

CONFEDERATE INDIAN FORCES OUTSIDE OF INDIAN TERRITORY

By LeRoy H. Fischer and Jerry Gill*

Following the major defeat of the South at Pea Ridge in Arkansas, Brigadier General Albert Pike and his Confederate Indian forces straggled back into Indian Territory. They were dismayed and depressed, and Pike brooded over the unfortunate events of this battle of March 6 to 8, 1862, in which his Indian forces had been participants in spite of specific Confederate-Indian treaties which provided for their use only in Indian Territory.

The Confederacy, realizing the strategic importance of Indian Territory to its cause, had taken vigorous steps in 1861 to annex the area.¹ On March 6 of that year, Pike, a resident of Arkansas, had been appointed commissioner to the tribes in Indian Territory by the Confederate government, with an assignment to negotiate treaties of alliance with the Indians.² Due to a number of favorable circumstances, he had successfully concluded permanent treaties with the Five Civilized Tribes by October 7, 1861.³ In each, the Confederate States promised not to move or use Indian soldiers "beyond the limits of the Indian country west of Arkansas without their consent."⁴

Under these treaties a number of Confederate Indian units operated. The First Cherokee Regiment of Mounted Volunteers was led by Colonel Stand Watie, and the First Cherokee Regi-

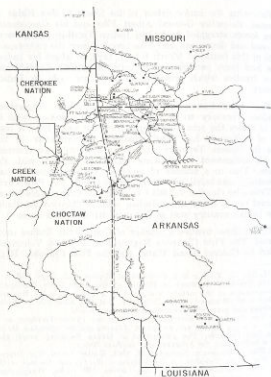
*LeRoy H. Fischer is a Professor of History and Jerry Gill is a Graduate Teaching Assistant in History at Oklahoma State University. The preparation of this article was aided by a grant from the Research Foundation of Oklahoma State University, and this assistance is deeply appreciated and gratefully acknowledged by the authors.

¹The Confederate government hoped to use Indian Territory as a base for invading Kansas and southwest Missouri and for extending its influence into Colorado. The annexation of Indian Territory would also create a buffer zone for Arkansas and northern Texas.

²Pike to Benjamin, November 27, 1861, United States War Department, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (four series, 128 books, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Ser. 1, Vol. VIII, pp. 697-698; Darts to the Congress of the Confederate States, December 12, 1861, *ibid.*, Ser. 1r, Vol. 1, pp. 795-797.

³Annie R. Abel, "The Indians in the Civil War," *American Historical Review*, Vol. XV (January, 1910), pp. 282-288; Anne H. Abel, *The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1915), pp. 93-126.

⁴Confederate-Cherokee Treaty, October 7, 1861, *Official Records*, Ser. 1r, Vol. 1, pp. 669-670. This provision is quoted from the Cherokee Treaty, page 670, but the same basic promise is also contained in the treaties with the other Civilized Tribes.



(Lester M. Fletcher and Jerry Gil)

CONFEDERATE INDIAN OPERATIONS OUTSIDE OF INDIAN TERRITORY

ment of Mounted Riflemen was commanded by Colonel John Drew. The leader of the First Regiment of Choctaw and Chickasaw Mounted Rifles was Colonel Douglas H. Cooper; the Creeks and Seminoles raised a regiment under the leadership of Colonel Daniel N. McIntosh; and a Seminole battalion was headed by Major John Jumper, principal chief of the tribe.⁵ Together these units numbered well over 5,000 men, and involved approximately 10,000 before the war ended.

Even before Indian troop units were organized under provisions of the Confederate treaties, the Indians had been operating militarily inside the borders of Kansas and Missouri. In May of 1861 Brigadier General Ben McCulloch of Texas had been directed "to engage . . . the services of any of the Indian tribes occupying the Territory."⁶ As a result, Joel B. Mayes, a prominent Cherokee cattleman, serving as the captain of a company of Cherokee Indians, followed McCulloch to the Battle of Wilson's Creek in southwest Missouri on August 10, 1861. In this Confederate victory the Indians did little actual fighting except for minor skirmishing on the fringes of the battle, although it was reported later that some Northern soldiers had been scalped. When Brigadier General Sterling Price, the commander of the Confederate forces at Wilson's Creek, began to enforce more rigid discipline among his troops, the Cherokees drifted back to Indian Territory.⁷ While McCulloch was unimpressed with the performance of the Indians at Wilson's Creek, he was highly pleased with the scouting activity of Watie and his men in the summer of 1861 in southern Kansas and the northern reaches of the Cherokee Nation. McCulloch requested in September of 1861 that Watie and his force be attached to his command, describing him as a "gallant man."⁸

Although the small Confederate Indian units of Mayes and Watie served voluntarily outside of Indian Territory, a military situation soon developed which urgently demanded the support of all Confederate Indian forces. In February of 1862 Brigadier General Samuel R. Curtis of the Federal forces

⁵ Charles Richard Francis, "Confederate Ascendancy in Indian Territory, 1860-1861" (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, 1963), pp. 40-52.

⁶ Order to McCulloch, May 13, 1861, *Official Records*, Ser. I, Vol. III, pp. 675-676.

⁷ William P. Connelley, *Quadrant and the Border Wars* (Cedar Rapids: The Torch Press, 1910), p. 108; Frank Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians* (San Antonio: The Naylor Co., 1900), pp. 38-41; Annie H. Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1919), p. 34, n. 72.

⁸ McCulloch to Drew, September 1, 1861, McCulloch to Walker, September 2, 1861, McCulloch to Price, October 22, 1861, *Official Records*, Ser. I, Vol. III, pp. 691-692, 721.

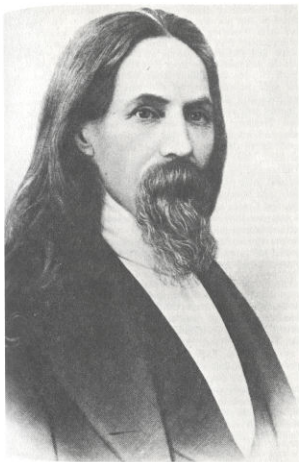
pushed Price out of southwestern Missouri and threatened to overrun northern Arkansas. Price's force alone were not strong enough to deter Curtis. Coupled with this grave military situation was the inability of Price and McCulloch, the only other important Confederate general in the West, to cooperate. President Jefferson Davis settled the problem of command in the West by creating the Trans-Mississippi District and placing Major General Earl Van Dorn in charge.

Van Dorn, who had a reputation as a fighting general, immediately began preparations for a counteroffensive against Curtis in southern Missouri. Curtis had halted his army north of Pea Ridge, Arkansas, and was awaiting reinforcements. Van Dorn first issued orders to McCulloch and Pike, the commander of the Department of Indian Territory, on February 22 to join him with their forces at Price's headquarters in the Boston Mountains south of Fayetteville. Then, finding that Curtis was awaiting reinforcements, Van Dorn immediately dispatched new orders to Pike on March 3 to march his entire force, with all possible speed, along the Cane Hill Road and fall in behind the rest of the army at Fayetteville. Still afraid that Pike would not reach him in time, Van Dorn sent corrected orders to Pike on the evening of the same day, commanding Pike to alter his course to as direct a route as possible and meet Price's army at Elm Springs, ten miles north of Fayetteville on the Bentonville Road. In his need for haste, Van Dorn even issued direct orders to Watie, Daniel N. McIntosh, and Drew to move along the road from Evansville to Fayetteville.⁹

Pike's troops were totally unprepared for combat, and only through great effort and sacrifice were his forces able to reach the battle area on time. His men not only lacked training, but were short of clothing, arms and ammunition because such supplies had been diverted for use among other Confederate forces. In addition, for an extended period his troops had not been paid, and he lacked the adequate white troops which had been promised to him to bolster his Indian forces. Instead of the three regiments of white troops Pike considered adequate, he had only one squadron of Texans led by Captain Otis G. Welch.¹⁰

⁹ Maury to Pike, March 3, 1862. Maury to Drew, McIntosh, and Watie, March 4, 1862, *ibid.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 763-765; Walter L. Brown, "Pea Ridge: Gettysburg of the West," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XV (Spring, 1936), p. 8; Roy A. Clifford, "The Indian Regiments in the Battle of Pea Ridge," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXV (Winter, 1947), p. 315; Edwin C. Benson, "The Battle of Pea Ridge," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XX (Spring, 1931), pp. 82-83; Warren Manassa Dethlefsen, "Brigadier General Stand Watie, Confederate Guerrilla" (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, 1946), p. 27.

¹⁰ Matiel H. Wright, "General Douglas H. Cooper, C.S.A.," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXII (Summer, 1954), p. 167; Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, p. 29.



(Oklahoma Historical Society)

COLONEL DANIEL N. McINTOSH

As commander of the combined Confederate Creek and Seminole regiment, McIntosh occasionally operated outside of Indian Territory and helped cover retreating supply trains at the Battle of Pea Ridge in Arkansas.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, and contrary to treaty stipulations and his own beliefs, Pike responded to Van Dorn's orders. After receiving the Trans-Mississippi commander's first communication, Pike wasted three precious days paying the Choctaw and Chickasaw troops at Cantonment Davis, located across the Arkansas River from Fort Gibson.¹¹ He then marched to Park Hill on the Illinois River, where he paid McIntosh's Creek regiment and expected additional Choctaws and Chickasaws from Fort Gibson to overtake him. The Creeks' demand for money was apparently a ruse to avoid fighting outside of Indian Territory; Opothleyahola, the leader of the Federal Creeks, had informed them that they would be forced to serve beyond its borders. The Choctaws and Chickasaws, on the other hand, were willing to fight outside of Indian Territory, but influenced by merchants to whom they owed money, they demanded their pay before they would fight. Pike then moved quickly with Welch's men only, having left the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Creeks behind, to Evansville, Arkansas, on March 3. The next day Pike overtook Watie's Cherokee regiment at Cincinnati, Arkansas, and on March 6 they caught up with Drew's Cherokee regiment at Osage Mills, Arkansas. Later the same day, Pike and his troops, consisting of 800 Indians and 200 Texans, met McCulloch's division.¹²

Van Dorn's army, estimated at 15,000 men, halted at nightfall on the Bentonville Road, and Van Dorn summoned McCulloch and Colonel James McIntosh to a conference. It was decided that a flanking movement would be wiser than a frontal assault. Curtis had positioned half of his four divisions directly across Telegraph Road, the main north-south artery between his army and Van Dorn's. The remaining two divisions were located near the tiny village of Leetown, a mile and one-half west of Telegraph Road. Van Dorn realized that Curtis was inviting him to make a direct frontal attack against fortified Union positions overlooking the approaching Confederate army, and he wisely chose an alternate route. His strategy was to take the Bentonville Detour, which bypassed Leetown and Pea Ridge to the northwest and joined Telegraph Road to the rear of Curtis'

¹¹ Fort Gibson was renamed Fort Hunt in July, 1863, by the post commander, Colonel William A. Phillips, in honor of his district commanding officer, Major General James G. Hunt. The name Fort Hunt was discontinued soon after the close of the Civil War in 1865. For purposes of clarity, the name Fort Gibson is used throughout this study.

¹² Pike to Maury, March 14, 1862, *Official Records*, Ser. 1, Vol. VIII, pp. 289-292; Pike to Confederate War Department, May 4, 1862, *ibid.*, Vol. XIII, pp. 819-822.

forces.¹³ Van Dorn ordered his troops to move out on the Bentonville Detour at 8:00 p.m. on the same evening, March 6. Price's men, with Van Dorn and his staff, pulled out first, followed by McCulloch, with Pike and his Indians bringing up the rear. The flanking movement was slowed by the lack of a bridge across Little Sugar Creek and by trees felled across the road by the Union forces on the previous day. Price finally cleared the road about 6:00 a.m. on March 7 and gained the Union rear, with McCulloch and Pike still behind. They were in this position when they received orders from Van Dorn to countermarch and advance against Lestown, four and one-half miles to the southeast.¹⁴

When McCulloch and Pike had marched about one mile south of the Bentonville Detour, near the southwest face of Pea Ridge, they were fired upon by a Federal battery of three guns, supported by five troops of cavalry. The Federals were located on a small prairie, about 250 yards across, which was bounded on the west by a fenced field and on the east by a ridge. Dense undergrowth and timber were located in the rear of the battery. Pike's Indians, carrying the brunt of the artillery attack, took cover in a wooded area behind a rail fence running parallel to the artillery position. Seeing that the artillery, only 300 yards away, was quickly decimating his cover, Pike ordered his men at midday to charge the battery. Watie's regiment, dismounted, and Drew's regiment on horseback led the attack. The Indians, whooping and screaming, charged through a wooded field, across an open prairie, and made a frontal assault on the bewildered Federals. The Indians completely routed the Union cavalry, captured the three guns, and pursued the fleeing enemy. Two of Drew's men were killed and one was wounded in the charge that left between thirty and forty dead Union soldiers around the guns.¹⁵

Drew's Indians jubilantly rode around the cannons, whooping and milling about, with no one obeying orders. Drew thus had lost effective control of his command. Four of the Union cavalry horses lay dead, and the others had bolted with the cannons. For this reason Pike was unable to send the captured guns to the rear, having neither harness nor horses to spare. While Drew's Cherokees were occupied with the captured guns, Watie was reconnoitering the surrounding area. He returned in twenty minutes to inform Pike that a second Federal battery, supplemented by infantry, was located to the front beyond a

¹³ Van Dorn to BRAGG, March 27, 1862, Curtis to McLean, April 1, 1862, *ibid.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 283-286, 105-204; Brown, "Pea Ridge, Gateway of the West," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XV, pp. 10-11.

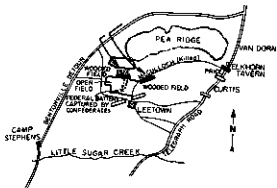
¹⁴ Pike to Maury, March 14, 1862, *Official Records*, Ser. 1, Vol. VIII, pp. 283-292.

skirt of underbrush. Pike ordered the captured guns turned around in order to fire on the Union forces, but in the confusion his order was disregarded. Union shells soon fell into the midst of Drew's Indians and scattered them. As they fled back to the woods they had earlier charged through, they were ordered by Pike to dismount, lead their horses to the rear, and take cover behind the trees. From their advantageous positions, the Cherokees coolly awaited a Federal attack which never materialized. Instead, the Union forces directed a two and one-half hour artillery and rifle barrage into the wooded area. At 1:30 p.m., about one hour after the shelling had commenced, Confederate cavalry formed to the left and front of the wooded area occupied by the Indians. Pike dispatched Drew's 500-man regiment to the rear of this formation, where they crossed an open field and then dismounted near the other edge of the timber. Meanwhile, a detail headed by Sergeant Major George West of Watie's regiment took the battery captured earlier into the woods, where a guard of Cherokees was placed over it. This feat was accomplished in spite of the heavy Federal shelling, most of which passed over the guard. Pinned down by the shelling, Pike's Indians were useless for the rest of the day.¹⁴

About 3:00 p.m. Pike rode past his left flank to check the ominous silence in that direction, and learned of the deaths of McCulloch and James McIntosh. Fearing that his left flank had been turned, he withdrew his forces to a wooded ridge on the left and behind the open field which the Indians had previously charged across. The field command of all Confederate forces in the Laetown area had fallen upon Pike's shoulders with the deaths of McCulloch and McIntosh. Rumors of a Federal assault indicated that 7,000 Union infantrymen were massing to attack the Confederate left flank at Laetown. Even worse, Pike was uncertain as to where the forces under his command were located, and he was completely out of contact with Van Dorn. Pike wisely decided to withdraw his forces again, by way of the Bentonville Detour and Telegraph Road, and lead them to Van Dorn. Watie's regiment was divided and positioned on the flanks of the withdrawing Confederate force, and Watie's Indians ably covered the movement. Somehow, word of the withdrawal had not reached Drew's men, and he remained in the woods on the battlefield after the rest of Pike's troops had withdrawn. When Drew realized his position, he also withdrew, and not knowing where Pike had gone, moved to Camp Stephens, the supply base at the rear, as had some white troops. Pike and

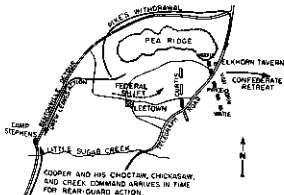
¹³ *Ibid.*; Hathaway, "Brigadier General Stand Watie, Confederate Guerrilla," pp. 29-30.

¹⁴ Pike to Maury, March 14, 1862, *Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. VII*, pp. 296-202.



(Lester M. Fletcher and Jerry GM)

CONFEDERATE INDIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE BATTLE OF PEA RIDGE IN ARKANSAS, MARCH 7, 1862



(Lester M. Fletcher and Jerry GM)

CONFEDERATE INDIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE BATTLE OF PEA RIDGE IN ARKANSAS, MARCH 8, 1862

the men under his command reached Van Dorn's headquarters after dark.¹⁷

Dawn on the morning of March 8 revealed a shift in Federal and Confederate troops in the Leetown area. They had joined forces with the rest of their respective armies, which were facing each other across Telegraph Road near Elk Horn Tavern. Pike's command then consisted only of Watie's First Cherokee Mounted Volunteer Regiment and Welch's squadron. Pike was directed by Van Dorn to place Watie's men on two high ridges located on the flanks of the Southern army, to observe Federal troop movement and to warn Van Dorn should a flanking maneuver be attempted. It took Van Dorn only about two hours on the morning of March 8 to realize that Curtis' men could not be dislodged. Van Dorn could not have sustained a lengthy offensive because most of his troops had been without food for two days and without water for one day. Adding to their physical exhaustion was the fact that most of the infantry had marched sixty miles in three days. The major cause of concern for Van Dorn, however, was the lack of ammunition, which had been left at Camp Stephens southwest of Leetown. A general withdrawal was then commenced. Watie requested an order from Pike directing his removal from Pea Ridge, but when this failed to arrive, Watie moved his men from the high ridge which he occupied and hurried to Camp Stephens to the south, where the baggage train and ammunition were located. It was at this point that Cooper with his Choctaws and Chickasaws reached the battle area. Also under Cooper's command were 200 men from the Creek regiment led by Daniel N. McIntosh. These troops met Drew's Cherokees at Camp Stephens and escorted the retreating Confederate supply train to Elm Springs, while Watie and 200 of his men were detailed to escort the ammunition train from Camp Stephens to the main army which was expected to meet them at Elm Springs. When this anticipated meeting failed to materialize, Watie rejoined the Confederate supply train. At Elm Springs the Indians were ordered to accompany their own supply train to Cincinnati, where they were reunited with Pike and his staff, who had been searching vainly for several days to locate this command. From Cincinnati the Indian force moved back inside the borders of Indian Territory.¹⁸

Pike and his Indians were much maligned for the part they had played in the Battle of Pea Ridge. The most devastating charge was that the bodies of several Union soldiers had been

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*; Clifford, "The Indian Regiments in the Battle of Pea Ridge," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXV, p. 318.

found on the battlefield "tomahawked, scalped, and . . . shamefully mangled."¹⁹ Although unsubstantiated, formal protests were made by Federal officers, and Northern newspapers severely criticized Pike. In partial refutation of the charge, it was later maintained by the Confederates that Drew's men had committed these atrocities and that they subsequently fought for the North. Another criticism of the Indian soldiers was that they could not be disciplined and that they would not remain in formation during artillery barrages. To these accusations Pike replied that mass formation combat was not the proper use of Indian troops, and that they were more effective as scouts and raiders.²⁰

After the Battle of Pea Ridge, Watie and his men returned to scouting duty on the northern border of the Cherokee Nation, and it was from this location that he soon moved eastward to challenge the Federals. On April 25, 1862, Watie's scouts informed him that Union troops were advancing on Elk Mills, Missouri. With a unit of forty men from his camp on Cowskin Prairie, Watie moved to that vicinity and awaited reinforcements, which arrived later in the day. With 140 of his own men and sixty Missourians under Colonel John T. Coffee of the Missouri State Guard, Watie then followed the Federals to Neosho, Missouri. Early the next morning, on April 26, Watie tried a double envelopment of the Federal forces. While some remained behind to hold the horses, Watie and 125 of his men dismounted two miles from the Federal camp and stealthily advanced on foot, completely surprising the Union pickets. With the attack element decidedly in their favor, Watie's Indians killed thirty-one Federals, eleven of whom were officers; three prisoners were also taken. When Coffee failed to commence a simultaneous thrust, the Cherokees were forced to retreat with two killed and five wounded. Major James M. Hubbard and 146 men of the Federal First Missouri Cavalry Regiment regrouped and pushed the Confederate raiders out of camp. Skirmishing continued until 3:00 p.m., when the Cherokee forces remounted and fell back to Cowskin Prairie within the borders of Indian Territory. Both sides claimed a victory. The Indian soldiers proved to be more than effective in their first independent action and probably would have completely routed the Federal forces had Coffee executed his part of the envelopment movement. Cooper was impressed with Watie's leadership ability and

¹⁹ McKenny to Van Dorn, March 9, 1862, *Official Records*, Ser. I, Vol. VIII, p. 194.

²⁰ Curtis to Kelton, March 13, 1862, Maury to Curtis, March 14, 1862, *ibid.*, p. 110; Also, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, pp. 32-34.

recommended that Watie be promoted to brigadier general in order to strengthen Confederate Indian troop morale.²¹

A second engagement near Neosho, on May 1, 1862, proved even more successful. On April 29 Captain Thomas R. Livingston of Watie's command reported that over 200 men of the Fourteenth Regiment of the Missouri State Militia, commanded by Colonel John M. Richardson, were at Granby near Neosho. Watie dispatched Captain Robert C. Parks and 200 men to find and attack the Federals. Parks and the Cherokee cavalry, joined by Coffee and 200 of his men, completely surprised Richardson's force early on the morning of May 1. Again, as at Neosho on April 26, the Indians dismounted and slipped past the Federal pickets, using a wooded knoll as a cover. The blood-curdling war cries of the Indians unnerved the astonished Union soldiers and made their horses nearly unmanageable. The Federal regiments hastily formed to meet the charge and fired a random volley, but as soon as Richardson's horse was shot out from under him, they again became disorganized and fled. Within ten minutes Watie's Indians, under Parks and Coffee, had killed or wounded over ten of the Federals and captured fourteen tents, five wagons and teams, arms, ammunition, commissary supplies, and all of the baggage. The only Confederate casualty was one of Coffee's men, who was killed. Richardson was investigated after this engagement for failure to establish adequate guards. His mistake lay in not posting a picket on the wooded knoll to the southwest of his camp, for it was over this hill that Parks and Coffee had approached.²²

Watie's engagements with Northern forces had been isolated skirmishes near the border, wherever contact could be made with the enemy; but in September of 1862, a concerted effort was made by Confederate forces to push into southwest Missouri. Into that area Cooper (promoted in rank in the previous month from colonel to brigadier general) led his Indian forces and four or five regiments of Texas troops, numbering 7,000 to 8,000, along with several batteries of artillery. From Scott's Mill, Missouri, he moved northward by way of Pineville in order to join forces with Southern troops led by Coffee, Colonel Joseph O. Shelby, Colonel Jeremiah V. Cockrell, and Brigadier General James E. Bains. Within supporting distance of each other, these forces commenced a northward thrust and occupied Neosho.

²¹ Watie to Cooper, April 27, 1862; Hulbard to Curtis, May 2, 1862; Cooper to Van Dorn, May 6, 1862, *Official Records*, Vol. XIII, pp. 62, 63, 823-824.

²² Watie to Cooper, June 1, 1862. Mills to Brown, June 13, 1862, *ibid.*, pp. 62-65; Hathaway, "Brigadier General Stand Watie, Confederate Guerrilla," p. 30; Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, p. 84.

Granby, and Newtonia. By occupying southwest Missouri, the Southern troops were able to recruit men and to control the fertile granaries in Newton and McDonald counties. The mills in these counties supplied grain, flour, and meal for the Confederate soldiers.²³

Northern forces, realizing the importance of this area, were determined to push the Confederates back into Arkansas as soon as possible. Three Federal brigades under the command of Colonel William Weer, Colonel William F. Cloud, and Brigadier General Frederick Solomon occupied defensive positions from Searsville, Missouri, to the Kansas line. The stalemate in southwest Missouri was finally ended when a portion of the Union forces moved toward Newtonia, occupied by a part of Cooper's command.

On the morning of September 30, Federal troops attacked the Confederates at Newtonia, with infantry and artillery. The Union forces outnumbered Colonel Tresevant C. Hawpe's Texas regiment and Major J. M. Bryan's Cherokee battalion, but as the fighting continued, Confederate units in the immediate vicinity arrived at intervals to reinforce the Newtonia contingent. A battery of two guns under the command of Captain Joseph Bledsoe returned the Federal's fire. This battery was supported by Bryan's and Hawpe's men, who were posted behind a stone fence. Cooper and Colonel A. M. Alexander, enroute to Granby when they heard the firing, immediately joined in the action. Alexander's regiment was located to the right of Bledsoe's battery, behind the stone fence. Bryan was on the left, and Hawpe's men occupied a stone barn in the center. On their first onslaught, the Federals gained the edge of the village, and sharpshooters harassed the Confederate battery, forcing it to fall back after it had expended its ammunition. The Union cavalry, upon seeing the battery retire, immediately began moving up, but Bledsoe halted his guns about 150 yards to the rear. This move bluffed the advancing cavalry into thinking the batteries were going to open up again, and it retired.

A charge was next ordered against the Union infantry, which was advancing. Hawpe's men checked the Federal movement but were forced to fall back behind the stone fence again because of intense combined artillery and small arms fire. At this point Lieutenant Colonel Tandy Walker and the First Choctaw and Chickasaw Regiment dramatically entered the village at a full gallop and, screaming and whooping, engaged the enemy. Walker's fierce charge reeled the Federals back. Then

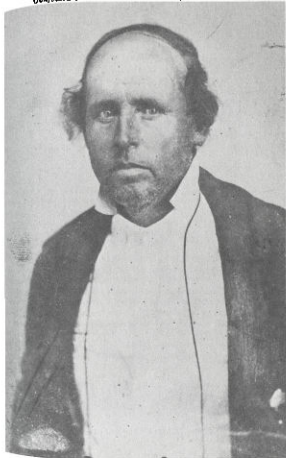
²³ 1864, pp. 88-90; Wright, "General Douglas H. Cooper, C.S.A.," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXII, pp. 169-170.

a flanking movement by part of Shelby's Missouri brigade, led by Lieutenant Colonel B. Frank Gordon, who had just arrived, forced a precipitate Union retreat. Colonel J. G. Stevens' regiment from Granby arrived in time to help pursue the fleeing Federals three miles until heavy reinforcements were encountered.

Cooper during this interval had been further reinforced by Colonel Beal G. Jean's Missouri cavalry and Captain Sylvanus Howell's four-gun battery, positioned at a graveyard on the north side of Newtonia. An artillery duel ensued between Howell's battery and Northern artillery located one mile north of the graveyard. The Federal infantry assault on the center had been repulsed, and then the Union cavalry on the left was dispersed by Bledsoe's battery, which had been resupplied. While the artillery was dominating the action, two Union Indian and Kansas mounted regiments slipped through heavy brush on Cooper's right flank. Again, just at the right moment for the Confederates, reinforcements arrived, this time Lieutenant Colonel Simpson N. Folsom and his Choctaws. Folsom and his men rode through a cornfield and surprised the Federal regiments attempting to flank the Southerners. The Union artillery opened up again, and under the cover of this fire, units of infantry advanced and fierce fighting once again raged on all sides. Folsom's Choctaws successfully repulsed the Union cavalry flanking attack, and the Northern infantry assault on Cooper's center was stopped by artillery. The momentum of the battle swung to the Confederates, and by nightfall they had pushed the Union forces three miles out of Newtonia to a woods. A Union battery, placed across the woods, received several direct hits from Howell's battery. The Federals fled through the woods, abandoning wagons which became wedged among the trees. The Union retreat continued to Sarcoxie, twelve miles north of Newtonia.¹⁴

The engagement at Newtonia, which had been fought on and off all day on September 30, 1862, was a credit to the Confederate Indian forces. Bryan's Cherokee battalion had been under fire nearly all day. Walker and his Choctaw-Chickasaw regiment turned the tide with a thundering charge in the first general engagement, and then Simpson N. Folsom and his Choctaw regiment supplied the impetus for the final Confederate counterattack. The Confederates had only twelve killed, sixty-three wounded, and three missing during the whole action. Bryan had three wounded; Walker had three killed, nine

¹⁴ West to Blunt, October 1, 1862. Cooper to Hains, October 2, 1862. Walker to Cooper, October 2, 1862, *Official Records*, Ser. i, Vol. XIII, pp. 298, 299-301, 302; Cussingham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, p. 71.



(Oklahoma Historical Society)

COLONEL TANDY WALKER

At the Battle of Newtonia in Missouri, Walker and his Confederate First Choctaw and Chickasaw Regiment repelled a Federal assault with a vigorous cavalry charge. Later, at the Battle of Poison Spring in Arkansas, Walker's Second Indian Brigade encountered heavy Federal fire, captured a four-gun battery, and pursued the Federals for several miles.

wounded, and one missing; and Folsom had three killed and six wounded.²⁵

Although the day had been carried by the Confederates, the Federals met heavy reinforcements, regrouped, and returned on October 4. During the night of October 3, 1862, Union forces under the direct command of Curtis, had approached Newtonia in three columns. Curtis, who had been promoted in March of 1862 to major general, was also commander of the Department of Missouri. The Confederates had scattered their forces over a wide area following the first engagement at Newtonia, and lacked time to regroup. Shelby, however, attacked the advance guard of one Federal column on the Jolification Road, and Lieutenant Colonel M. W. Buster, with his battalion and Bryan's First Cherokee Battalion, skirmished with the Federals near Shasl Creek on the Sarcosis and Granby Road. These encounters merely slowed the Federal advance, and did not give Cooper time to march with the First Choctaw and Chickasaw Regiment to Newtonia. Colonel Sampson Folsom and the First Choctaw Regiment remained at Camp Coffee near Big Spring to guard the supply train and to observe the Federal troop movement on the Jolification and Casseville roads.

When Cooper reached a point about three miles south of Newtonia, he found that Shelby had already evacuated Newtonia and was guarding the retreating supply trains traveling south on the Pineville Road. Simpson N. Folsom and a portion of the Choctaw and Chickasaw regiment drove the Federal advance guard back to Newtonia, which the main Union army was just entering. The remainder of Cooper's command was withdrawn and concealed in the timber along the Pineville Road. The Federals, suspecting an ambush, formed on the prairie between Newtonia and the timber and shelled the woods for hours. But Cooper remained concealed in the timber out of effective artillery range and then retreated south after he was joined by Captain Sampson Loering's company of the First Choctaw and Chickasaw Regiment. Loering had been dispatched to Camp Coffee to bring back stragglers and to locate Sampson Folsom, but Folsom and his men had left Camp Coffee earlier and were on the Pineville Road ahead of the supply train. Cooper, after the return of Loering, marched to Dog Hollow, four miles north of Pineville, and spent the night. During the next day, October 5, Cooper continued the march to White Rock Prairie, south of Pineville.

On the night of October 7, 1862, the Federals attacked Confederate pickets near Pineville, and Rains ordered Cooper

²⁵ Cooper to Bains, October 2, 1862, *Official Records*, Ser. 1, Vol. XIII, pp. 296-301.



(Oklahoma Historical Society)

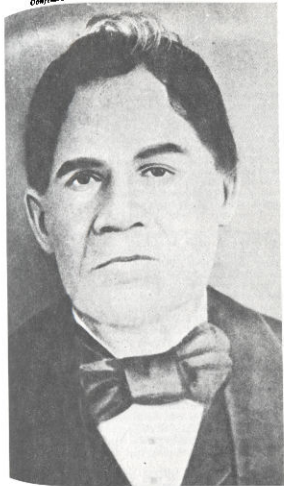
COLONEL SAMPHON FOLSOM

While leading a Confederate Choctaw regiment at the Battle of Folsom Spring in Arkansas, Folsom helped turn the Federal right flank and capture a battery of four guns.

to move the supply trains down to Mud Town, Arkansas, by way of Bentonville. The train headed south at midnight, followed by the rest of Cooper's command the next day in a heavy rain storm. Cooper caught up with his train at Mud Town and met Rains the next morning at Cross Hollows. It was decided that Shelby would remain at Cross Hollows and Cooper would move to Elm Springs to await further Federal movements. After consultation with Rains on October 14 and 15, Cooper was ordered to invade southeast Kansas and seize Fort Scott; at the same time, his command was considerably weakened by the detachment of the regiments of Alexander, Stevens, Hawpe, and T. C. Bass, and Buster's battalion. Cooper began preparations for a move on Fort Scott with his small force of Indians and Howell's battery. The drive into Missouri had been deterred and a new strategy had been devised. The Texas and Arkansas troops of the Confederates in the future would be deployed against the Federals advancing from Missouri, and the Indians could in the meantime outflank the combined Union forces, do considerable damage in Kansas, and divert Union troops from western Arkansas.²⁶

In accordance with this plan, Cooper marched his force to the vicinity of Mayeville, Arkansas, where he was to unite forces with Watie and Sampson Folsom. Although joined by Lieutenant Colonel Chilly McIntosh and his Creek battalion, Cooper learned upon reaching Mayeville that Watie and most of his men were scouting near Evansville, Arkansas, and that Sampson Folsom and his men, contrary to orders, were in the vicinity of Cincinnati, Arkansas. Since Daniel N. McIntosh's Creek regiment had failed to receive orders informing it of Cooper's plans, Cooper made an effort to contact McIntosh. It was while Cooper was attempting to organize his troops that he learned of the approach of Federal troops under the command of Brigadier General James G. Blunt. Cooper's forces were attacked on the morning of October 22, 1862, by a larger force and compelled to retreat from the Fort Wayne area just inside Indian Territory. With Cooper's retreat went the hopes of invading Kansas, and this decisive engagement placed the Federal troops on the offensive in Indian Territory. The Southern Indians had been driven out of Missouri and Arkansas, and their plans for entering Kansas had also been curtailed. Confederate

²⁶ Cooper to Newton, October 25, 1862; Cooper to Blalock, December 15, 1862, *ibid.*, Ser. 4, Vol. XIII, pp. 331-333; Wright, "General Douglas H. Cooper, U.S.A.," *The Chronicle of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXII, p. 170.



(Oklahoma Historical Society)

COLONEL CHILLY McINTOSH

While commanding a Creek battalion, McIntosh frequently supported Confederate Indian thrusts under Brigadier General Douglas H. Cooper into western Arkansas and southwestern Missouri.

Indians were never again able to mount a major offensive against Federal troops in Indian Territory or along the border.¹⁷

Following the engagement at Fort Wayne, Cooper led his troops south into the heart of the Choctaw Nation, where they wintered at Skullyville. Watie was still needed as a scout in western Arkansas, however, and after the initial retreat he was ordered on December 3, 1862, by Major General Thomas C. Hindman, commander of the Trans-Mississippi area, to proceed to the Evansville area and establish communications with the Confederate pickets on the Line Road. Watie and about 400 men arrived at Peyton Springs, Arkansas, five miles from Evansville, just after dark on December 5. On this march Watie's men had minor skirmishes with Union Indians near Dwight Mission and killed several. Scouts sent by Watie into Evansville reported seeing a Federal force leaving, but no Confederate pickets. Bypassing Evansville, Watie moved to Dutch Mills, Arkansas, discovered Federal pickets there, and learned that Union troops were in force at Cane Hill.

Knowledge of a superior number of troops in the vicinity caused Watie to retire down Lee's Creek, five miles south of Peyton Springs, where he met Simpson N. Folsom, a company of Texas Rangers, and a detachment of Bryan's Cherokee battalion under Captain John Miller, all from Fort Coffee in the Choctaw Nation. On Sunday, December 7, a scout under Watie's personal command was sent to the Line Road looking for Confederate pickets, and finding none, Watie camped at Peyton Springs. On December 8, Watie's combined forces took possession of Dutch Mills. Being out of touch with other Confederate units in the area, Watie sent Captain J. W. Wells to communicate with Hindman, who was supposed to be in the vicinity of Cane Hill. On the same day, leaving a company at Dutch Mills, Watie moved his camp closer to the Cherokee-Arkansas line. There he learned on December 10 that a surprise attack on his camp was planned by Federal Indians located at Mamus, ten miles away. This strategy was reversed when Watie routed the Federals in their camp early the next morning and drove them into the hills. Watie's men killed three and wounded one of the Federals. Finally, Watie received news of the Battle of Prairie Grove and learned that the Federal supply train

¹⁷ Cooper to Hindman, December 15, 1862, *Official Records*, Ser. 1, Vol. XIII, pp. 322-336; Barney King Neal, Jr., "Federal Ascendancy in Indian Territory, 1862-1863" (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, 1968), p. 68; Hathaway, "Brigadier General Seward Watie, Confederate Guerrilla," pp. 43-46; Laff (Charles) Rapp, "The Twilight of the Confederacy in Indian Territory, 1862-1865" (Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, 1968), pp. 23-25.

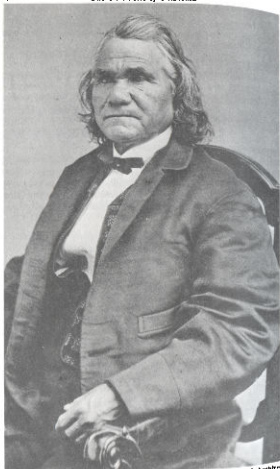
which he had hoped to intercept had travelled on a different route than the one covered by him. On December 12, Watie was ordered by Cooper to return to Indian Territory, and Simpson N. Folsom retired to Fort Coffee, also in Indian Territory.¹⁸

The year 1863 was disillusioning for the Confederate Indians. Their once bountiful land was by then scarred from the scorched-earth policy engaged in by the combatants as first one side gained possession and then the other. Confederate prospects in Indian Territory were as unfavorable as the land. By the middle of 1863, Union military power was supreme north of the Arkansas River and threatened to push the Southern Indians to the Red River. Indian troop morale was further damaged by the failure of the Confederacy in several respects to uphold its treaty promises to its Indian allies. Watie strongly condemned Confederate treatment of the Indians and heatedly asserted that Indian Territory had been hopelessly abandoned by the Richmond government.¹⁹

In spite of heartbreaking sorrows and nearly insurmountable odds, the Southern Indians continued to fight outside of Indian Territory in a cause they chose as their own. In 1863 the Indian forces changed their tactics, turning more and more to guerrilla activity, the only effective method of harassment left open to them. Early in June of 1863, Watie slipped across the Arkansas River near Greenleaf Prairie under the cover of darkness, accompanied by Colonel L. M. Martin's Fifth Texas Partisan Rangers. They sped through Park Hill and Tahlequah, leaving burning houses in their wake. After Tahlequah the raiding party separated, with Martin heading for Evansville, Arkansas, and Watie with 400 men sweeping along the Arkansas border past Maysville and into southwest Missouri. Watie's cavalry raid was terminated when he was pushed out of the area by Major J. A. Foreman and the Third Indian Home Guard Regiment. The chase was continued by contingents from Fort Gibson who nearly trapped Watie against the rising waters of the Arkansas River, but he was able to ford the river and elude his pursuers. Watie had lost three men, but in the process curtailed Union troop

¹⁸ Watie to Cooper, December 12, 1862, *Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. XXII, Pt. 1*, pp. 86-87; Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, pp. 83-84.

¹⁹ Morris L. Wardell, *A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, 1838-1907* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939), pp. 175-176; Angie Debo, "Southern Refugees of the Cherokee Nation," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXV (April, 1932), pp. 265-268.



(National Archives)

BRIGADIER GENERAL STAND WATIE

Throughout the Civil War Watie operated with his Confederate guerrilla forces in western Arkansas, southwest Missouri, and southern Kansas. At the Battle of Pea Ridge in Arkansas, Watie's Cherokee raised a Federal cavalry unit and captured a three-gun battery.

activity and forced the Union commanders to employ extra troops for guard duty at strategic locations.¹⁰

As Watie made more and more raids above the Arkansas River, confused Federals reported him as far north as Fort Scott, Kansas, in operations with William C. Quantrill, the Confederate border guerrilla. Thus Watie was also becoming a legend. On one of his excursions outside of Indian Territory, he moved into Missouri in December, 1863, causing panic among the Federal troops. Commanding 300 men, he succeeded in eluding Union forces on the Barren Fork Creek in the Cherokee Nation and debouched into Arkansas. He skirmished with Federal cavalry under the command of Foreman on December 20 and 21 below Cane Hill, Arkansas. Watie then broke contact and duped the Northern forces around Cane Hill into thinking he had retreated across the Arkansas River. However, on December 23, he was sighted moving north near Cincinnati. From there he moved into southwest Missouri, where he greatly aggravated Federal troops. By December 24 Watie had returned to Indian Territory, leaving a few men behind along the Cherokee-Arkansas border to move Southern families below the Arkansas River.¹¹ Brigadier General William Steele, the Confederate commander of Indian Territory in 1863, failed to see, as did many other Confederate generals, the value of these small encounters. "I have just received your note relative to Stand Watie," Steele complained to Cooper. "A . . . full correspondence is absolutely necessary . . . You do not now advise me of Colonel Watie's force, or his object, or when he left, or when he is expected back."¹² The object of these raids was not to hold territory or to kill large numbers of Federals, but to neutralize their superiority in the Indian Territory area by causing them to employ large numbers of men as scouts and escorts.

By the fall of 1863, Northern forces had gained control of the Mississippi and Arkansas rivers and had divided the South. The Confederate Trans-Mississippi West was then ef-

¹⁰ Steele to Cooper, June 11, 1863, Phillips to Dist. June 6, 1863, Edwards to Schofield, June 19, 1863, *Official Records*, ser. 1, Vol. XXII, Pt. 2, pp. 605, 310-311, 329-330; Edwin C. Beaman, "General William Steele Fights to Hold Oats Northwest Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXV (Spring, 1940), pp. 82-83; Hathaway, "Brigadier General Stand Watie, Confederate Guerrilla," pp. 54-55.

¹¹ Sullman to Phillips, December 23, 1863, *Official Records*, ser. 1, Vol. XXII, Pt. 1, pp. 781-784; Barnett to Ewing, November 28, 1863, Harrison to Totten, December 21, 1863, Sanborn to Totten, December 23, 1863, Sanborn to Totten, December 25, 1863, Phillips to Sanborn, January 4, 1864, Totten to Ewing, December 20, 1863, *ibid.*, Pt. 2, pp. 722-723, 740, 748, 751, 708-709, 754; Abel, *The American Indian or Participant in the Civil War*, p. 312.

¹² Steele to Cooper, June 11, 1863, *Official Records*, ser. 1, Vol. XXII, Pt. 2, p. 605.

fectively separated from the eastern half of the Confederate States and its nerve center, Richmond, Virginia. Major General Henry W. Halleck, General-in-Chief of the Federal armies, hoping to further divide the Confederate states, ordered a large-scale campaign against the Confederate states of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. This involved a two-pronged attack on Shreveport, Louisiana, and was known as the Red River Campaign. The southern portion of the coordinated attack was led by Brigadier General Nathaniel P. Banks, who moved up from southern Louisiana. The Arkansas movement started on March 23, 1864, when Major General Frederick Steele moved out of Little Rock with 9,000 troops. Nine days later, south of Arkadelphia, Steele's army was joined by 5,000 troops from Fort Smith. Brigadier General John M. Thayer was in command of these forces.¹¹

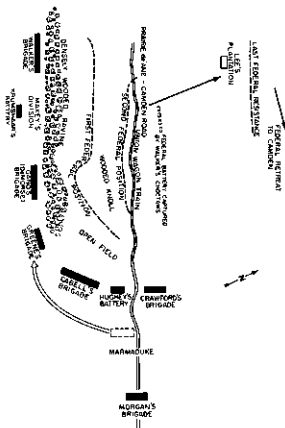
As these events were unfolding, there was feverish activity among the Confederate leaders in the Trans-Mississippi West to devise an adequate defense against this Union juggernaut. Price, the commander of the District of Arkansas, and Lieutenant General Edmund Kirby-Smith, the commander of the Department of the Trans-Mississippi, requested support from Indian Territory. However, Brigadier General Samuel Bell Maxey, commanding the Department of Indian Territory, refused to order Indian troops to leave Indian Territory unless their permission was first obtained. He was also concerned about leaving most of his jurisdiction defenseless by pulling all of his troops into the Laynesport or Fulton area on the Red River in Arkansas as ordered by Kirby-Smith. From this position Maxey could supposedly guard the Red River and be ready to help repel an invasion from Arkansas or Louisiana.¹²

Price on April 12, 1864, suggested that Maxey move all of his available forces to Washington, Arkansas. Maxey complied by moving with his Texas brigade, under the leadership of Colonel Richard M. Gano, to the contested area by way of Laynesport. Walker's Second Indian Brigade voted to fight outside of Indian Territory and joined Maxey in Arkansas on April 13. The First Indian Brigade under Watts remained in Indian Territory to protect it from invasion.¹³

¹¹ Ira Don Richards, "The Battle of Polk Spring," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XVIII (Winter, 1950), p. 338.

¹² Maxey to Lee, January 16, 1864, Cunningham to Maxey, March 12, 1864, Cunningham to Maxey, March 20, 1864, Cunningham to Price, March 20, 1864, Maxey to Anderson, March 22, 1864, *Official Records*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 2, pp. 882-883, 1012-1030, 1032, 1063, 1070-1071.

¹³ Maxey to Kirby-Smith, April 3, 1864, Maxey to Boggs, April 2, 1864, Maxey to Boggs, April 14, 1864, *ibid.*, Pt. 3, pp. 728-729, 745-746, 765-766; Williamson to Maxey, April 28, 1864, *ibid.*, Pt. 1, p. 646.



(After H. Foster and Jerry Bell)

CONFEDERATE INDIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE BATTLE OF POISON SPRING IN ARKANSAS, APRIL 13, 1864

After joining forces with Thayer, Frederick Steele moved to Prairie de'Ane, and instead of continuing south, marched rapidly to Camden, a Confederate stronghold twenty-three miles to the east. Taking advantage of the momentary confusion on April 13, Price employed Maxey's Indians against Steele's rear guard. Maxey and Brigadier General James Egan's units, commanded by Price, crashed into the Federal's rear guard, led by Thayer. The Union troops, posted in a skirt of timber near Moscow, had ten pieces of artillery. Price charged the position, and, after initial success, was thrust back. During the severe cannonade, Walker's Second Indian Brigade withstood the withering barrage and did not break formation or withdraw until ordered to do so.¹⁴

Following this skirmish near Prairie de'Ane, Frederick Steele occupied Camden and sent a forage train to Poison Spring to gather corn and any other feed that could be located. Maxey bivouacked near Woodlawn, where he was informed of the presence of the Federal forage train. Maxey's division, composed of Gano's brigade, led by Colonel Charles DeMorse in Gano's absence, and Walker's Second Indian Brigade, was ordered to march to Lee's farm on the Camden and Washington Road. This movement placed Maxey ten miles from Camden and between Steele and his foraging party. Maxey arrived at Lee's farm about 9:00 a.m. on April 18, 1864, and conferred with Brigadier General John S. Marmaduke. Maxey, the ranking general, was informed by Marmaduke of the situation and collaborated with him and Brigadier General William L. Cabell on a plan of attack. The Federal train of 200 wagons was located on high ground, strung out in an east-west direction. Marmaduke's division was located on the right of the Confederate position, blocking the road on the east to Camden; Cabell's division was in the center; Maxey's division was on the left near the west end of the train. Walker's brigade, with Gano's forces on its immediate right, was concealed in heavy brush on the extreme left flank of the Confederates. This left wing actually curved around the Union right flank, and Walker's men were located nearly behind the Federals. The Federal wagon train was protected by about 1,100 men from Thayer's Frontier Division, and nearly half of these were from the First Kansas Colored Infantry Regiment.

The plan of attack called for Maxey to press forward first on the right flank of the Union forces. This movement commenced about 10:00 a.m., but Colonel James M. Williams, the commanding officer of the Federals, had become aware of the

¹⁴ Price to Hogg, May, 1864; Williamson to Maxey, April 28, 1864; *ibid.*, pp. 778-781, 815; Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, pp. 157-158; Alwyn Barr, "Confederate Artillery in Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXII (Fall, 1963), pp. 205-206.

presence of troops on his right flank and offered stiff resistance. The Federals in front of Walker occupied a wooded ravine between an open field and the wagon train. Walker's two regiments led by Lieutenant Colonel James Riley, with 300 men, and Colonel Simpson N. Folsom, with 380 men, advanced from the timber to the open field but were forced back by a galling fire. At this moment, Captain William B. Krumbhaar's artillery from Maxey's division opened up in conjunction with Captain W. M. Hughey's battery in Marmaduke's division. This scathing fire enabled Maxey's division to charge across the open field and drive the Union forces on the right flank out of the ravine and back to the wagons, where the Federals regrouped. After about twenty minutes of savage fighting, the Federals again broke rank, but behind Lee's plantation made a futile attempt at organized resistance. Even though the temptation was great for the hungry Choctaws and Chickasaws under Walker to stop and feed off the captured train, they relentlessly pursued the fleeing Federals for several miles.

In turning the Federal right flank, Walker's men not only made the Union position untenable, but they captured a battery of four guns located a few yards behind the train. This Confederate victory at Poison Spring also netted 200 teams and wagons heavily loaded with corn. Federal casualties included 700 killed, wounded, and missing. The Confederates had thirty killed, eighty-eight wounded, and ten missing. Walker's Second Indian Brigade sustained only minor losses, with four killed and seven wounded.³⁷

While Maxey, the commander of the Confederate forces in Indian Territory, was participating in the Camden expedition, a guerrilla raid, led by Colonel William Penn Adair of Watie's brigade, kept Federal troops occupied along the Indian Territory border. On this thrust, Adair commanded 325 Cherokees, Creeks, Chickasaws, and Seminoles. He broke camp near Willaby on April 19, 1864, forded the Arkansas River several miles below Fort Gibson, and pushed rapidly through the Federal occupied Cherokee Nation. As Adair moved northward between the Illinois and Grand rivers, he was intercepted by Union forces. Trapped between the two rivers, swollen by spring rains, and the Federals,

³⁷ Maxey to Belton, April 23, 1864, Walker to DeHiltree, April 10, 1864, DeMoss to DeHiltree, April 21, 1864, Williams to Whitten, April 24, 1864, *Official Records*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 1, pp. 841-844, 849, 849-848, 743-744; Helms, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, pp. 302-373; Hare, "Confederate Artillery in Arkansas," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXII, pp. 207-208; Richards, "The Battle of Poison Spring," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 341-349; Banquet, "The Twilight of the Confederacy in Indian Territory, 1863-1865," pp. 48-70; Ralph R. Bea, *Smiling Prince: The Lee of the West* (Little Rock: Pioneer Press, 1959), pp. 104-106.

Adair barely managed to cross the Illinois River below Tablequah. As he swung eastward into Arkansas, Federal commanders attempted to guess his destination. Reports had him converging on Bentonville, Maysville, and Pineville in Arkansas, and finally on Neosho, Missouri. West of Bentonville, Adair decided to again extend his raid northward. A partial reason for this was the abundance of grass on the border produced by recent spring rains. This supply of grass assured the Southern cavalry of adequate feed for their thin ponies, and enabled them to continue their extraordinary scouting raid.

By April 30, Adair had divided his Indians into small scouting parties in northwest Arkansas near Maysville and below Pineville. He moved along the Cherokee-Missouri border in early May to Cowskin Prairie, and from there he eluded Northern cavalry by retreating across the Grand River, which had subsided by that time. The gray ghost next appeared ten miles northeast of Maysville on May 8, when he seemingly popped up out of nowhere to engage the bewildered Federals. But at 11:00 p.m. on May 13, Adair and 125 of his men were surprised in camp on Spavinaw Creek in Arkansas by Major Milton Burch of the Eighth Cavalry Regiment of the Missouri State Militia. Adair's raiders were forced to flee, leaving behind twenty-two horses, ten stands of arms, saddles, and several items of clothing such as pants, hats, and boots. Following the near disaster on Spavinaw Creek, Adair collected his men and struck Lamer, Missouri, on May 20, 1864. The nimble raiders quickly penetrated to the heart of the city, but after five minutes of savage street fighting they were forced to withdraw.¹⁴

When Adair finally returned his forces to Confederate territory in late May, he had spent over a month behind enemy lines. In length the raid was one of the most significant carried on along the border, but its results were less easily distinguishable. The length of the raid proved the vulnerability of Federal defenses along the border, a fact which would later be exploited by Watie. Adair was able to locate and report enemy troop lo-

¹⁴ Cooper to Masey, April 2, 1864, Adair to Watie, April 17, 1864, Gallagher to Kaufman, April 23, 1864, Curtis to Rosecrans, April 30, 1864, Sanborn to Burch, April 26, 1864, Curtis to McKenn, April 26, 1864, Blair to Hampton, April 27, 1864, Sanborn to Greene, April 29, 1864, Phillips to Curtis, April 28, 1864, Harrison to Sanborn, May 2, 1864, Sanborn to Rosecrans, May 2, 1864, Curtis to Rosecrans, May 4, 1864, Sanborn to Greene, May 4, 1864, *Official Records*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 3, pp. 749, 776-777, 272, 301, 302, 303, 313, 328, 329-330, 403, 403-404, 440-441, 443; Cosgrove to Shelby, May 7, 1864, Blair to McKenn, May 14, 1864, Burch to the Adjutant-General, Springfield, Missouri, May 14, 1864, Blair to McKenn, May 20, 1864, Blair to McKenn, May 21, 1864, *ibid.*, Pt. 1, pp. 604-605, 615, 621-622, 642; Sanborn to Greene, May 24, 1864, *ibid.*, Pt. 4, p. 23; Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, pp. 386-386.



(Oklahoma Historical Society)

COLONEL WILLIAM PENN ADAIR

In the spring of 1864 Adair led a spectacular month-long Confederate cavalry raid behind Federal lines in northwest Arkansas and southwest Missouri. His unit consisted of 325 Cherokee, Creeks, Chickasaw, and Seminoles.

cations to Moxey, while Fort Gibson and Fort Smith were harassed, Union communications were disrupted, civilians were frightened, and Northern troop morale was damaged.

The constant movement of cavalry forces within Indian Territory and near its borders was hard on horses, and both Union and Confederate forces were always in need of fresh mounts. Captain William H. Shannon of Cooper's First Indian Brigade was sent by Moxey in early July, 1864, to southwest Missouri and northern Arkansas to secure fresh mounts, and to contact Shelby. Shannon crossed the Arkansas River about twenty-five miles above Fort Gibson and the Grand River at Caney's Ferry. Nine days after he left the Choctaw Nation he entered Missouri ten miles above the Arkansas state line. Shannon moved south into Arkansas, looking unsuccessfully for horses. At Cane Hill, learning that Shelby was in Batesville recruiting, he dispatched a message to him. While awaiting a reply, Shannon ascertained that a large Union refugee wagon train was moving from Van Buren, Arkansas, into the Cane Hill area, and he set up plans to ambush it. Even though Shannon did not capture the train, he managed to burn several of the wagons, kill ten of the Federals, and escape without casualties. Continuing south along the Wire Road in western Arkansas, Shannon heard of another Federal wagon train, less heavily defended. It reached him on August 25, about five miles south of Lee's Creek. Shannon dismounted half of his men and placed them on the road directly in the path of the train; the other half remained mounted and concealed along the road in the rear of the train. The trap worked perfectly. The Federal soldiers, not suspecting that enemy troops lay to their rear, charged Shannon's men on the road. When the trap was sprung from behind, only seventeen of the sixty-two Union men escaped. The rest perished in the brief but deadly engagement. Having secured what supplies they could carry, Shannon's men returned to Camp Conner in the Choctaw Nation.³⁹

The closest the Confederate Indians came to amassing an offensive after the Missouri drive in 1862 was the demonstrations against Fort Smith in July and August of 1864. Moxey maintained that the only hope for the Confederate cause in Indian Territory was the harassment of Fort Gibson and Fort Smith.⁴⁰ If the Federals could be forced to withdraw from either

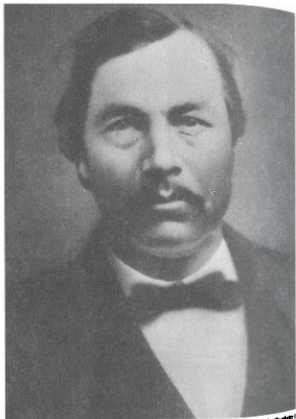
³⁹ Shannon to Cooper, August 25, 1864. Moxey to Hoge, August 31, 1864, *Official Records*, Ser. 1, Vol. XLII, Pt. 2, pp. 1086-1087, 1093-1095; Rupp, "The Twilight of the Confederacy in Indian Territory, 1863-1865," pp. 107-108.

⁴⁰ Moxey to Anderson, January 12, 1864, *Official Records*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXXIV, Pt. 2, pp. 850-858.

or both of these positions, their hold on Indian Territory would be considerably weakened. Maxey believed that he might be able to force Thayer into thinking that these forts were unsecurable because their supply lines could be easily disrupted. The two available means of accomplishing this were by directly threatening the forts with invasion or by cutting their supply lines and slowly strangling them to death. The feasibility of the latter was demonstrated by the phenomenal success of Watie in capturing the *J. R. Williams*, a steamship carrying \$120,000 worth of supplies from Fort Smith to Fort Gibson by way of the Arkansas River. Another coup by Watie, with the help of Gano, was the capture of a \$1,500,000 Federal train, consisting of 200 wagons, at Cabin Creek, enroute from Fort Scott. This train was also carrying supplies for Fort Gibson.⁴¹

In the summer of 1864 Maxey assigned Cooper the task of threatening Fort Smith. In July Cooper moved to the vicinity of the fort and sent several scouts to check the area for Union forces. On July 26 the Confederates discovered that Union cavalry troops were located near the fort in Arkansas. Cooper dispatched a detachment of 1,500 men under Gano to rout the Federals outside of the fort. Gano, in addition to the men from his own Texas brigade, had Indians under Lieutenant Colonel Simpson N. Folsom and Lieutenant Colonel Jackson McCurtain. At 8:00 a.m. on July 27, Gano's forces charged Captain David Mefford's battalion of the Sixth Kansas Cavalry Regiment on Mossard Prairie, located in Arkansas five miles south of Fort Smith. Mefford's troops, serving as an outpost for Thayer's forces located inside the fort, were completely surprised. Due to the lack of feed, the Federal mounts were allowed to graze on the open prairie early every morning. At the moment of attack, Mefford's horses, grazing three-quarters of a mile to the southwest of camp, stampeded before a detail could be sent for them. Mefford, a veteran fighter, regrouped his confused men and fought off several assaults as he slowly retreated in the direction of Fort Smith. However, the Confederate Indians and Texans, riding in two columns, outflanked the dismounted cavalymen and finally encircled them. Gano captured 127 Federals and compelled them to run several miles to prevent their being freed by a relief column from Fort Smith. Besides those captured, the Federal forces had eleven killed and twenty wounded. Gano had twenty-six men wounded and nine killed. Additional fruits of victory were 200 Sharps rifles, 400 six-shooters, a number of horses, and camp equipage. Thayer was unable to pursue the

⁴¹ Egan, "The Twilight of the Confederacy in Indian Territory, 1862-1865," pp. 82-83, 128-130.



(Oklahoma Historical Society)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JACKSON McCURTAIN

As a preliminary move in the 1864 siege of Fort Smith, McCurtain's battalion of Choctaws helped rout a regiment of Federal cavalry on Mansfield Prairie five miles south of the fort. In this brief engagement 127 Federals were captured.

Confederate raiders due to a lack of fresh mounts, and he was afraid to dispatch more troops from the fort, which was already weakly defended.⁴²

Encouraged by Confederate success on Mound Prairie, Cooper moved on Fort Smith on July 30, 1864. All of the units at Mound Prairie were again present, and this time Watie and all his men were involved. Fort Smith was approached from the south in two columns. Gano with McCurtain's battalion of Choctaws proceeded to Mound Prairie, while Simpson N. Folsom and Watie, under the personal command of Cooper, moved toward Fort Smith on the main road. Watie was ordered to attack Union pickets in front of the fort, and he accomplished this by sending Colonel James M. Bell and the First Cherokee Regiment along the main road and by positioning Adair and the Second Cherokee Regiment on the Wire Road to the left. Bell and Adair routed the Federal pickets and chased them to their entrenchments near Fort Smith. This action aroused the Federals from their lethargy, and their infantry, supported by artillery, advanced on the main Fort Smith road in front of their fortifications. Massing to repulse the Union infantry, Watie and Adair joined Bell on the main road; with the timely arrival of Gano's column, Cooper's forces were able to drive the Federals back to their fortifications. The remaining minutes of daylight were wasted in an artillery duel. Fearful that his position was too precarious to be maintained after dark, Cooper ordered a withdrawal to Indian Territory, thus ending the brief siege of Fort Smith.⁴³

The remainder of 1864 was spent by Confederate Indian troops in harassing Federal supply lines in Indian Territory. Due to a severe shortage of food and supplies, Confederate Indians were not again used in engagements outside of Indian Territory. Guerrilla raids within Indian Territory were all that Confederate logistics could support. By the spring of 1865 both Federals and Confederates in Indian Territory and the Trans-

⁴² Thayer to Scott, July 30, 1864. Morehead to Judson, July 29, 1864. Maxey to Boggs, July 30, 1864. Cooper to Scott, August 10, 1864. *Official Records*, Ser. 1, Vol. XLII, Pt. 1, pp. 23-24, 25, 29, 31-36; Folsom C. Beams, "General Cooper's C.S.A. Indians Threaten Fort Smith," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVI (Autumn, 1967), pp. 260-272; Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, pp. 424-426; Rappaport, "The Twilight of the Confederacy in Indian Territory, 1863-1865," pp. 97-101.

⁴³ Maxey to Boggs, August 5, 1864. Cooper to Scott, August 10, 1864. *Official Records*, Ser. 1, Vol. XLII, Pt. 1, pp. 26-30, 31-33; Beams, "General Cooper's C.S.A. Indians Threaten Fort Smith," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 273-280; Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, pp. 427-428; Rappaport, "The Twilight of the Confederacy in Indian Territory, 1863-1865," pp. 101-104.

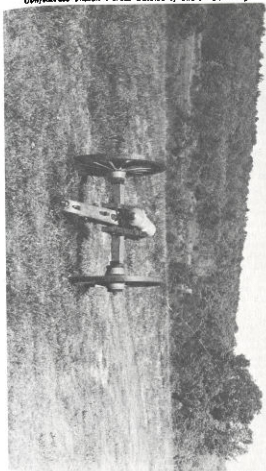
Mississippi West were simply awaiting the inevitable Southern surrender, and the Indian guerrilla forces did not again take to the field.

Although the Indian nations were invaded twice by Union forces, contrary to Confederate treaty promises of military protection, they received but little outside aid militarily, logistically, or financially from any of the Southern states. However, when the neighboring states of Missouri, Arkansas, or Texas were invaded or even threatened with invasion, Confederate Indian troops were usually called upon to leave their homelands, against treaty provisions, to help repel the Federals.

The Confederate Indians were usually willing to campaign outside of Indian Territory. Only once, however, was a formal vote used to obtain their approval in this regard, and this was at the insistence of Maxey. Generally, the Indian forces and their officers were little concerned about the Confederate treaty provisions promising that they would not be used outside of Indian Territory without their consent, even though this treaty stipulation was apparently well known to both officers and enlisted men. There was undoubtedly a realization on the part of the Confederate Indians and their officers that the only adequate defense was a vigorous offense, and harassing the Federals outside of Indian Territory was consistent with this objective.

While on military operations beyond the borders of Indian Territory, the Confederate Indians usually performed well, and sometimes distinguished themselves, as in the battles of Newtonia and Poison Spring. Such performance contrasts strikingly with the poor showing at times of these same Indian forces inside the borders of Indian Territory. The inconsistency in performance may have been due to the steadying influence of the higher percentage of white troops used in the engagements outside of the Territory combined with the cavalry scouting activity so well suited to the nature of the Indian.

Despite little support from the South, the Confederate Indian troops effectively harassed Northern forces outside of Indian Territory. Watie's guerrilla raids along the Kansas border, and into Missouri and Arkansas, disrupted and disorganized Union operations along the northeastern boundary of Indian Territory. By the end of the war Watie had become a legend as a guerrilla fighter in the Trans-Mississippi West. Not knowing where he would appear next struck fear into the minds of Federal commanders and drastically retarded the movement of their troops in and along the border of Indian Territory. Supply trains from Fort Scott, Baxter Springs, and Fort Smith had to be augmented by additional forces; hay gathering operations



(Pea Ridge National Military Park)

PEA RIDGE NATIONAL MILITARY PARK IN ARKANSAS

The approximate location of the Union artillery emplacement looking toward the west end of Pea Ridge, near Leestown. From this direction the Confederate Cherokee Indian regiments of Colonel John Drew and Colonel Stand Watie attacked and captured a three-gun Federal battery.

along the border needed to be curtailed; and the number of Federal mounts and cattle diminished because of the uncertainty of grazing on the open prairies.

Of greater military importance to the South was the protection of the Confederate left flank by the Indian tribes. Southern Arkansas and northern Texas could not have been held by the South without the support of the Indians who fought outside of Indian Territory. Texas, a major food and mineral producing region of the Confederacy, would have been nearly impossible to retain by the South had the Confederate elements of the Five Civilized Tribes chosen to fight only within Indian Territory. These Confederate Indian forces exerted telling influence on military events in a wide area of the Trans-Mississippi West by fighting ably, bravely, and unselfishly outside of Indian Territory.