

SOME REMINISCENCES OF THE CHEROKEE PEOPLE

*RETURNING TO THEIR HOMES THE EXILES OF A
NATION*

By Wiley Britton, Author *Civil War on the Border*, Two
Volumes

In referring to the exile of the people of a Nation, there should be some account of the events, of the tremendous convulsion, which caused the exile perhaps of more than one-half of the people, with all the sufferings and hardships it entailed.

The Civil War between the States of the United States, was a civil convulsion that shook the foundations of social organization of not only the states, but also of the people of the Five Civilized Indian Nations, with whom the ties of neighborly feeling were nearly as strong as if all were one people.

Briefly, what was the Apple of Discord that divided the people of the two sections, north and south into two hostile camps that entailed upon the country so much misery and woe? It was a question that had been debated in the councils of the American Government almost from its foundation.

The question debated was slavery and its extension to the Territories being settled by emigrants from the states. Slavery existed in nearly all the Colonies before and after they had won their Independence from the Mother country in a long war, the war of the Revolution.

The immediate cause of the Civil War, as the writer has always conceived it, was involved in the Platforms of Principles and Policies of the two great political parties, Republican and Democratic, published by their National Conventions in 1860.

The Republican Platform of Principles and Policies declared its opposition to the extension of slavery into the Territories, but did not propose to interfere with it where it then existed. The Democratic Platform of Principles and Policies declared that the slave owners had the right to take

their slave property into the Territories and have it protected there the same as other property.

After the National Conventions of the two great political parties had nominated their candidates for President and Vice President, nearly all the Democratic leaders of the Southern States declared in their speeches in the campaign that if Mr. Lincoln who had been nominated by the Republicans, should be elected President, the Southern States would certainly secede or withdraw from the Union, and by the close of the campaign, when Mr. Lincoln's election was announced, had worked up a powerful sentiment in the South for secession. The writer was then living in Greenville, Hunt County, Texas, with relatives.

In these peaceable times it is almost impossible to conceive of the intense excitement that flared up immediately after the announcement of Mr. Lincoln's election, in all the towns of the South, and the talk of war.

One State after another called State Conventions and passed ordinances of secession in the Southern Slave States.

The States bordering on the Indian Territory, Arkansas and Texas, were early in the field, and sent prominent men as emissaries to the leaders and councils of the Five Civilized Indian Nations, to have them denounce their treaty relations with the United States and declare their adhesion to the South.

But the Indians were divided in their views of slavery and secession, and at first it was not easy for the emissaries from Arkansas and Texas to convince the councils and leaders of the Indian tribes, particularly the Cherokees and Creeks, that it would be to their interest to take any active part in the impending conflict in the States. The emissaries, however, were able to point out to the councils and leaders of the Indians, with emphasis, that the position of the Indian Territory, with Arkansas directly on the east and Texas on the south, made them natural allies of the South. Kansas had not yet been admitted as a State in the Union, and its southern tier of counties, if not indeed the southern part of the Territory was thinly settled, and the dreadful drought of 1860, had obliged nearly all those who lived on their claims to the latter part of the year, to move to other parts of the country for relief, so that the Cherokees and Creeks could not

reasonably look for advice and assistance from the North, or Unionists.

In this dilemma the representatives of the Cherokees pleaded with the emissaries to be allowed to occupy a neutral position in the approaching struggle. In the meantime Southern military organizations from Texas and Arkansas seized the United States Forts in the Indian Territory with such supplies of arms and equipment as they were able to secure, the retreating Regular U. S. troops taking most of the supplies with them.

The situation drifted along until mid-summer of 1861, when, after defeats of the Federal armies at Bull Run, Virginia, and Wilson Creek, Missouri, and after much blundering of Union Commanders in Missouri, the Cherokees at a great mass meeting at Park Hill, resolved and decided through their representatives to cast their fortunes with the South, and immediately organized two regiments to cooperate with the Confederate forces for the protection of their country.

All the councils of the Five Civilized Indian Tribes were now pledged to adherence to the Confederacy and had raised and were raising their quota of troops for operations against the common enemy. But there was a large faction, perhaps a majority of the Creeks, and a large minority of the Cherokees, who refused to abide by a majority of their national councils, and denounce their treaty relations with the U. S. Government and assumed a belligerent attitude.

Late in the fall of 1861, when military operations on both sides in Missouri, were inactive and General McCulloch had put his troops in winter quarters at Cross Hollows and Fort Smith, to visit Richmond for a conference with the Confederate leaders in regard to future policies in his district, a campaign was planned by his subordinate, Colonel James McIntosh, against Hopoeithleyohola, the leader of the recalcitrant Creeks and Cherokees, to reduce them to submission.

Two expeditions were fitted out from Fort Smith and Fort Gibson, of three or four thousand mounted troops, consisting of Arkansas, Texas and Indian regiments, under Colonel McIntosh, who moved forward and attacked the Indians and drove them from their position. But Hopoeithleyohola rallied his forces in a stronger position and Colonel McIntosh again attacked him and drove him from his position

and captured his camp and nearly all the live stock of the Indians and their household effects and provisions. There was nothing now left for the Indians but a disastrous retreat to Southern Kansas in mid-winter in which men, women and children suffered almost inconceivable hardships of cold, hunger, and thirst, pursued by a relentless foe for many miles over the bleak prairies, taking few prisoners, but cutting or shooting down the helpless victims when overtaken.

In January, 1862, the few settlers of Southern Kansas west of the Neosho River, suddenly found themselves burdened with the care of thousands of these starving, freezing and exhausted Indians, whose terrible plight appealed for immediate relief.

Bountiful crops had been raised in Kansas in 1861, and the local, state and military authorities put forth every effort to supply the Indians with food, clothing, shelter and medicines to make them as comfortable as possible until spring, when measures would be taken by the Government to restore them to their homes.

About this time the military authorities of the Department of Kansas, represented by Generals Hunter and Lane, were considering a proposition that had for its object, the sending of an expedition of several thousand men, cavalry, infantry and artillery into the Indian Territory for the protection of the Indians still loyal to the Government and of restoring the exiles to their homes, and the troops were concentrated at Fort Scott for that purpose.

The latter part of January, 1862, the troops for the proposed expedition commenced concentrating at Fort Scott, and by the middle of February there were probably available and ready to march, four or five thousand men well equipped; but about this time the commander of the troops received information that General S. R. Curtis was concentrating several divisions at Lebanon, Missouri, which he called *The Army of the Southwest*, with somewhat more than ten thousand men, with the view of attacking General Sterling Price, commanding the Southern forces then at Springfield, and if possible drive him out of the State and back upon the forces of Generals Van Dorn, McCulloch and Pike, who were concentrating at Cross Hollow and Fayetteville, for a desperate struggle.

In the movement of the Federal Commanders, the troops at Fort Scott were to be a co-operating column with Curtis, on the extreme right of Curtis, and prevent a full concentration of the Southern forces against him. But on account of a bickering between Generals Hunter and Lane, as to which should command this column, the troops at Fort Scott remained idle and Curtis was obliged to fight the battle of Pea Ridge without the assistance of the Kansas column, defeating the combined Southern forces of Van Dorn, Price, McCulloch and Pike. The battle of Pea Ridge changed the entire situation. There was now no immediate danger of an invasion of Missouri or Kansas, by a Southern army; the Southern Indians who had participated in the battle of Pea Ridge, were too much demoralized to show any aggressiveness in the spring, and most of the Union troops concentrated at Fort Scott were ordered to other points where they were needed.

The presence of several thousand Indian refugees or exiles in Southern Kansas being cared for by the Government, led to the discussion of returning them to their homes, and to the consideration of the military authorities of an expedition into the Indian country for the protection of the loyal Indians and all others who might wish to rally to the Union cause.

The Government was rapidly getting its forces in shape for aggressive operations, and in June, 1862, a Federal force of four or five thousand men, cavalry, infantry and artillery were concentrated at Baxter Springs, well equipped for the Indian Expedition. Before the column moved forward, however, strong cavalry detachments were sent out and scouted the country in Southwest Missouri, and in the Territory as far south as Maysville, but met with no decided opposition. It appeared from the information secured by the reconnaissance that there was no large Confederate force north of the Arkansas River. Colonel Waitie with a regiment of Cherokees, and Colonel Clarkson with a regiment of Missourians, preparing for an expedition into Southwest Kansas, were the only hostile forces occupying the country. The Refugee Indians who had been in Southern Kansas for several months, joined the Expedition at Baxter Springs and Hudson's Crossing of the Neosho River. A few miles below Hudson's Crossing of the Neosho, the Expedition divided, the main part of

it, the infantry and artillery, marching down on the Military Road west of Grand River to Cabin Creek, and most of the cavalry with a section of the Second Indiana Battery, and several howitzers, marched down on the east side of Grand River, with instructions to form a junction with the infantry and artillery at Cabin Creek.

Colonel William Weir, Tenth Kansas Infantry, senior Colonel in command of the Expedition, received information that Colonel Clarkson, commanding the hostile forces of Missourians in the Territory, was encamped at Locust Grove, near Grand Saline, and made a forced march all night and struck the camp at daybreak and captured Colonel Clarkson and most of his command with a train of about sixty wagons of ammunition just arrived from Fort Smith. The camp was surrounded before the Confederates had any warning of the approach of the Federal force. The prisoners were immediately sent north to Fort Scott and Leavenworth, and the troops of the Expedition remained at Cabin Creek several days, dividing the spoils, celebrating Independence Day, the Fourth of July, and then the main part of the army moved down on the west side of Grand River to Flat Rock, some twelve miles above Fort Gibson, where it remained a week or two.

While encamped at Flat Rock, the commander of the Expedition received information that large detachments of Missouri Southern forces were marching north through Western Arkansas enroute to the Missouri River to recruit and organize a large force for operations in Western Missouri.

The line of march north of these Southern forces was not more than thirty or forty miles from the line of communication of the Indian Expedition, and Colonel Salomon of the Ninth Wisconsin infantry, who has just been promoted Brigadier General, and by virtue of his rank, commander of the Expedition, fearing that his supply trains from the north, some of which were overdue, would be attacked, captured or destroyed, ordered a retrograde movement of the army to Baxter Springs, leaving the three partly organized Indian regiments in the Territory to complete their organization.

Captain H. S. Greeno of the Sixth Kansas Cavalry, was ordered with his company of the regiment, to make a reconnaissance to Tahlequah and Park Hill, to ascertain if prac-

ticable whether the Chief, John Ross and his advisers, proposed to oppose with his organized forces the Federal occupation of the Indian country. On his arrival at Tahlequah and Park Hill, Captain Greeno found quite a number of the prominent men of the Cherokee Nation, and probably most of the officers and men of Colonel Drew's regiment of Mounted Rifles, but as their attitude was not hostile, friendly relations were soon established and the Captain saw the Chief, Ross, and made him prisoner and paroled him so that he could not obey the orders of Colonel Cooper, the senior colonel commanding the Confederate forces at Fort Davis, south of the Arkansas River.

On the return of the Expedition to Cabin Creek from Flat Rock, Captain Greeno made his report of his reconnaissance to Tahlequah and Park Hill, to the commanding officer, and Colonel W. F. Cloud of the Second Kansas Cavalry, who had just joined the Expedition, was ordered to take his regiment and march to Tahlequah and bring out the Chief, John Ross, his entourage and the archives of the Nation. The Chief and his entourage occupied a dozen or so carriages and on their arrival at Cabin Creek an escort was furnished and accompanied him to Fort Scott.

The army continued its retirement to Baxter Springs, leaving the three partly organized Indian regiments as the only Union force to occupy the country, and in a week or so they retired to Baxter Springs, closely followed by nearly all their families, with such belongings as they were able to bring with them.

On arrival of the army at Baxter Springs, Lieut. Colonel James G. Blunt of Kansas, was promoted Brigadier General and placed in command of the Department of Kansas and the Indian Territory, and ordered the troops of the Indian Expedition to march at once to Fort Scott, where he met them, and after some refitting he took command in person and started out on the Lone Jack Expedition, marching day and night, having received a dispatch from General Schofield, commanding the Department of Missouri, that the Southern forces under General John T. Hughes, Colonels Cockrell, Coffee, Tracy, Hunter and Hayes, were concentrating in large numbers in the neighborhood of Lexington.

After marching day and night nearly two days, Gen.

Blunt arrived in front of Lone Jack and at once commenced forming his line for attack of the enemy, but waited a short time for his infantry and dismounted artillery, which had been put into Government wagons, to arrive. While waiting in line and reconnoitering the enemy position, a terrific thunder storm came up from the northwest and black darkness shrouded everything with a torrential downpour of rain. In the midst of the storm and darkness of the early night, General Blunt's skirmishers discovered that the enemy were passing around his right but on account of the darkness of the night no satisfactory movement was practicable until daylight the next morning, when it was found that the enemy had passed completely around him and were in full retreat south.

As soon as the artillery caissons, limbers and guns and ambulances were extricated from the mud and ditches, General Blunt took up the pursuit of the enemy and continued it day and night with some rear-guard fighting, as far south as Carthage and Neosho, where the Missouri forces of Schofield and Totten relieved him and continued the pursuit into Arkansas.

In the meantime General T. C. Hindman had been appointed by the Confederate Government to the command of the Trans-Mississippi Department, including Arkansas and the Indian Territory, and he had the ambitious design of recovering Missouri, or South Missouri, for the Confederacy, and commenced at once to organize his forces for an active campaign, and ordered the Missouri forces to halt and face their pursuers. He also ordered the Southern Indian and Texas forces to cross to the north side of the Arkansas River and march to Southwest Missouri and co-operate with the Missouri forces in holding in check the Federal troops from Southwest Missouri and Kansas.

By concentration of the Confederate forces they pushed the Union troops back some distance north and occupied Neosho and Newtonia and seemed determined to make a stand at the latter place and defeated heavy reconnaissance under Colonel Lynde, Ninth Kansas Cavalry, with some loss, on September 30th, but on October 4th, General Schofield with three divisions attacked the Confederates at Newtonia, and

General Cooper in command, retired precipitately without coming to close quarters.

After this action the Federal divisions advanced into Arkansas, to Pea Ridge and Bentonville, and both sides commenced to organize for decisive action. But General Hindman was not yet ready to give battle with a prospect of success and retired his forces into the Boston Mountains, except that he ordered General Cooper with his Indian forces to take up a position at Maysville on the State line to threaten Kansas.

General Blunt asked permission of General Schofield to take his Kansas Division and attack Cooper at Maysville, or near there at old Fort Wayne. He made an all night march from Pea Ridge and Bentonville and struck Cooper at dawn October 20th, and after a short, sharp conflict captured all his artillery, four guns, and part of his train. This successful action of the Kansas forces so demoralized the Southern Indian troops that it was reported they did not stop running until they had crossed the Arkansas River, and were of little further use to General Hindman in his campaign that fall.

This defeat of General Cooper removed the menace to the large number of Indian refugee families, probably upwards of two thousand, at Baxter Springs, which had been gradually increasing since the withdrawal of the Indian Expedition in July.

A short time after the action of Old Fort Wayne, General Blunt moved his Division south leisurely along the western parts of Benton and Washington counties in the direction of Cane Hill, and through his spies and scouts, keeping accurately informed of the movements and intentions of General Hindman and his subordinates, Generals Marmaduke and Shelby.

The second and third divisions under Schofield had left him at Pea Ridge and returned to Wilson Creek and the vicinity of Springfield, and if Hindman should concentrate against General Blunt without the assistance of these other divisions he might find himself in a perilous situation from which he might not be able to escape disaster.

General Hindman had not been idle in reorganizing his forces at Fort Smith and Van Buren and ordered forward his cavalry under General Marmaduke, with some artillery, to

take up a position at Cane Hill to gather supplies for the army which would advance in a short time. After moving the First Division south to Lindsay's Prairie, about thirty miles north of Cane Hill, General Blunt sent out a heavy reconnaissance under Lieut.-Colonel Jewell, Sixth Kansas Cavalry, with instructions to advance through the mountains on the Van Buren road until he was able to secure information of the latest movements of Hindman.

Colonel Jewell advanced on the Cove Creek road to Lee's Creek and beyond, when he came in contact with General Marmaduke's advance, and after a short skirmish with it, captured several prisoners, from whom he received information that the force in his front was Hindman's cavalry advance, and that his infantry and artillery were at Fort Smith and Van Buren crossing to the north side of the Arkansas River, with their ammunition and supply trains, and would follow the cavalry in a day or two.

Colonel Jewell hastened his return march and reported the situation to General Blunt. The General was satisfied from the information disclosed by Colonel Jewell that Hindman had determined to attack him with his combined forces, and at once sent a courier with a dispatch to Elkhorn to be telegraphed to General Curtis, St. Louis, commanding the Department, to order the second and third divisions, then under the command of General F. J. Herron, encamped in the vicinity of Springfield, to move forward and reinforce him at the earliest practicable moment. General Curtis made the order and General Herron made a record march of 116 miles in less than three days and met General Hindman's advance under Generals Marmaduke and Shelby at the foot of the Boston Mountains near Prairie Grove Church, south of the Illinois River, and the battle was opened and fought there all day Sunday, December 7, 1862, resulting in the defeat of Hindman and the retirement of his army to the south side of the Arkansas River, with his headquarters at Fort Smith.

Preliminary to the battle of Prairie Grove, General Marmaduke had advanced with his cavalry and occupied Cane Hill and commenced gathering in supplies for the combined Confederate forces. General Blunt was immediately advised and parking his trains at Lindsay's Prairie, left General Salomon with the Ninth Wisconsin Infantry, a battery of

artillery and some other detachments, to guard the trains, and took the balance of his division, cavalry, infantry and artillery, and making a day and night march, struck Marmaduke the next morning, and the action of Cane Hill was on. This was largely a maneuvering fight, but the Confederates were pushed back during the day seven or eight miles, and at dark made a stand at a gorge in the mountains on Cove Creek. General Blunt attempted to charge the position and brought up Colonel Jewell who led the charge with part of his regiment and some other detachments, and on approaching the position the Confederates were prepared for him and opened upon him a heavy volley at close range and he fell mortally wounded with several of his command. The Confederates made a few captures and the balance of the Federal charging party fell back a short distance, and that ended the operations of the day.

Immediately after the action of Cane Hill, the battle of Prairie Grove was fought all day Sunday, December 7, 1862, between the Confederate forces under General T. C. Hindman, about 16,000 strong, and the Union forces under General James G. Blunt, of about 12,000 men. This was one of the major battles west of the Mississippi River. General Blunt reported his losses at 1,248 killed, wounded and missing, and General Hindman reported his losses at 1,317 killed, wounded and missing.

After the Van Buren Expedition of Generals Blunt and Herron, and the capture and burning of General Hindman's steamboats in the Arkansas River at Van Buren, he had no other transportation for bringing up food and clothing and other supplies for his army, and retired from Fort Smith in the direction of Little Rock, detaching General Marmaduke with most of his cavalry with instructions to cross to the north side of the Arkansas River at Clarksville and march to Springfield, Missouri, and capture the town and destroy the Federal supplies at that sub-base.

The attack was made, but General Marmaduke was driven off without the loss of any supplies from that important sub-base of the army.

There was now no organized Confederate force north of the Arkansas River in western Arkansas or the Indian country, and Generals Blunt and Herron retired the Army

of the Frontier from Van Buren to Rheas Mills and Prairie Grove, where General Schofield resumed command and retired twenty-five miles north to Elm Springs, where new dispositions were made, and where the Indian Brigade was organized and became a separate command under Colonel W. A. Phillips, with instructions to take up a position near Maysville on the Arkansas and Territory line to safeguard the interests of the loyal Indians in the Territory, and to be of assistance to Colonel M. La Rue Harrison at Fayetteville in organizing several regiments from the Unionists of western Arkansas.

A detachment of four companies of the Sixth Kansas Cavalry, and the writer as commissary and adjutant, under Captain J. W. Orahoad, senior captain, and the four-gun battery, captured from General Cooper in October, under Captain Henry Hopkins, Second Kansas Cavalry, were sent with the Indian Brigade as a kind of stabilizing force.

After the battle of Prairie Grove, arrangements were made for removing the large number of Indian refugees, exiles, old men, women and children from their camp at Baxter Springs to Neosho, Missouri, about twenty-five miles southeast, where it was believed better housing and sanitary conditions could be provided for them. There were four or five springs of pure water within the limits of the town; there was an abundance of hardwood timber for fuel, easily accessible; many of the Southern and Union families had moved, leaving their houses empty, the Southern families going South, and the Union families to Kansas and Springfield. There were probably a dozen or more churches in town that would afford hospital facilities for the sick and feeble, and there were quite a few doctors who could be useful in attending the sick and afflicted.

The cold blasts of winter were beginning to be keenly felt and the military authorities put forth commendable efforts to make the nation of exiles as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. Major John A. Foreman was detached with a battalion of the Third Indian regiment, Cherokees, and ordered to occupy Neosho for the protection of these refugees or exiles against the raids of guerilla bands in that section.

Some of the Indian families were brought over from

Baxter Springs in Government wagons, and the same wagons could be used for hauling in forage for their Indian ponies and for the mounts of the Indian soldiers, besides hauling in corn and wheat to the mills in the vicinity to be ground into meal and flour for the Indian families. These Indian families were at Neosho from December, 1862, to the early part of April, 1863, and their conduct was commendable in every respect. Their relations with the white families were friendly, and there was no charge of pilfering or of their unlawfully appropriating the property of their white neighbors or of causing annoyance by trespassing.

It was almost unbelievable that this large number of Indian families could occupy the town for nearly four months with practically no complaints or disturbances and who were without the conveniences which they had been used to all their lives. Nearly every Indian family brought out a pony, and half-grown children and under, who were large enough to ride a pony, were put on one to bring it along, with such personal effects as were most necessary to the family.

In the early part of February, when the Indian Brigade was encamped at Elk Mills on Elk River, scarcely more than twenty miles from Neosho, many of the Indian women did not consider it much of a task to mount their ponies and ride down and visit their husbands.

While the operations of the Indian Brigade extended as far south as Dutch Mills, and beyond, and covered practically the whole of the Cherokee Nation, very few families attempted to return to their homes in mid-winter.

There was one feature of the war in the Indian country that contrasted favorably with the effects of the war in Missouri, and that was that very few of the homes and fences and other property, was burned or destroyed by either side when occupying the country or marching through it, whereas in the western counties of Missouri, there was scarcely a vacant house left standing on the highways between the Missouri River and the south line of the state. The fences were practically all destroyed.

After about two weeks at Elk Mills the Indian command broke camp and turned east up the Elk River Valley as far as Pineville, foraging for supplies for both troops and animals.

At Pineville the command turned south to Bentonville, Arkansas, and was there two or three weeks. Here the smallpox broke out among the Indian soldiers, and a smallpox camp established and the patients isolated and sent there. And the Indian families at Neosho were beginning to get restless and longing for the day when they would start back to their long abandoned homes. They, too, had suffered from a plague of measles, which with its sequelae, had brought death and sorrow to many families.

Probably about one-half of the Cherokee people espoused the Confederate cause under the leadership of Colonel Stand Waitie, but at this time was south of the Arkansas River. The river, however, was fordable at different points a good deal of the time, and it would be easy for him to cross it and make frequent raids into the Cherokee Nation, which would enable his men to visit their homes. To thwart these raids by the Southern Indians as much as possible and permit the Cherokees who were attached to the Union to live in their homes undisturbed, Colonel Phillips determined to seize and occupy Fort Gibson, which would enable him to hold the Indian country north of the Arkansas River, and protect the Union Indian families.

The spring was now sufficiently advanced to allow the Indian families to plant such crops of corn and garden stuff as they usually raised, and he sent an order to Major Foreman at Neosho, to prepare an adequate train to bring down all the Indian families at that place and their effects and join him at Park Hill, which they did on the 9th of April, 1863, being enroute about ten days. When information was received that the train of exiles was approaching near at hand, a battalion of Cherokees was drawn up in line and awaited them, There were many demonstrations of joy between the Indian soldiers and their families, having seen little of each other the last year.

The train bearing the exiles was more than a mile long, made up of every conceivable kind of vehicle, but the restoring to their homes the families of the exiles of a nation was almost as keen a satisfaction to the white soldiers as to the Indians. Nearly all the Cherokee families dispersed to their homes, many having left the train at Maysville who lived in the northern part of the nation, but the Creek and

Seminole families followed the troops to Fort Gibson, and nearly all remained there that spring, as their country was south of the Arkansas River and still held by the Confederate forces.

After the defeat of the Confederate forces under General Cooper, twenty-five miles south of Fort Gibson, in July, 1863, at Elk Creek, they were pushed back south of the Creek country and the Creek families returned to their homes, but with less safety than the Cherokees whose country was firmly held by the Federal forces. The Arkansas River was a good line of defense for the Cherokee country, particularly when western Arkansas was held by the Union forces.

After Colonel Phillips captured, occupied and fortified Fort Gibson and was able to control the Arkansas River through the Indian country, the Southern Cherokee families who belonged to the Waitie faction, gradually drifted south with colonies settled along Red River, having lost practically everything by the fortunes of war. The Confederate authorities were not prepared to take as good care of these Southern Indian families as the Federal Government had taken of the loyal Cherokees and Creeks. They too were exiles and in a pitiable condition the last year of the war.