backward, what is not remembered can be just as important. Absent are the pro-Union Indian leaders and the testament to the plight of the civilians and refugees during the war or the hardships endured by the enslaved.

While countless historical markers dot the landscape, it is essential to view them and their narrative as an evolving story of local history constructed at a specific time with a distinct perspective. Are they an obsolete holdover from efforts launched decades ago to claim ownership of history or can they still be a tool for engagement with the public? Each year new markers are erected across Oklahoma and the United States. New marker trail guides and commercial marker guidebooks make it to market. For many marker locations, their placement denotes a site of violence and trauma. They are locations that and foster public dialogue and provide historical perspective. They are places the public and history can intersect and have the potential to understand our collective experience of the past better.

Now is our chance to remedy some of the marker program's shortcomings. With the current attention on diverse experiences in the antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction eras, Oklahoma has the opportunity to revise its existing markers and bring a more inclusive experience of the conflict to the public. The Oklahoma State Legislature has introduced legislation to create a "Civil War Trail" system several times in recent years. Funding a revised marker system is possible through cooperation with the state legislature and the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and

Seminole Nation tribal governments. At Honey Springs Battlefield, new trail panels focus on the words of those who experienced the conflict allowing individual stories to lead the discussion. The source material for the Civil War in Indian Territory is rich with personal accounts, diaries, letters, and other firsthand reflections of the events as they unfold. Any interpretation enshrined in "permanent" markers will be contentious; however, we should focus our efforts on the human experience, allowing readers to gain a personal understanding of individual thought, sacrifice, and experience in a contextualized setting.

Perhaps the 150 – 200 words of the narrative are not sufficient to address such profound events in our history. The solution remains the project of future public historians. The experience of visiting the location of an event or historic site can serve as a backdrop for everyday conversations. While the vast majority of Oklahoma’s markers were erected during the Jim Crow era, we can expand the narrative to include the contributions and suffering of the civilian population, the personal stories of conflict, and the contributions of various minorities as they experienced the war in what is now Oklahoma. We can, with effort, transform our Civil War marker system into a diverse narrative of personal remembrance allowing the public to understand that the conflict was not only a monumental historic event with armies marching across fields of battle, but rather, it was the multi-year struggle of countless individuals at home and in military service to survive four gruesome years of war while differing political perspectives battled for supremacy. Furthermore, that battle for supremacy continued for another century as we memorialized and enshrined this seminal event for the public. We can help the public understand that the intersection of these conflicting factions took a heavy toll on individuals and families. Ultimately, we can help those who explore the past through

markers begin to understand, in context, the events that still shape the American cultural landscape.

The voices of the past are a reminder of the shared experience of generations long gone. For decades, memorials to the Civil War focused on the triumph on the battlefield. Today, the shared suffering of the conflict has expanded but remains incomplete. As museums, historic sites, and the historiography continue to expand the narrative of the war to include an increasingly wider variety of perspectives, they also bring attention to the humanity of its participants. It is that humanity that drove the popularity of Ken Burns *The Civil War.* The voices of the individual who lived in the moment bridged the divide of time. While the extraordinary popularity of the war peaked in the 1990s and early 2000s, it remains a topic of significant interest to the public.

Furthermore, public historians must ensure that the public understands the many complicated factors that led to the truly revolutionary moment in American history. In Oklahoma, we can ensure that the Civil War in Indian Territory transitions from Native American participation in the conflict to the "civil wars" within the Civil War in Indian Territory, acknowledging the unique individual experiences in the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations among others. We can provide a voice to the participants of Reconstruction in Indian Territory, including the Native Nations that watched as their sovereignty and independence was destroyed and to the enslaved who gained their freedom but quickly lost their newly won status as racism institutionalized segregation and led to second-class status. And, we can accept that Oklahoma's history of the war was dedicated to the Lost Cause ideology professed well

into the twentieth century and begin to remove the memorialization of individuals and events that do not deserve our praise.

The creation of the Honey Springs Battlefield Park is the culmination of efforts at preservation and interpretation of the Civil War in Oklahoma thus far. It was made possible by the tireless effort of countless individuals. Its success finally came with the introduction of the collaborative relationship initially planned in the 1960s but not fully implemented until the 1990s. Just as the NPS moved beyond the Lost Cause through the professionalization of staff, so too has the OHS, thanks in large part to the efforts of Dr. Bob Blackburn in the 1990s. The agency now faces the question of whether it should use the model developed for Honey Springs as a roadmap for the construction of a visitor's center at Cabin Creek Battlefield or whether it remains a protected site with improved markers and outdoor interpretive panels.

As Frederick Douglas noted in his 1894 Decoration Day speech in Rochester, New York, “the rebellion is suppressed but not conquered; that its spirit is still abroad and only waits the chance to reassert itself.”[384] We can move beyond David Blight’s early reconciliationist, white supremacist, and emancipationist perspectives and understand that the war and its aftermath in Indian Territory are significantly more complicated. In administering history for the public, the OHS has a fundamental responsibility to ensure they keep up with current trends in the field and incorporate the most diverse narrative possible when providing the public, the complicated narrative of Indian Territory’s road

[384] Douglass, Frederick. "Decoration Day. A Verbatim Report of the Address of Frederick Douglass at Franklin Square, Rochester, N.Y."6-7, 10, Manuscript/Mixed Material. https://www.loc.gov/item/mfd.27003/.

to war and Reconstruction. And as this study has illustrated, they are keenly aware of that responsibility and willing to adapt.

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APPENDICES

Oklahoma Historical Society Civil War Historical Marker Text

Name/Topic	Description	Location	County
Fort Wayne	Established in 1839, the army fort was named in honor of General "Mad" Anthony Wayne. The fort was abandoned in May 1842. During the Civil War, in July 1861, Colonel Stand Watie used the fort as a Confederate post and organized the Cherokee Mounted Rifles. The fort was captured by Union forces in the Battle of Fort Wayne on October 22, 1862.	on US-59 on south edge of Watts	Adair
Confederate Cemetery	The cemetery contains graves of Confederate soldiers who fought in the Civil War.	on US-69 at the Confederate Memorial Museum on the east side of Atoka	Atoka

Middle Boggy Battle Site	On this site lie Confederate soldiers who died in battle, February 13, 1864. The Confederate encampment here at Middle (or Muddy) Boggy Crossing on the Boggy Depot Road was held by Lieutenant Colonel John Jumper, Seminole Battalion. Captain Adam Nail's Company A of First Choctaw and Chickasaw Cavalry and a detachment of the Twentieth Texas Regiment was suddenly attacked by Federal forces; three companies of Fourteenth Kansas Cavalry with Major Charles Willetts in command and a section of howitzers under Captain Solomon Kaufman. The Confederates, though poorly armed, made a firm stand in a kat fight of thirty minutes in which forty-seven of their men were killed and others wounded. Word of Confederate forces riding in from Boggy Depot (1.2 miles southwest) caused a harried retreat of the Federal troops toward Fort Gibson north.	on US-69 near bridge over Middle Boggy Creek	Atoka
Chahte Tamaha	This settlement was also called Choctaw City and was the site of Armstrong Academy, established by the Choctaw Nation in 1845. The Choctaw National Council met in the main hall of the academy for twenty years. Chahte Tamaha served as the Confederate capital during the Civil War. Delegates to a meeting of the United Nations of Indian Territory met here at the beginning of the Civil War to ally with the Confederacy. Armstrong Academy continued as a Choctaw boys school until a fire destroyed the building in 1919.	on US-70 at the eastern city limits of Bokchito	Bryan

Fort McCulloch	Brigadier General Albert Pike built Fort McCulloch in 1862 as a major Confederate stronghold in Indian Territory. The post was named for Brigadier General Ben McCullough who was killed in the Battle of Pea Ridge. During the Civil War, the fort was home to 3,000 soldiers and eighteen pieces of artillery. The post was abandoned soon after Pike was relieved of his command in the fall of 1862.	on OK-48 west of Kenefic	Bryan
Fort Washita	The site for Fort Washita was selected by the post's first commander, and later President of the United States, Zachary Taylor. US Army troops manned the fort from April 23, 1843, until it was abandoned to Confederate forces on May 1, 1861. After the Civil War, the fort was never again used as a military installation, but the post office remained open until May 1880.	on OK-199 east of Lake Texoma bridge, thirteen miles east of Madill	Bryan
General Douglas Hancock Cooper	General Cooper was appointed as the US Indian agent to the Choctaws in 1853 and to the Chickasaws in 1856. He consolidated the two agencies and moved them to Fort Washita. When the Civil War began, Cooper's friend, Confederate President Jefferson Davis, appointed him Choctaw-Chickasaw agent for the Confederacy. As commander of the Choctaw-Chickasaw Confederate mounted riflemen, he saw much action. He later was promoted to commander of the Indian Territory Military District, C.S.A., and was named Superintendent of Indian Affairs by President Davis. He died at	on OK-199, thirteen miles east of Madill in Fort Washita Cemetery	Bryan

	Fort Washita in 1879 and is buried in an unmarked grave.		
Julia Jackson Chapter United Daughters of the Confederacy	Sponsored by the Julia Jackson Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the nearby granite marker honors Douglas Hancock Cooper, the first Confederate agent for the Choctaws and Chickasaws and later commander of the Choctaw-Chickasaw Mounted Rifles.	near Douglas Cooper monument at Fort Washita	Bryan
Fort Cobb	Established October 1, 1859, Fort Cobb was manned by Federal troops to allay fears of raids by Plains Indians on Choctaws, Chickasaws, and white settlers moving West. Four companies of infantry were garrisoned at the fort until it was evacuated in May of 1861. During the Civil War, the fort was occupied by Confederate soldiers. After the Battle of the Washita (1868), Fort Cobb was headquarters of General W. B. Hazen, special Indian agent, General Philip H. Sheridan, and Colonel George Armstrong Custer. The US Army abandoned the post in March of 1869.	on OK-9 in Fort Cobb	Caddo
Wichita Agency	This first Indian agency opened by the federal government in western Oklahoma began operations in 1859 on the site of an abandoned Kichai village. Agents controlled relations with the Wichitas and exiled tribes from Texas, including Caddo, Anadarko, Tawakoni, Waco, and Ionie. Federal Indian forces attacked the agency on the night of October 23, 1862, before the federal troops all but exterminated the Confederate Tonkawa tribe in a bloody massacre nearby. The attacks closed the work of the agency	on US-62, eight miles west of Anadarko	Caddo

	until after the Civil War when it was moved to Anadarko.		
Pikey's Crossing	Pikey's Crossing (circa 1867) on the South Canadian River was established by Benson Pikey, a Chickasaw born in Mississippi and Trail of Tears survivor (circa 1837). He was elected as a Representative to the Chickasaw House before and after the Civil War. During the Civil War, Ben fought for the Confederacy, serving as Captain of Company G in Shecoe's Chickasaw Battalion Mounted Volunteers.	on SH-4 bridge crossing over the South Canadian River between SH-153 and SH-37 (between Mustang and Tuttle).	Canadian/Grady
Manard	Named for early-day fur trader Pierre Manard, a member of the Chouteau family, the settlement was the site of a Civil War skirmish on July 27, 1862, in which Federal troops and the Indian Home Guard routed Confederate forces.	on OK-82 south of Tahlequah, one mile east of the Cherokee-Muskogee County line	Cherokee
Park Hill	Before the Civil War, Park Hill was the center of culture and learning in the Cherokee Nation. See Park Hill Press.	1/2 mile east of junction of US-62 and OK-82 on south edge of Tahlequah.	Cherokee
Fort Towson	Colonel Matthew Arbuckle ordered the construction of the fort in May 1824 to guard the US boundary with Mexico. After Indian removals to the area in the 1830s, the fort served as a permanent army post until 1854. During the Civil War, the fort was occupied by Confederate forces. Brigadier General Stand Watie surrendered his Confederate troops here in June 1865, the last Confederate general to lay down	on US-70 at east edge of Fort Towson	Choctaw

	his arms. Fort Towson was abandoned after the Civil War.		
Fort Towson Landing	The Fort Towson Landing was south of here on the banks of the Red River. Also known as the Public Landing, it served as a receiving point for soldiers and supplies delivered by keelboats and steamboats from 1824 to 1854. Traders at the Choctaw settlement of Doaksville and local planters received goods and transported cotton to New Orleans. The cotton went to textile mills in Great Britain and the eastern United States helping to fuel the Industrial Revolution. Commercial navigation on the Upper Red River continued until the early 1900s when railroads surpassed it an as economical mode of transportation.	on US-70 near Swink	Choctaw
Goodland Mission	The first church and school were built here in 1850. During the Civil War, Choctaw troops drilled on the campus for service in the Confederacy. However, after the war, the school returned to its primary mission of educating Indian youth. Later, the mission school was called the Goodland Indian Orphanage, operated by the Southern Presbyterian Church. As the Goodland Presbyterian Children's Home since 1960, it is one of the oldest schools in continuous operation in Oklahoma.	on OK-2A, one mile south of Hugo	Choctaw

Rose Hill	Rose Hill, constructed before the Civil War, was the plantation home of Colonel Robert M. Jones, the wealthiest citizen of the Choctaw Nation. At one time, he owned 500 slaves to farm the land along the Red River. His mansion was decorated with crystal chandeliers imported from Europe. Rose Hill burned to the ground on Christmas night 1912. Only a row of massive cedar trees mark the site of the home today. Nearby, Jones is buried with his wife and children in a family cemetery.	on US-70, two miles east of Hugo	Choctaw
Stand Watie Surrender	Stand Watie's Surrender, Here at Doaksville, June 23, 1865, Brigadier General Stand Watie, Cherokee Indian, was the last Confederate general to surrender.	Doaksville	Choctaw
Fort Wayne	Fort Wayne was originally intended as a link in the great line of forts extending north and south to afford protection on the frontier of the unknown West. It was soon realized that such extensive precautions were not necessary, and the locations were abandoned. One building had been completed, with four more under construction. These improvements were given to the Cherokee Nation and were in use until after the War Between the States. The exact site is known, but the buildings no longer exist and today nothing remains to mark the location of this frontier army post.	on SH20, about one mile west of Arkansas line	Delaware

New Springplace Cherokee Mission	Established by the Moravian Church in 1842, the old mission was closed during the Civil War after missionary James Ward was ambushed and killed. Prominent Cherokee families such as Adair, Fields, Ridge, Vann, and Watie attended the mission.	on OK-412A, three miles north of Oaks	Delaware
Stand Watie	Stand Watie, a leader of the pro-removal faction of Cherokees in the southeastern United States, was the first Indian commissioned in the Civil War as a general officer. At the close of the conflict, he commanded all Confederate troops in the Department of Indian Territory. In May of 1865, he surrendered to Union troops near Fort Towson, the last Confederate general to lay down his arms.	in Polson Cemetery, two miles northwest of South West City, Missouri	Delaware
Watie and Ridge	Watie and his cousin, John Ridge, were signers of the 1835 treaty that brought about the removal of the Cherokees from Georgia to Indian Territory. Ridge was killed by opponents of removal, but Watie escaped and became a general in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. See Stand Watie.	on US-59, 1/2 mile south of Grove	Delaware
Fort Arbuckle	Captain Randolph Marcy established Fort Arbuckle in April 1851. From this major army post, Marcy and George B. McClellan, later the commander in chief of the Army of the Potomac, set out to explore the source of the Red River. The post was abandoned to Confederate forces in May of 1861. After being garrisoned by US troops after the Civil War, Fort Arbuckle was abandoned in 1870.	three miles west of Davis, one mile south of Indian Meridian/Base Line intersection (DAR)	Garvin

Sinking of the J. R. Williams	On June 15, 1864, Confederate forces led by Brigadier General Stand Watie captured and sunk the Union steamboat *J. R. Williams* on the Arkansas River. The cargo was valued at $120,000. Southern troops included Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles in what is known as the most inland naval battle of the Civil War.	on OK-9, four miles east of Stigler	Haskell
Battle of Backbone Mountain	Union forces, led by Major General James G. Blunt, and Confederate troops, commanded by Brigadier General William L. Cabell, skirmished here in September of 1863. On July 27, 1864, a Choctaw battalion under the command of Captain Jackson McCurtain defeated federal troops nearby.	on OK-112, one mile north of OK-120	Le Flore
Fort Coffee	Named in honor of General John Coffee of Tennessee, Fort Coffee was established by the 7th Infantry on June 16, 1834, on the southern bank of the Arkansas River. Because of relative peace in the area, the fort was abandoned four years later. In 1842, the Choctaw Council established the Fort Coffee Academy for boys. Confederate forces used the barracks during the Civil War. However, Federal troops overran the post in October of 1863 and burned the main buildings.	on US-271 east of Spiro	Le Flore
Cabin Creek Battlefield	Cabin Creek Battlefield. On Sept. 18, 1864, a Confederate force of 2,000, Mainly Gen. Stand Watie's Indian Brigade, intercepted from a Union supply train enroute from Kansas to Ft. Gibson. The Convoy of 130 wagons with supplies worth $1.5 million was captured after a heavy engagement. Last	Cabin Creek Battlefield near Pensacola.	Mayes

	major Civil War engagement in Indian Territory.		
Battle of Cabin Creek	The first Battle of Cabin Creek was fought July 1 and 2, 1863, where Cabin Creek crossed the old Fort Gibson Military Road. The second battle occurred September 18, 1864, when 2,000 Confederate troops under Brigadier General Stand Watie captured a 130-wagon federal supply train carrying $1.5 million in goods. This was the last major Civil War engagement in Indian Territory.	on US-69, one mile south of Craig-Mayes County line	Mayes
Battle of Locust Grove	On July 2, 1862, federal troops under Colonel William Weer surprised a Confederate encampment here. The Southerners led by Colonel J. J. Clarkson surrendered, but heavy fighting continued throughout the day in nearby woods between Union troops and Confederate soldiers who escaped the raid.	on OK-33 on east side of Locust Grove in parkway at "Pipe Spring," SH 33	Mayes
Cabin Creek Battlefield	Emplacements can still be seen where cannons were set to defend the crossing of Cabin Creek. There are many unmarked graves of soldiers who died when General Stand Watie's Confederate troops captured a Federal supply train on September 18, 1864. Earlier, in July 1863, the Confederates were defeated in a small skirmish here.	on US-69 north of Patton	Mayes
Creek Council Ground	Confederate Commissioner Albert Pike met with Creek leaders at North Fork Town, now covered by the waters of Lake Eufaula, on July 10, 1861, to sign a treaty in which the Creeks pledged their support to the South in the Civil War.	at Eufaula Indian community at Seventh and Forest in Eufaula	McIntosh

Honey Springs Battlefield	Six monuments and markers pay tribute to those who fought in the Civil War Battle of Honey Springs on July 17, 1863. Included are Honey Springs Depot, the Texas Confederates, the Indian and Texas troops, Union soldiers, and the First Regiment Kansas Colored Volunteers, one of the first African American units of the Civil War to play a key part in a Union victory.	six miles northeast of Checotah	McIntosh
Battle of Honey Springs	This battlefield east of the marker, beginning near the south edge of Oktaha, extends south over the countryside more than two and a half miles to Honey Springs on Elk Creek, located south of the Muskogee County line in McIntosh County. Beautiful, clear flowing Honey Springs can be seen about one and a half miles east and north of Rentiesville, McIntosh County. On a rise of ground several hundred feet north of the springs was a Confederate commissary depot where large stores of flour, pork, and other supplies in a big warehouse were destroyed by the Confederate troops to keep them from falling into the hands of the enemy.	on US-69, south of Oktaha	Muskogee
North Fork Town	From 1836, this was an important center on the Texas Road in the Creek Nation. Albert Pike secured treaties between the Creeks, Chickasaws, and Choctaws and the Confederacy here in 1861. See Creek Council Ground.	at the intersection of Elm and Main Streets in Eufaula	McIntosh

Bake Oven	This brick oven was constructed with the new bakery erected at Fort Gibson about 1863 to supply the garrison with fresh bread.	at the Fort Gibson Historic Site	Muskogee
Battle of Honey Springs	This battlefield east of the marker, beginning near the south edge of Oktaha, extends south over the countryside more than two and a half miles to Honey Springs on Elk Creek, located south of the Muskogee County line in McIntosh County. Beautiful, clear flowing Honey Springs can be seen about one and a half miles east and north of Rentiesville, McIntosh County. On a rise of ground several hundred feet north of the springs was a Confederate commissary depot where large stores of flour, pork, and other supplies in a big warehouse were destroyed by the Confederate troops to keep them from falling into the hands of the enemy.	on US-69, south of Oktaha	Muskogee
Cherokee National Cemetery	Before the Civil War, the Cherokees designated the cemetery as a national cemetery. The Cherokee Nation maintained the cemetery until 1906 when it was transferred to the town of Fort Gibson. Cherokee Principal Chief William P. Ross and other tribal leaders are buried here.	on East Poplar Street in Fort Gibson	Muskogee
Fort Davis	Brigadier General Albert Pike established this frontier post in November of 1861 to house Confederate forces. It was named for Confederate President Jefferson Davis who had served in present-day Oklahoma in his army career. Union forces completely destroyed the heavily fortified post two days after Christmas in 1862.	on OK-16, one mile north of Bacone College	Muskogee

Fort Gibson	Fort Gibson has a long and colorful history. The first post was erected by Colonel Matthew Arbuckle in 1824 and named for the head of the army's commissary department. At the time, it was the westernmost fort built by the military to guard the western frontier.	on OK-80 in Fort Gibson	Muskogee
Fort Gibson	In the twenty-six years before the Civil War, more than a hundred West Point graduates served at Fort Gibson, including Confederate President Jefferson Davis. In 1841, the post was headquarters of Brigadier General and later President Zachary Taylor. Known as Fort Blunt and occupied by federal troops during the Civil War, the post was abandoned in 1890. See Fort Gibson.	on US-62 east of Fort Gibson	Muskogee
Webbers Falls	Western Cherokee Chief Walter Webber established a trading post here in 1829. The falls on the Arkansas were reportedly six feet high in 1806, sufficient to block travel for river steamers. The village of Webbers Falls was burned by federal troops in the Civil War in April 1863.	on US-64 at west end of the Arkansas River Bridge	Muskogee
Civil War 10-Pounder	This three-inch, muzzle-loading field cannon was used in battle by the New Jersey Volunteer Artillery and for entertainment by Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show. Major Gordon W. Lillie (Pawnee Bill) gave the cannon to his long-time publicist Frank Stuart who kept it at his Nichols Hills home before bequeathing it to the Oklahoma Historical Society.	on grounds of Wiley Post Building, 2100 North Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City	Oklahoma

Council Grove	Jesse Chisholm opened a trading post here in 1858. In 1865, Comanche and Kiowa met nearby with Confederate leaders. Barracks were constructed on the site to house soldiers to clear timber for the construction of Fort Reno.	near Northwest Tenth Street and the North Canadian River in Bethany (DAR)	Oklahoma
Samuel Checote	Samuel Checote was the first elected Creek chief after the Civil War and spent much of his life serving as a Methodist minister. Checote was a lieutenant colonel in the Confederate Army.	on OK-56 on grounds of Creek Council House Square in Okmulgee	Okmulgee
Battle of Round Mountain	Between the landmark known as Round Mountain (Twin Mounds) to the south and a camp on Salt Creek two miles northwest, the first battle of the Civil War in Oklahoma was fought between a group of loyal Creeks under Opothleyaholo and Confederate forces led by Colonel Douglas H. Cooper. Some scholars believe this engagement took place in Tulsa County.	one mile north and 1/4 mile west of intersection of OK-18 and OK-51, four miles west of Yale	Payne
Battle of Chustenahla	This site, 3.5 miles N.W. is where Col. Jas. McIntosh, 2nd Ark. Mtd. Rifles routed loyal Union Indian forces Dec. 26, 1861. The Battle opened with fire from the Indian line on Patriot's Hill. 2 Mi. S.W. the loyal "Union" Indians finally fled to Kansas.		

1st Kansas Regiment Kansas Colored Volunteers	On July 17, 1863, At the Battle of Honey Springs, the 1st Kansas Colored Volunteers Wrote a stirring page in American History, becoming one of the first Black units of the Civil War to play a key role in a Union victory. As Major General James G. Blunt, the Union commander at Honey Springs, reported: "The First Kansas Colored particularly distinguished itself, they fought like veterans, and preserved their line unbroken throughout the engagement. Their coolness and bravery I have never seen surpassed. They were in the hottest of the fight and opposed to Texas troops twice their number, whom they completely routed." Consisting largely of escaped slaves from Arkansas and Missouri, on January 13, 1863, the 1st Kansas became the fourth Black regiment to officially enter Federal services. Later redesignated as the 79th U. S. Colored Infantry, this command fought with conspicuous bravery in Missouri, Indian Territory, Kansas, and Arkansas. Mustered out in October 1865. Suffered a total of 177 men killed in action, more combat casualties than any other Kansas regiment.	Honey Springs Battlefield	McIntosh
Five Civilized Tribes at the Battle of Honey Springs	Five Civilized Tribes at the Battle of Honey Springs. Order of Battle (Indian Unites) Federal: First Indian Home Guard (Cherokee), Second Indian Home Guard (Cherokee). Confederate: First Choctaw Regiment, Second Choctaw Regiment, First Chickasaw and Choctaw Regiment, First Creek Regiment,	Honey Springs Battlefield	McIntosh

	Second Creek Regiment, Seminole Detachment.		
Honey Springs Battlefield	"We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain" This commemorative marker is dedicated to the memory of the Union soldiers who bravely fought and died here on July 17, 1863. Major General James G. Blunt began moving 3,000 Union troops south along the Texas Road on July 15 to prevent a Confederate attach on Fort Gibson. The Battle of Honey Springs took place north of the depot where 5,000 Confederate Troops were deployed along the road. Despite desperate Confederate resistance, Blunts troops forced a Confederate retreat and earned a Union victory. Union Unites presented in Battle were: First Indian Home Guards, Second Indian Home Guards, Third Indian Home Guard, First Kansas Colored Infantry, Sixth Kansas Cavalry, Second Kansas Battery, Hopkins Kansas Battery, Second Colorado Infantry, Third Wisconsin Cavalry. Donated by Grateful Oklahomans in remembrance of those Union soldiers who fought and died in the Battle of Honey Springs.	Honey Springs Battlefield	McIntosh
Battle of Chustenahlah	This site, 3.5 miles N.W. is where Col. Jas. McIntosh, 2nd Ark. Mtd. Rifles routed loyal Union Indian forces Dec. 26, 1861. The Battle opened with fire from the Indian line on Patriot's Hill. 2 Mi. S.W. the loyal "Union" Indians finally fled to Kansas.	on OK-20, three miles west of Skiatook Sportsman Club (DAR)	Osage

VITA

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