

AMERICAN INDIAN CONFEDERATES

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After *The War Between the States* began, President Jefferson Davis addressed the Congress of the Confederate States of America to establish a Bureau of Indian Affairs.¹ While the North was apathetic concerning the plight of American Indians², the South determinedly created a positive relationship with "Indian Country."³ In May 1861 Confederate envoy Albert Pike arrived in Indian Territory so that he could negotiate treaty terms with American Indians who were originally from the South.⁴ Pike found that most Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks and Seminoles immediately allied themselves with the Confederacy,⁵ but Cherokees were conflicted and bitterly divided just as other Americans. Still others in Indian Territory wanted neutrality.⁶ After their careful consideration, most American Indians living in Indian Territory or a confederated state believed that siding with the Confederacy was in their best interest.⁷

Confederate treaties were quite extensive, explicit, and inclusive which American Indians viewed favorably; one such treaty presented national sovereignty, confederate citizenship possibilities, and an entitled delegate in the Confederate House of Representatives.⁸ However, the situation was far from ideal despite treaty promises.⁹ American Indian Confederate soliders, who were expecting arms; supplies; and pay, got little or none.¹⁰ Confederate units often commandeered supplies that were designated for Indian Territory confederates.¹¹ Such events caused friction between high ranking Confederate military leaders.¹²

The Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole; who were collectively known as the "Five Civilized Tribes;" were not the only native groups to engage in *The War Between the States*. Many American Indians fought on both sides of *The War* such as the: Caddoes, Delaware, Kickapoo, Miami, Osage, Pottawatomie, Quapaws, Shawnee, and Wichitas.¹³ The pro-Union Pimas in Arizona Territory successfully routed Confederate forces.¹⁴ American Indians were located east of the Mississippi River; Choctaws, who lived in Mississippi, formed a battalion.¹⁵ Other American Indian Confederates were from Tennessee, North Carolina, and Kentucky.¹⁶

American Indians filled the Confederate ranks from private to the highest levels of military leadership. Some of the most notable Indian Territory Confederate leaders and supporters were:

- *Winchester Colbert*– Colbert was a pro-Confederacy Chickasaw Nation Governor and delegate during Pike's treaty negotiation,¹⁷
- *John Jumper*– Jumper, a Seminole Nation citizen, served as a Lieutenant Colonel,^{18 19}
- *Daniel N. McIntosh*– McIntosh was Creek Nation citizen and a Colonel²⁰ who was in the Battle of Honey Springs,
- *Stand Watie*– Watie was a Cherokee Nation statesmen and successful General,²¹
- *Allen Wright*– Wright was a highly educated Choctaw Nation citizen and a delegate during Pike's treaty negotiation; Wright served as a private.²²

The War muster rolls had hundreds of enlistees with interesting names:²³ John Bear Meat,²⁴ Samuel Cat,²⁵ Thomas Chubby,²⁶ Frog,²⁷ Hogshooter,²⁸ Konshattountzchette (or Flying Cloud),²⁹ and George Washington.³⁰ On April 9, 1865 a pro-Union Seneca at Appomattox Courthouse copied an order issued by General Ulysses S. Grant,³¹ Donehogawa, also known as *Ely S. Parker*, was made a Brigadier General the last day of *The War*.³²

American Indian Confederates participated in many battles, skirmishes, and reconnoiters; but some actions were not battle related. During *The War Between the States* American Indian Confederate situations included,

- *Engaging in warfare*– Battle of Honey Springs, with nearly 8000 American Indians, was the largest battle in Indian Territory,³³
- *Performing search and rescue*– After a disastrous train wreck occurred that was a few miles east of Newton Station, Mississippi; a detail of Choctaw Confederates risked their lives by jumping into a flooded river to save the lives of their Confederate brethren,³⁴
- *Being prisoners of war*– Not long after the formation of Major J. W. Pierce's Mississippi Choctaw Battalion the unit was immediately dispersed, and a few Confederates were taken captive;³⁵ The American Indian Confederate prisoners of war were sent to New York where they were paraded in the streets for the entertainment of onlookers.³⁶

Not all American Indians were concerned with *The War Between the States*. American Indians beyond the frontier usually had relations with Union forces. Battles did ensue but not because of North-South ideologies. One of the most disturbing events was committed during *The War*.³⁷ In November of 1864 troops, who were led by Union Colonel John M. Chivington, attacked a band of inoffensive Cheyenne and Arapaho camping near Sand Creek, Colorado Territory.³⁸ Most of the victims were women and children.³⁹ The Colonel was later brought before a U. S. Congressional hearing.⁴⁰ Chivington, a former minister, once wrote: "I am fully satisfied that to kill the red rebels is the only way to have peace and quiet."⁴¹

Positive remarks were also said. Colonel Richard M. Gano remarked that "not the least of the glorious results of this achievement is the increased goodwill of the Indian and white troops toward each other."⁴² Albert Pike, at the time a Brigadier General, once said: "it is important that our Indians should have our troops by their side that they may not conclude that they are fighting for us only and not equally for themselves."⁴³ During the surrender at Appomattox General Robert E. Lee quoted: "I'm glad to see one real American is here."⁴⁴ A compliment to *Ely S. Parker* after Lee noticed Parker was an American Indian. All these positive remarks were said by Confederate officers.

After the War ended, the once divided nations reunited and a new era of treaty making began. For allying themselves with the Confederates, harsh reparative terms were put into effect such as the reduction of Indian Territory land.⁴⁵ All in all approximately 12,000 American Indians⁴⁶ served in the Confederate military during *The War Between the States*. Years later during Confederate reunions American Indians were praised and honored for deeds done⁴⁷ while serving in the mighty forces of the Confederate States of America. ----- ROBERT BRUCE FERGUSON

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RECOMMENDED READING AND WATCHING MATERIALS USED AS CITATIONS

- ¹ Yale Law School, The Avalon Project, Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy. "Confederate States of America - Message to Congress March 12, 1861 (Indian Affairs)." http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/csa_m031261.asp. In March of 1861, Jefferson Davis messaged Howell Cobb: "Sir: To enable the Secretary of War most advantageously to perform the duties devolved upon him in relation to the Indian tribes by the second section of the Act to establish the War Department of February 21, 1861, it is deemed desirable that there should be established a Bureau of Indian Affairs, and, if the Congress concur in this view, I have the honor respectively to recommend that provision be made for the appointment of a Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and for one clerk to aid him in the discharge of his official duties."
- ² Mary Ahenakew, Do All Indians Live in Tents?, (United States of America: Collins In Association With The National Museum Of The American Indian, 2007), 2. American Indians are also known collectively as Native Americans, Indians, Red men, indigenous Americans, and many others. Ahenakew explained: "What is the correct terminology: American Indian, Indian, Native American, or Native? All of the above are acceptable. The consensus, however, is that whenever possible, Native peoples prefer to be called by their specific tribal name."
- ³ Annie Heloise Abel, Vol. 1, The Slaveholding Indians As Slaveholder and Secessionist, An Omitted Chapter In The Diplomatic History Of The Southern Confederacy. (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1915), 83. Abel wrote: "No one can deny that, in the interests of the Confederate cause, the project of sending emissaries even to the Indians was a wise measure or refuse to admit that the contrasting inactivity and positive indifference of the North was foolhardy in the extreme. It indicated a self-complacency for which there was no justification." Abel continued: "More than that can with truth be said; for, from the standpoint of political wisdom and foresight, the inactivity where the Indians were concerned was conduct most reprehensible."
- ⁴ James H. Malone, The Chickasaw Nation, A Short Sketch of a Noble People (Louisville, Kentucky: John P. Morton & Company Incorporated, 1922), 406-407. Malone wrote: "General Albert Pike was ... well known to the Indians ... the Choctaws and Chickasaws were themselves men of the South ... who can blame them for entering into this treaty with the people among whom they lived, and whose material interest were the same as theirs?"
- ⁵ Duane K. Hale, Arrell M. Gibson, Frank W. Porter III, Ed., The Chickasaw, (New York, Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1991), 77. Hale and Gibson reported: "They" (the Confederate government) "also suspected that the Chickasaw and other Indian Territory tribes might be naturally sympathetic to the Southern cause." Hale and Gibson continued: "At a council at North Fork Town in the Creek Nation, Pike found that the confederate officials' hunch was largely correct. The commissioner negotiated a treaty with the Creek, another with the Chickasaw and the Choctaw, and a third with the Seminole."
- ⁶ How the West was Lost, Five Tribes, As Long as the Grass shall Grow. Directed by Chris Wheeler. 50 minutes. Discovery Channel, KUSA-TV, Time-Life Video, 1993. Wheeler's documentary stated: "... many people of the five nations (were) still torn. Thousands favor the Union or neutrality."
- ⁷ *Ibid.* Wheeler's documentary also stated that it "was in their best interest to join the confederacy."
- ⁸ Malone, 407. Numerous treaty provisions were favorable to Native Americans in Indian Territory. Malone noted: "they should be 'admitted into the confederacy as one of the Confederate States, upon equal terms in all respects,' ... the rights of Indians in a fairer and better manner than in any treaty theretofore."
- ⁹ William C. Davis, Rebels & Yankees, The Fighting Men of the Civil War, (New York, New York: Gallery Books, 1989), 22. Davis wrote that Native Americans were: "ill-treated and ignored even by their own superiors ..."
- ¹⁰ Malone, 409. Malone stated: "The Confederacy obligated itself to furnish the Indian army with arms, ammunition, clothing, and tents, and the men were to receive the customary pay. I may here state that none of these promises were fulfilled."
- ¹¹ Alvin M. Josephy Jr., George Constable, ed., The Civil War, War on the Frontier, The Trans-Mississippi West, (U.S.A.: Time-Life Books Inc., 1986), 146. Josephy wrote: "For the moment, Van Don and Price reequipped their weakened forces—largely with supplies waiting at Fort Smith, Arkansas, for transshipment to Pike's Indians."
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 146. "Furious with Van Dorn," commented Josephy, "Pike brooded unhappily in the Indian Territory. Not only had Van Dorn commandeered arms and equipment earmarked for the Indians, but he had abandoned the Territory as well, breaking the Confederacy's vow to protect the tribes there."
- ¹³ Annie Heloise Abel, "The Indians In The Civil War." *The American Historical Review*, Vol. XV., No. 2 (Jan., 1910), 281.
- ¹⁴ Richard Collins, ed., The Native Americans, The Indigenous People of North America, (New York, New York: Smithsonian Publishers Inc., 1991,1992), 47.
- ¹⁵ J. W. Pierce to the Confederate Secretary of War, 17 February 1863, at Newton Station, Mississippi. Pierce wrote: "Sir, I have the honor to enclose for the confirmation of the department the muster rolls of the companies of Choctaw Indians raised by the authority of the ___ Secretary of War."
- ¹⁶ Davis, 22. Davis noted that: "a few hundred other redmen scattered through some of the white Confederate regiments from North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky."
- ¹⁷ Chronicles of Oklahoma. "Governor Daugherty (Winchester) Colbert by John Bartlett Meserve" Volume 18, No.4, December, 1940, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/chronicles/v018/v018p348.html>. Meserve wrote: "Winchester Colbert was a signer of the treaty which, as a Chickasaw delegate he had aided in negotiating with Gen. Albert Pike the representative of the Confederate States at North Fork, Creek Nation, on July 12, 1861. His sentiments, as were those of the Chickasaws in general, were very distinctly with the South."
- ¹⁸ Oklahoma Historical Society's Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History & Culture. "Jumper, John (ca. 1820-1896)". <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopediaindian/entries/j/ju002.html>. May wrote: "In 1861 Jumper reluctantly agreed to an alliance between the Seminole and the Confederate States of America. During the Civil War he served as major of the First Battalion Seminole Mounted Rifles and as colonel of the First Regiment Seminole Volunteers. He participated in the engagements at Round Mountain, Chusto Talasa, Middle Boggy, and Second Cabin Creek."
- ¹⁹ Janet B. Hewett, The Roster of Confederate Soldiers, 1861-1865. Volume IX, Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1996. Hewett's page 50 entry included: "Jumper, John 1st Seminole Mtd. Vol. Lt. Col"
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, Volume X, 1996. Hewett's page 481 entry included: "McIntosh, D. N. 1st Creek Mtd. Vol. 2nd Co. C Col."
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, Volume XVI, 1996. Hewett's first entry on page 26 was: "Watie, Stand 1st Cherokee Mtd. Vol. Col." Her second entry on page 26 was: "Watie, Stand Gen. & Staff Brig. Gen."
- ²² *Ibid.*, Volume XVI, 1996. Hewett's page 26 entry included: "Wright, Allen Choctaw Inf. Wilkin's Co."
- ²³ Davis, 22. "But they certainly lent color to the muster rolls of North and South." Davis says of the names, he continued: "Spring Frog, John Beameat, Alex Scarce Water, Big Mush Dirt Ester, Warkiller Hogshooter, George Hogloter, and Jumper Duck, were all soldiers of the Union, and these were simply anglicization of Indian names probably impossible to pronounce. In the Confederate First Kentucky Brigade there served a Mohawk sachem named Konshattountzchette ... His fellow soldiers simply preferred to call him or Flying Cloud."
- ²⁴ Janet B. Hewett, The Roster of Confederate Soldiers, 1861-1865. Volume I, Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1995.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, Volume III, 1995.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, Volume III, 1995.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, Volume VI, 1996.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, Volume VIII, 1996.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, Volume III, 1995.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, Volume XVI, 1996.
- ³¹ Jerry Kom, George Constable, ed., Pursuit to Appomattox, The Last Battles, (U.S.A.: Time-Life Books Inc., 1987), 150. Kom wrote: "Now that the terms were agreed upon, Grant asked Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Bowers to copy the order in ink. Bowers was too nervous to write steadily, so Grant gave the assignment to Ely Parker."
- ³² James J. Cassidy, Jr., ed., Through Indians Eyes, The Untold Story of Native American Peoples, (Pleasantville, New York/Montreal: Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1995), 333. Cassidy mentioned: "He was made a brigadier general as of that date, April 9, 1865."
- ³³ Kim Dramer, Frank W. Porter III, Ed., Native Americans and Black Americans, (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1997), 47. Dramer wrote: "Approximately 8,000 men took part in the ensuing three-day Battle of Honey Springs—the largest military engagement in the Indian Territory during the Civil War."
- ³⁴ S. G. Spann, "Choctaw Indians as Confederate Soldiers," Confederate Veteran Magazine, December 1905, 560. Spann wrote about the train falling into the river: "At this juncture, with my interpreter, Jack Amos, I went up to the Newton County camp. While there in the early part of June, 1863, rain fell in torrents, flooding the streams, the roads became impassable, and country bridges were washed away. Vicksburg was being besieged by Grant, and reinforcements were ordered to the assistance of Pemberton. Chunkey River intervened, and the bridge across the river was submerged and the water far out of the river banks. The engineer was under military orders, and his long train of cars was filled with Confederate soldiers, who, like the engineer, were animated with but one impulse—to Vicksburg to victory or death! " Spann continued describing the rescue: "Onward rushed the engineer. All passed over except the hindmost car. The bridge had swerved out of plumb, and into the raging waters with nearly one hundred soldiers the rear car was precipitated. "Help!" was the cry, but there was no help. The cry reached the camp. "Fly to the rescue!" was the command, and in less time that I can tell the story every Indian was at the scene. It was there that Jack Amos again displayed his courage and devotion to the Confederate soldiers."
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 560. Spann wrote: "New Orleans at that time was in the hands of the Federal Gen. B.F. Butler. Without notice a reconnoitering party of the enemy raided the camp, and captured over two dozen Indians and several noncommissioned white officers and carried them to New Orleans."
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 560. Spann wrote: "All the officers and several of the Indians escaped and returned to the Newton County camp; but all the balance of the captured Indians were carried to New York, and were daily paraded in the public parks as curiosities for the sport of sight-seers."
- ³⁷ Ashley Dunbar, "Native Americans: A Study Of Their Civil War Experience," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Research* 3 (2013): 9-10. Dunbar explains: "The Sand Creek Massacre was one of the most devastating events of the Civil War for Native Americans."
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 9-10.
- ³⁹ Benjamin Capps, Jerry Kom, ed., The Old West, The Indians. (New York: Time-Life Books Inc., 1973), 187. Author Capps wrote: "One observer, who claimed he had counted the Indian dead, put the total at 123, of whom 98 were women and children."
- ⁴⁰ John Tebbel. The Compact History of the Indian Wars, (New York, New York: Tower Publications, Inc., 1966), 218. Tebbel wrote: "There was a Congressional investigation of the Sand Creek Massacre, as it soon came to be known. The reports of eyewitnesses and other testimony filled 700 pages ..."
- ⁴¹ Capps, 192.
- ⁴² Josephy, 156.
- ⁴³ Josephy, 138. "Brigadier General Albert Pike" wrote Josephy "warned the Confederate government against subordinating the interests of the Indians in the Indian Territory to those of whites in Arkansas and Missouri."
- ⁴⁴ National Park Service. "Ely Parker - Chief, Lawyer, Engineer, and Brigadier General." www.nps.gov/apco/parker.htm. Robert E. Lee noticed Ely Parker was a Native American: "At the surrender meeting, seeing that Parker was an American Indian, General Lee remarked to Parker, 'I am glad to see one real American here.' Parker later stated, 'I shook his hand and said, 'We are all Americans!'"
- ⁴⁵ Dramer, 47. Kim Dramer wrote: "To punish Native American for supporting the Confederacy, the U. S. government declared after the war that all treaties between the government and the Indians were null and void. New treaties required tribes to yield parts of their land to the federal government."
- ⁴⁶ James I. Robertson Jr., George Constable, ed., The Civil War, Tenting Tonight, The Soldier's Life, (U.S.A.: Time-Life Books Inc., 1984), 31. Robertson reported: "The muster rolls of American Indians. Perhaps 12,000 served the Confederacy, most of them members of the Five Civilized Tribes— Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole—living out in the Indian Territory. Altogether, the Confederates would raise 11 regiments and seven independent battalions of Indians in the West, not to mention the few hundred Indians who were scattered through some of the white regiments from North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky."
- ⁴⁷ Spann, 561. Spann noted about Confederate reunions: "Jack Amos, to the manner born, refuses to emigrate, and still lives in Newton County, Chunkey Station his post office. He writes to me, saying that he is sure to attend the Reunion in New Orleans next year as he did in 1903, where he was feasted by the ladies and lauded by the press and honored by Confederate veterans every day."