

American Indians and the Civil War



Official National Park Service Handbook

Front Cover: Stockbridge-Munsee Indian Jonas Davids in the Union Army, Wisconsin 2nd Cavalry, Co. A
COURTESY OF DONNA HOGERHUIS IN HONOR OF
HER GRANDMOTHER THELMA (DAVIDS) PUTNAM

A rug likely woven by a Navajo woman
while incarcerated during the war.
COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
HUBBELL TRADING POST NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

American Indians and the Civil War



Robert K. Sutton and John A. Latschar, Editors

Produced by

The National Park Service

Washington Support Office, Interpretation and Education

Washington Support Office, Cultural Resources

Southeast Regional Office, Interpretation and Education

The American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association

The Bureau of Indian Affairs

The Bureau of Indian Education



*Mohican Stockbridge-Munsee
Indians are sworn into the US Army.*

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY WHS 1909

Contents

Foreword / 2

by Edward H. Hall III

Preface / 4

by Robert K. Sutton and John A. Latschar

Introduction: American Indians and the Civil War / 10

by Laurence M. Hauptman

Violence and the Dakota War of 1862 / 28

by Janet Youngholm

Soldiers in the Shadows: Company K, 1st Michigan Sharpshooters / 48

by Eric Hemenway and Sammie Meadows

Wisconsin American Indians in the Civil War / 66

by Jo Ann Schedler

The Civil War in Indian Territory / 88

by Theda Perdue

The Bear River Massacre / 112

by Mae Timbimboo Parry

The Sand Creek Massacre / 132

by Gary L. Roberts

The Navajo Nation and the Treaty of 1868 / 162

by Peter Iverson

Conclusion / 180

by Elliott West

Epilog: You Cannot Remember What You Never Knew / 196

by Daniel Wildcat

About the Authors / 210

Places to Learn More / 212

Map / 214



Foreword

History is a powerful tool for the future. American Indian tribes understand the value of passing knowledge through an oral tradition and the responsibility of being present and respectful when receiving the honor of that knowledge. I am thankful that we are able to support the inclusion of tribes in the sesquicentennial commemoration of the Civil War and the documentation of tribal history through this publication.



Many people come to the United States to visit and learn about the history of this land and the people who first inhabited it. American Indians are often referenced in a historical context without relevance to the present or as part of the overall thread of the American story. It is important to note that the “American story” was not written by indigenous peoples and therefore the dominant perspective and content have not represented their voices. We learned through tribal participation in the Lewis and Clark Expedition Bicentennial that there was a whole new point of view about the Lewis and Clark story that could only be delivered by the tribes.

This publication is adding tribal voices to another chapter of American history, documenting oral tradition for generations to come while validating generations past. Through this effort we are able to understand the context and significance of tribal history to the story of America and to provide our children with a better understanding of the influences that have shaped our present. Although it is impossible to document every American Indian story of the Civil War in one small volume, I do hope this book is a catalyst to encourage people to embrace the inclusion of authentic American Indian interpretation into the context of this country’s past, present, and future.

*Edward H. Hall III, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Arikara-Hidatsa*



*This publication is adding
tribal voices to another chapter of
American history. It documents oral
tradition for generations to come
while validating generations past.*

The National Park Service gratefully acknowledges the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Education, and Eastern National for providing copies of this book to Tribal Colleges/Universities and Indian Schools across America.

ATTENTION! INDIAN FIGHTERS

Having been authorized by the Governor to raise a
Company of 100 day

U. S. VOL CAVALRY!

For immediate service against hostile Indians. I call upon all who wish to engage in such
service to call at my office and enroll their names immediately.

Pay and Rations the same as other U. S.

*Even as American Indian soldiers
were fighting and dying for the
army in the East, the US government
was recruiting white soldiers to
“subdue” Indians in the West.*

Preface

On the morning of July 17, 1863, Union Maj. Gen. James G. Blunt led his forces in an attack against the Confederate Army led by Gen. Douglas H. Cooper near Honey Springs, Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma).

*US Army
recruitment poster*

COURTESY, HISTORY COLORADO 10025731

The battle began with an artillery barrage, then Blunt ordered a full-scale attack. Eventually, Blunt was able to outflank and turn the Confederate left, and Cooper ordered a full retreat. The Union had won a clear victory, essentially stopping any further Confederate offensive actions in Indian Territory and setting the stage for the eventual recapture of Fort Smith, a major post then in the hands of the Confederates in Arkansas.

The Battle of Honey Springs was unique, but not because it was a major decisive battle. It was important, but not decisive. Nor was the engagement significant for the loss of life—79 Union soldiers and 181 (probably more) Confederates. Honey Springs was unique as the largest and perhaps only Civil War battle in which white soldiers on both sides were in the minority.

American Indians fought on both sides of the Battle of Honey Springs. Cherokees fought Cherokees; Creeks lined up against Creeks. Cherokees and Creeks made up the majority of American Indian soldiers on the Confederate side; Choctaws and Chickasaws fought beside them. The Cherokees and Creeks who fought on the Union side were joined by companies from the Seminole, Shawnee, Delaware, Keechi, Caddo, Kickapoo, and Osage tribes, as well as by soldiers from other tribes. In addition, African American soldiers from the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry fought on the Union side.

Indian Territory was home to the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, and smaller nations at the outbreak of the Civil War. For most, the decision to side with the Confederacy was easy.

*This book is
an introduction to
the accounts of
American Indians
and the Civil War.
There are many
other stories
and perspectives,
as well.*

Cherokee Civil War veterans

MUSEUM OF THE CHEROKEE INDIAN



The Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles were still angry with the forced removal from their ancestral homes by the federal government some 30 years earlier. Some of the more prosperous Indians owned African American slaves and, like many Southerners, wanted to protect their economic and social system. Layered on top of these issues, however, were long-standing conflicts within the tribes themselves that complicated, and in some cases fractured alliances and that influenced decisions to align with one side or the other.

The Cherokee, Choctaw, Creeks and other nations in Indian Territory were not the only American Indians who fought in the Civil War. Some, like the Delawares in Kansas, joined the Union forces hoping that their service would secure a permanent home, perhaps in Indian Territory. The Pamunkeys from Virginia and the Lumbees from North Carolina joined the

Union cause in part due to their long-standing dislike for the Southern planter aristocracy. On the other hand, the Catawbias, and the Cherokees and Choctaws who had remained in the Southeast joined forces with the Confederacy in hopes that the new government would validate their tenuous land claims. In western New York, the Tonawanda Band of Seneca looked to Washington to help them hold their land and continue to reacquire land that had been purchased earlier by speculators. Ely Parker, a Tonawanda sachem (paramount chief), rose in rank to brevetted (temporary appointment) brigadier general, served on Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's staff, and drafted the surrender documents signed by Gen. Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Court House. On both sides, some Indians fought to earn money or for the adventure of battle. In all, over 20,000 American Indians fought in the Civil War.

For the most part, American Indians in the Far West neither participated in the Civil War nor cared about

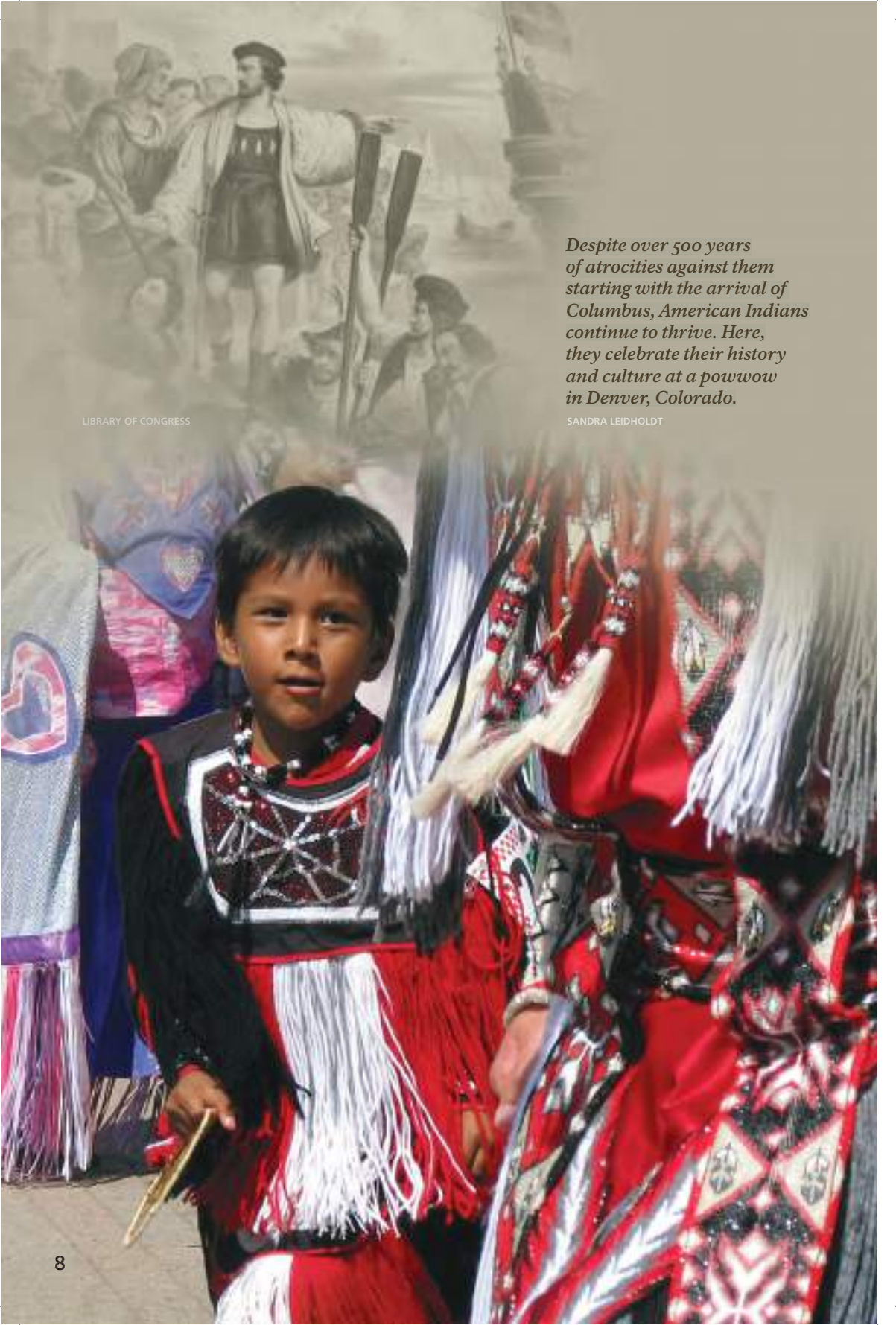
the war raging in the East. On the eve of the Civil War, most of the 16,000 regular soldiers of the US Army were stationed west of the Mississippi River. Their major duties consisted of protecting white settlers, emigrants on western trails, the mail, and the recently completed telegraph lines from Indian attacks. They also had the duty of guarding peaceful Indian populations against white incursions and attacks. Many future Union and Confederate senior officers served in western military posts before the Civil War. With the outbreak of the war, most officers and enlisted men were either transferred east to fight for the Union or resigned to fight for the Confederacy.

*Canyon de Chelly,
Arizona*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

This withdrawal of Union troops from the West left a protective vacuum throughout this vast area. It would take time to fill the void with local and imported militia, most of whom were not well-trained and for whom the role of protecting whites far outweighed any notion of protecting Indians. During the previous decades, white migration and settlements throughout the West had dramatically altered and reduced food sources and had forced many American Indians to settle on reservations, where they received meager supplies of food and clothing. The resources required to support the Union war effort plus the corruption of Indian agents and suppliers further reduced already scarce supplies, so many tribes were soon desperate for food and shelter. When gold was discovered in present-day Montana and elsewhere in the West, the rush of miners to these strikes, often through and into American Indian lands, further exacerbated the tensions between whites and Indians.

American Indians participated in the Civil War for a number of reasons. Some hoped that their lives and future prospects would be better, some that their lands would be protected, and some that they would get better treatment after the war from either the Confederate or the United States governments. For most, their hopes and dreams were dashed. The American Indian people in Indian Territory eventually lost land and autonomy with the establishment of the Oklahoma Territory and later the State of Oklahoma. Further west, in the post-Civil War "Indian War" era, American Indians fought the US Army. Although the western tribes and nations won stunning victories at places such as

The image is a vertical composition. The upper portion features a faded, historical-style illustration of Christopher Columbus standing on a ship's deck, surrounded by other figures. The lower portion is a vibrant, close-up photograph of a young Native American child, likely of the Navajo or Hopi tribe, wearing traditional regalia. The child is dressed in a red and black garment with intricate white and silver beadwork and fringe. To the right, another person in similar traditional dress is partially visible. The overall theme connects historical events with contemporary Native American culture.

*Despite over 500 years
of atrocities against them
starting with the arrival of
Columbus, American Indians
continue to thrive. Here,
they celebrate their history
and culture at a powwow
in Denver, Colorado.*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

SANDRA LEIDHOLDT

Little Big Horn and although they showed remarkable military skill in many other conflicts, ultimately they were relegated to reservations that were only fractions of their earlier lands.

After the Civil War, after the Indian Wars of the late 1800s, and after the United States government implemented policies of assimilation with the concerted effort to make Indians into “Christian farmers,” American Indian cultures might have seemed doomed. The very survival of American Indians seemed in jeopardy. The population had declined rapidly from about 600,000 in 1800 to about 250,000 in 1890 due to European diseases, warfare, massacres, forced marches to new locations, hunger, and starvation. Both predictions would have been wrong.

American Indians have not only survived, but their numbers have also increased dramatically since 1890. The 2010 census reported that 2.9 million individuals identified themselves as either American Indian or Native Alaskan, and another 2.3 million called themselves American Indian or Alaska Native in combination with one or more other races. American Indian cultures and many languages have survived as well.

The year 1992 could have been a year for major celebration in the United States—at least for whites. That year marked the 500th anniversary of Columbus’s “discovery” of the New World. There were exhibitions, books, and films, but celebrations were low-key, nothing like 100 years earlier at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Instead, on Columbus Day 1992, descendants of the original inhabitants of the western hemisphere demonstrated against the atrocities committed by a succession of conquerors and governments since 1492. The message heard from many places then, is still heard today, “We are still here!”

Robert K. Sutton, National Park Service
John A. Latschar, National Park Service
Editors

In past National Park Service publications 620,000 has been cited as the death count of troops from the Civil War, a number long accepted by historians. Recent scholarly studies, however, suggest that at least 750,000 and possibly more died as a direct result of the Civil War. Some of the scholars who contributed essays to this handbook cite the higher estimate, based upon the new research findings.

Introduction: American Indians and the Civil War

*Laurence M. Hauptman, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History
The State University of New York, New Paltz*



The American Civil War was one of the most momentous eras in American history. The war and its aftermath ended bondage and ushered in President Abraham Lincoln's "new birth of freedom" for four million enslaved people. Perhaps as many as 750,000 soldiers did not return home. A little known but crucial part of the story was that more than 20,000 American Indians fought on both sides of the conflict. Many thought their participation would guarantee their survival, protect their lands, and enhance their autonomy. Instead, for them the post-war period was tragic. A reunited nation turned its vision towards westward expansion, overrunning Indian lands and decimating their populations.

From 1861 to 1865, American Indians found themselves swept up into a war not of their own choosing. At a time when the United States Army was fighting the Apache, Cheyenne, Navajo, and Sioux in the West, over 20,000 American Indians served in the Civil War. They contributed to the Union and Confederacy on both land and sea, as "grunts" in the trenches and even as commissioned and noncommissioned officers. An unknown number perished in battle, from disease, or in prison camps, including a number of Union Indians at Andersonville and several Confederate Choctaws incarcerated in New York.

American Indians from Maine to Minnesota joined the Union Army or Navy. Most outside of Indian Territory, now the State of Oklahoma, were assigned to integrated companies—the exception being the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters—or were seamen aboard naval blockading vessels. Some also served in the United States Colored Troops. Diaries and letters indicate that Indian and non-Indian troops bonded, but most native recruits enlisted and stuck together for the duration of their service. For example, seven of 25 Iroquois Indians in the 132nd New York Volunteer Infantry enlisted on the same day, May 4, 1862, and 25 Odawas/Ottawas signed up at Pentwater, Michigan, for service in Company K of the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters on July 4, 1863.

*An unidentified
Federal cavalryman*

NPS/WILSON'S CREEK

More than 20,000 American Indians fought in the Civil War, some for the Union and some for the Confederacy. Though some opposed slavery and others held slaves, this was not their driving issue. Most were fighting to remain independent on their own lands.

Only two weeks after the war with the Dakotas began in Minnesota, Catawba soldiers were fighting in the Second Battle of Bull Run (Manassas) in Virginia.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

American Indians from South Carolina to Indian Territory enlisted in the Confederate ranks. Almost all served in their own separate companies, with the exception of the Catawbas. Confederate-allied Indians were largely recruited from North Carolina, from Mississippi, and from Indian Territory. The greatest concentration of American Indian troops fought in and around Indian Territory. There, American Indians allied to both the Union and Confederacy fought each other, especially at major battles at Chusto-Talasah, Pea Ridge, Honey Springs, and at two battles at Cabin Creek.

What explains the significant presence of so many American Indians in this brutal conflict, particularly at a time when mostly Union-aligned soldiers were undertaking campaigns of “pacification” against the Indians in the Great Lakes, Plains, and Southwest? Clearly, not all American Indians participated in the Civil War. While the Confederate constitutional convention was meeting in February 1861 at Montgomery, Alabama, the US Army was attempting to capture Cochise, the Chiricahua Apache leader. Then, less than two weeks before the Second Battle of Bull Run in August 1862, the Dakota War began in Minnesota. On January 29, 1863, less than a month after President Lincoln formally issued his Emancipation Proclamation, Col. Patrick Connor led California Volunteers in the massacre of some 400 Northwestern Shoshone camping



along the Bear River in present-day Idaho. In the summer of 1864, when the Army of the Potomac was in the trenches at Petersburg, Christopher “Kit” Carson and his mostly volunteer soldiers were removing thousands of Navajos and Mescalero Apaches from their homelands, forcing them on their “Long Walk.” Finally, two weeks after Lincoln’s reelection in November 1864, Col. John Chivington and the troops of the 1st and 3rd Colorado attacked a peaceful camp of Arapaho and Cheyenne Indians along Sand Creek, killing about 200 men, women, and children and mutilating their bodies.

To be sure, by 1861 some Indian communities had been integrated into the region that surrounded them, becoming dependent on the non-Indian world for economic and political survival. Frequently the reasons for volunteering were simply the result of persuasive and well-respected community leaders who were committed to joining the war effort—North or South. Although slavery was not the major reason for most Confederate enlistments, some American Indians were slaveholders and/or were historically and economically tied to the “peculiar institution” as slavery was called; some of those who joined the Union leaned toward abolitionism, objected to their poor treatment as “free persons of color,” or served with blacks in the United States Colored Troops. Some individual Indian soldiers, like their white counterparts, were inspired by wanderlust and adventure. Like many other recruits, American Indians were especially attracted by financial inducements to enlist. Some clearly served as “substitutes” and numerous others chose sides especially in the last two years of the war when cash bounties to enlist were more than 30-40 times greater than in 1861!

Some American Indians enlisted individually into integrated units while others joined as groups, forming their own companies. Still others joined the primarily African American US Colored Troops.

DAVID M. RUBENSTEIN
RARE BOOK & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY,
DUKE UNIVERSITY



Fort Scott

With a critical need for soldiers to defend isolated Kansas and retake Indian Territory, Union officials raised three Indian Home Guard Units by the summer of 1862. Fort Scott provided logistical support to these regiments of General Blunt's "Indian Brigade" in numerous battles. Many wounded Home Guard soldiers were brought to the hospital at Fort Scott. Some found permanent peace in the national cemetery there.

NPS/FORT SCOTT



American Indians, nevertheless, did have unique reasons to enlist. In some instances, it was based on past alliances, treaty obligations, and previous military experiences. As in earlier times, participation in war validated tribal leadership and status within one's community. However, there appears to be one overriding reason. For American Indians, a universal motive in the North, South, and Trans-Mississippi West was to maintain what was left of their homeland. Indeed, most native peoples who participated in these three regions hoped to save their communities from further land loss and removal. Unlike African American troops who were struggling against slavery, most American Indians were fighting to be left alone from past intrusions and threats to themselves and their land bases. Since most American Indians were not US citizens until 1924, they felt much more patriotic to their own nations than to the Union stars and stripes or the Confederate stars and bars. Faced with a precarious existence, many American Indians saw military involvement as their only chance, their last desperate hope of obtaining a more secure recognition of their territories. Thus, from Connecticut to Indian Territory, they sought the "warpath" because it seemed imperative for their own economic and/or community's survival; however, local factors also shaped their responses.

The Delaware are a case in point. They were one of the more significant American Indian nations to participate in the Union war effort. From the end of the 1700s to the Civil War, the Delawares had been forced to migrate 1,500 miles from their Middle Atlantic homeland to several areas in the Trans-Mississippi West in order to survive as a people. By the 1850s, those Delawares who resettled in Kansas once again faced pressures of white settlement and dispossession. Surrounded by sectional violence as a result of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and "Bleeding Kansas," they found themselves in a tenuous situation. By the Civil War, the Delawares hoped to cut a deal about their future south of Kansas. Hoping to secure a new home, they signed up with the Union. Approximately 170

served during the war. Some were “Jayhawkers” such as Capt. Ben Simon, raiding Confederate-allied Indians in Indian Territory and participating with the Kickapoos in the killings of half of the Tonkawa Indians at the Wichita Agency. Others served as scouts for Gen. John C. Frémont in Missouri. Captain Falleaf (Fall Leaf) led Delawares in a home guard unit in Union Gen. James Blunt’s Indian Brigade. Later in the war, some of these men served in the 6th and 14th Kansas Cavalry.

Black Beaver was the most heralded Delaware in the Civil War. For 25 years before the war, he had been an employee of the American Fur Company as well as a guide and interpreter for explorers and military men like John James Audubon, Richard Dodge, John C. Frémont, Henry Leavenworth, and Randolph Marcy. He had also served the United States in the Mexican War as a commander of Black Beaver’s Spy Company. In mid April 1861, Black Beaver warned Union Gen. William Emory at Fort Cobb of approaching Confederates, leading to the capture of its advance column, the first prisoners taken in the war. He then skillfully guided Emory’s forces and federal troops stationed at Forts Arbuckle, Cobb, Smith, and Washita through hundreds of miles of Confederate-held Indian Territory, arriving at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, on May 31 without losing a man, horse, or wagon.

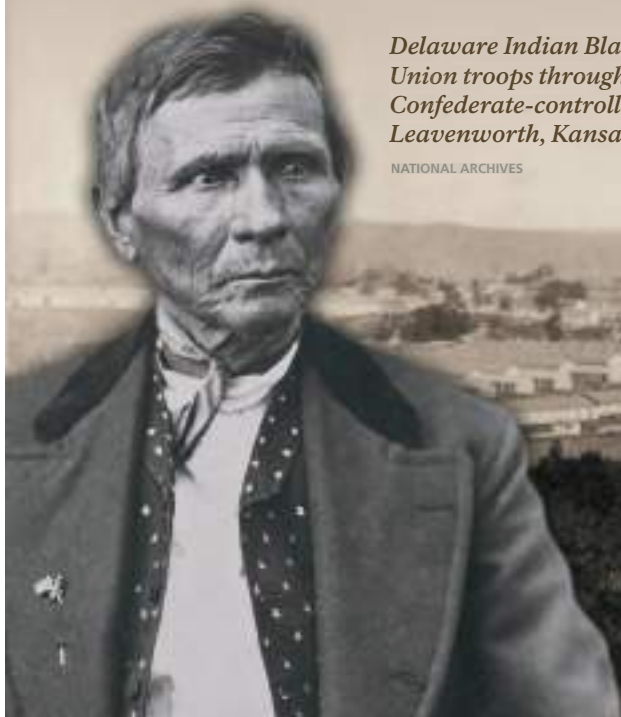
Prior to the Civil War, Delaware Indians were highly acclaimed guides and scouts for the wagon trains and scientific explorations of the West. During the war, they continued in this role for the army.

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY



Delaware Indian Black Beaver guided Union troops through hundreds of miles of Confederate-controlled Indian Territory to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, without losing a man.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES



Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Lumbee Indians were forced to build the massive earthworks of Fort Fisher, North Carolina.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Other native communities outside of Indian Territory had their own local reasons for joining the Union ranks. The Pamunkey of Virginia and the Lumbee of North Carolina reacted to the white supremacist world of the pre-Civil War South by serving Union interests. Several Pamunkeys worked as river pilots for Gen. George McClellan's Army of the Potomac during the Peninsula campaign of 1862. Lumbees were used as forced labor to build Fort Fisher, the major Confederate bastion on the South Atlantic, and were intimidated by North Carolina's Home Guard, which had attempted to force them into Confederate service.

In response, some Lumbees, led by Henry Berry Lowry (Lowrie) became guerillas fighting the Home Guard in the swamp country on the southern border of North Carolina and aiding Union Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's Carolina campaign of 1865.



Although the Lumbee were more aggressive in resisting the local Confederate power structure than the Pamunkey, members of both communities reacted to their demeaning status as “free persons of color,” a label given to them by white southerners.

Confederate Foe and Indian Folk Hero

When Henry Berry Lowry's father and brother were first forced to dig their own graves and then shot by the North Carolina Home Guard, Lowry became a determined foe of the Confederates as well as a protector of the Lumbee people. He also helped Gen. William T. Sherman navigate the nearly impenetrable Carolina swamps to capture Confederate troops on his way north to Virginia.

THE STATE ARCHIVES OF
NORTH CAROLINA



BILL BENISH

Several American Indian communities in the East served the Confederacy. The Eastern Band of Cherokees were the most numerous in Confederate ranks in this region, following the leadership of their adopted white leader, William Holland Thomas. Thomas had helped some Cherokees remain on their ancestral lands in North Carolina during the forced removals during the 1830s. Hundreds of Cherokees joined the Thomas Legion. The legion guarded the railroad pass between the Cumberland and Smoky mountains, a vital link for the Richmond-Chattanooga Railroad and a lifeline to Atlanta for the Confederacy. The Thomas Legion was also employed enforcing Confederate conscription in pro-Union eastern Tennessee.

Still other American Indians in the Southeast chose the Confederate side. From Antietam to Petersburg, a small contingent of Catawbas served in the 12th South Carolina in an integrated company with white troops. The Catawbas had served South Carolina faithfully in past wars and had even been involved in capturing runaway slaves. Like the Cherokees in the Thomas Legion and some of the Mississippi Choctaws, some Catawbas had avoided removal from their traditional homelands. All three groups had a precarious existence in the South, even as late as the Civil War. They were dependent on their white neighbors who surrounded them. Consequently, to maintain their shrinking homeland, they needed to prove themselves as good loyal Southerners. In one of the more heroic episodes of the war in the Deep South, the 1st Choctaw Battalion rescued 23 soldiers from a Confederate troop train wrecked at Chunky Creek near Hickory, Mississippi.

American Indian communities in the Northeast were also drawn into the Union war effort. Some within the small culturally and historically related maritime communities of Pequot and Mohegan Indians of Connecticut and Montauketts, Unkechaugs, and Shinnecocks in New York had no pretenses about noble ideals when they joined the Union Army or Navy. Whaling, their major source of income, declined when war broke out, so they reluctantly chose another line of work. One Pequot, Austin George, enlisted in the 31st US Colored Troops in 1864 rather than seek work in a nearby Norwich factory.

We are all Americans

After the first shots of the Civil War were fired on Fort Sumter, President Abraham Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to put down the Confederate rebellion. Many men from the North offered their services, including lawyer and engineer Ely S. Parker who had experience with the New York militia. Most men with his education were given commissions as officers. Parker was told he could not serve because this was a white man's war. He was a Seneca chief or sachem.

While working as an engineer on a project in Galena, Illinois, Parker struck up a conversation with a clerk in a harness shop whose military career had also stalled. When a fight broke out in a local tavern, Parker came to his aid and the men became fast friends.

As white men began to die by the thousands, the military began accepting other able-bodied men to fight. Parker's friend's star began to rise. Ulysses S. Grant had gone back to war and Ely Parker became one of his closest aides, serving at his side through much of the last half of the war. Parker rose in rank to breveted brigadier general.

Parker was ordered by Grant to draw up the articles of surrender which Gen. Robert E. Lee signed at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. One popular story is that upon meeting Parker at the surrender, Lee is said to have remarked, "I am glad to see one real American here," to which Parker replied, "We are all Americans, Sir."

*Ely S. Parker,
second
from right.*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Members of the Tonawanda Band of Seneca in western New York were fearful of land speculators after a series of harsh treaties led to their dispossession from their homeland. From 1857 to 1861, the federal government had allowed the Seneca to repurchase a part of their homeland. By the Civil War, most Senecas saw Washington as a needed ally to help them guard against another dispossession. Ely S. Parker and his family were directly involved in resisting the actions of the Ogden Land Company, intent on securing Tonawanda lands. Parker, a Tonawanda sachem on the Grand Council of Chiefs of the Iroquois Confederacy, later served as General Grant's military secretary and was the scribe ordered to draw up the articles of surrender signed by General Lee at Appomattox Court House.

In the Midwest, American Indians from Michigan and Wisconsin joined the Union in greatest numbers. They served in the trenches in the nine-month Union siege of Petersburg from June 1864 to January 1865. In the disastrous Union defeat at the Battle of the Crater on July 30, 1864, Menominees served in the 37th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. A full company of mostly Odawas/Ottawas and Ojibways/Chippewas, and a sprinkling of other Indians from Michigan and across the border in Canada made up Company K of the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters, the most famous Union Indian company from east of the Mississippi.

The Odawa and Ojibway as well as the Potawatomi were culturally and historically related communities that had faced removal from Michigan from the 1820s onward. Their world was shrinking and their status was ambiguous by the time of the Civil War, leading them to be increasingly dependent on the federal government. Hoping to renegotiate their treaties after a series of disastrous ones from 1820 to 1855,



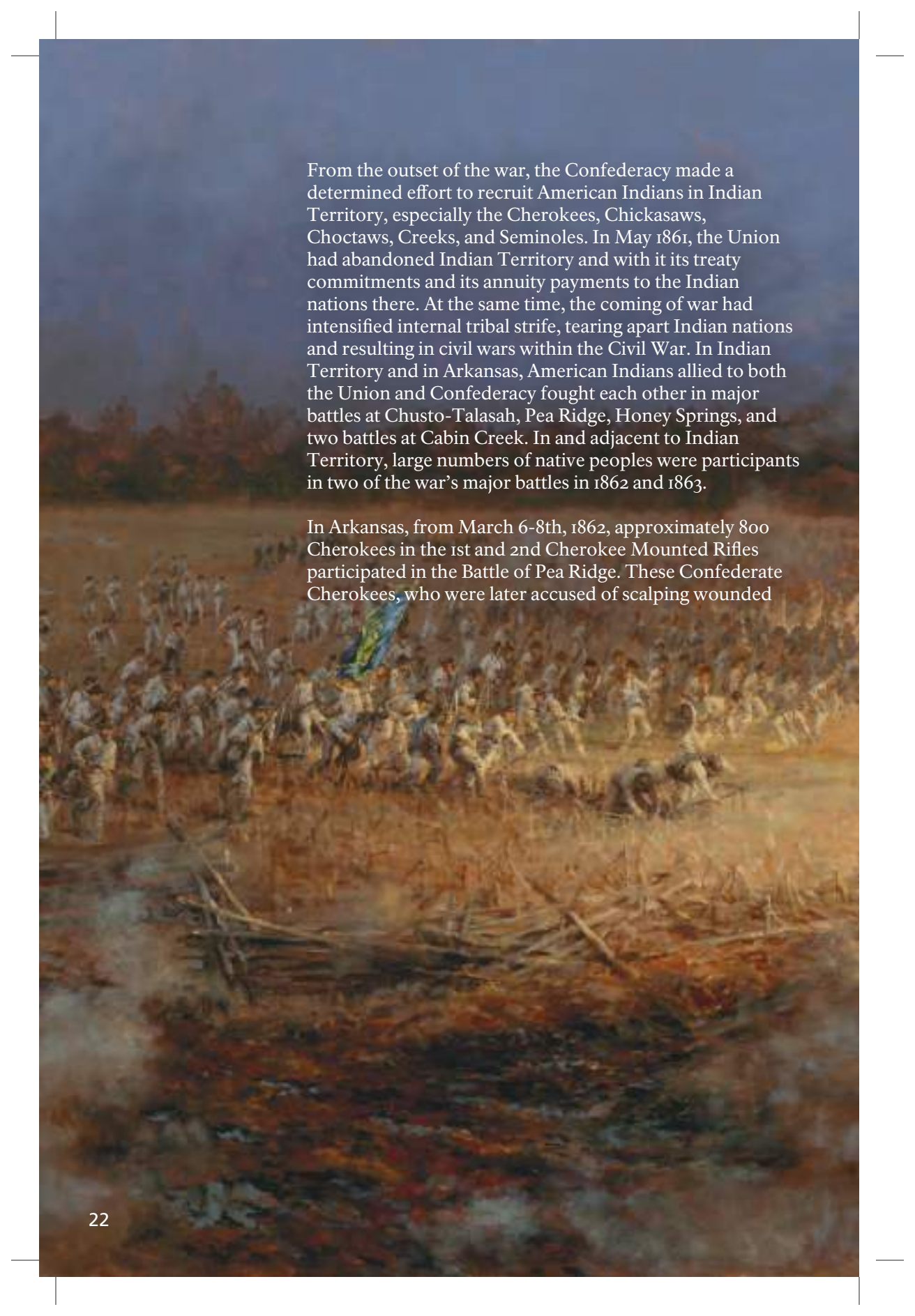
these nations sought to obtain a larger, more concentrated land base in Michigan. American Indian sharpshooters, especially Antoine Scott from Michigan's Company K, were cited for heroism at the Battle of the Crater and were even acknowledged for their bravery in Confederate accounts. Penobscots in the 7th Maine Volunteers and at least one Pequot and one Tuscarora in the US Colored Troops also participated in this Union disaster. On the other side of the earthworks at Petersburg, Confederate Catawbas fought for the 12th South Carolina Volunteers.

Indian troops from the Midwest and Northeast were praised for their heroism at Vicksburg and here at Spotsylvania.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Other American Indians troops fighting for the Union from both the Midwest and Northeast were praised for their heroism during the war. At Vicksburg, Indians in the 14th Wisconsin also served as sharpshooters. They camouflaged themselves with leaves and crawled on their bellies to get into position to silence the rebel cannon. A year later at Spotsylvania, Seneca soldiers repeated this feat by camouflaging themselves and capturing a nest of Confederate snipers.



From the outset of the war, the Confederacy made a determined effort to recruit American Indians in Indian Territory, especially the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles. In May 1861, the Union had abandoned Indian Territory and with it its treaty commitments and its annuity payments to the Indian nations there. At the same time, the coming of war had intensified internal tribal strife, tearing apart Indian nations and resulting in civil wars within the Civil War. In Indian Territory and in Arkansas, American Indians allied to both the Union and Confederacy fought each other in major battles at Chusto-Talasa, Pea Ridge, Honey Springs, and two battles at Cabin Creek. In and adjacent to Indian Territory, large numbers of native peoples were participants in two of the war's major battles in 1862 and 1863.

In Arkansas, from March 6-8th, 1862, approximately 800 Cherokees in the 1st and 2nd Cherokee Mounted Rifles participated in the Battle of Pea Ridge. These Confederate Cherokees, who were later accused of scalping wounded

and dead Union soldiers, suffered defeat. After the battle some Cherokees deserted the Confederacy and headed to Unionist Kansas. On July 17, 1863 a Union force composed of American Indians, African Americans, and white troops won its most important victory in Indian Territory at Honey Springs, just north of present-day Checotah, Oklahoma. At this battle, Maj. Gen. James G. Blunt's Union forces included Indian Home Guard units composed of Delawares, Kickapoos, Osages, Quapaws, Senecas, Shawnees, and Unionist members of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole nations. The opposing Confederate force, commanded by Brig. Gen. Douglas H. Cooper, included regiments of Cherokee mounted rifles, Creek regiments led by half-brothers Daniel and Col. Chilly McIntosh, and a Choctaw-Chickasaw regiment of mounted rifles led by Col. Tandy Walker.

On several occasions, American Indian troops faced each other in battle such as here at Pea Ridge, Arkansas.

ANDY THOMAS



The Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole presence on both sides of this battle might seem puzzling. The explanation is that during the Civil War, longstanding feuds had resumed in Indian Territory. Creeks sought retribution against tribal enemies that dated back decades. Chief William McIntosh of the Upper Creeks, the father of Chilly McIntosh and his half-brother Daniel, had signed the Creek removal treaty at Indian Springs in 1825 and was later killed for his actions by the Lower Creeks. Both McIntosh brothers chose to serve as officers of the Confederacy during the Civil War. Their family's rival, Opothle Yohola, chief of the Lower Creeks, chose the Union. A Confederate force that included the McIntosh brothers defeated Opothle Yohola on December 9, 1861, at Chusto-Talasah, driving the chief and his Creek contingent out of Indian Territory to Union-held Kansas.

The removal era of the 1830s was also the backdrop to Cherokee history during the Civil War. Although there were schisms in 1861 and challenges to Principal Chief John Ross' leadership, the Cherokee Nation was torn asunder, especially after the Battle of Pea Ridge in March 1862. Open warfare broke out between followers of Ross and Stand Watie. Several of Watie's relatives, the Ridge family, had been signatories to the 1835 Cherokee Removal Treaty of New Echota. They were assassinated after the accord by anti-treaty allies of Ross. The Civil War and Watie's success as a Confederate field commander gave him the opportunity to retaliate and take back political control of the Cherokee Nation, leading Ross to flee from Indian Territory.

Stand Watie, a master guerilla tactician, is often considered by military historians to be the best high-ranking Confederate officer in the last year of the war in the Trans-Mississippi West. Too often, however, they excuse his methods, especially his ruthless treatment of African American prisoners in the Union Army, by emphasizing his genius as a strategist. Watie's men were forced to live off the land since supplies were always low or were diverted to the war's eastern theater. Consequently, he undertook daring raids to secure provisions. On June 15, 1864 he captured the federal steamboat, *J. R. Williams* on the Arkansas River. The boat was transporting \$100,000 worth of supplies, including 150 barrels of flour and 16,000 pounds of bacon. Three months later at the Second Battle of Cabin Creek,

Watie's men along with Confederate Gen. Richard Gano's Texans surprised a 300-wagon Union supply train filled with provisions worth \$1.5 million. On June 23, 1865, at Doaksville near Fort Towson in Indian Territory, Watie was the last Confederate general to surrender his command during the Civil War.



Besides combat, American Indians had an important impact on regimental life. In the 14th Wisconsin, Pvt. Elisha Stockwell described how one of the F Company Indians, armed with his Belgian rifle, went squirrel hunting and came back to camp “with all the squirrels he could handily carry, all shot in the head.” Squirrel soup, an Iroquoian Indian delicacy, was a welcome substitute for stale hardtack. The commander of the company, Lt. James K. Newton of De Pere, made reference to a culinary delight—parched hominy seasoned with salt pork—that was “discovered” by his regiment’s recruits. He never acknowledged that this was an old Iroquoian dish that dated at least to the 1600s, nor did he mention that 39 Oneidas were in his company. In the records of Grand Army of the Republic, one Civil War veteran, Dudley Beekman, reflecting on his comrades in the 132nd New York State Volunteers, wrote that he had served in combat with 25 Iroquois in North Carolina and that they had taught him to swim. They were all “good fellows” and could “all talk American.”

Schisms within tribes that played out in Civil War battles sometimes dated back to the Indian removal era of the 1830s, as was the case with the Cherokees.

THE GRANGER COLLECTION

Throughout the United States today, there are visible signs of American Indian participation in the Civil War. Impressive monuments remind us of their service in a war that cost approximately 750,000 American lives. One of these monuments is located at Confederate Park in Fort Mill, South Carolina; another is in front of the old Cherokee capitol building in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. American Indians who served in the Union ranks are honored at recently dedicated tribal veterans' memorials on the Seneca Nation's Allegany Indian Reservation at Salamanca, New York, and on the Oneida Indian Reservation near Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Despite hopes that participating in the war effort would lead to a better day, most American Indians were severely disappointed. Even those who chose the winning Union side failed to improve the overall condition of their peoples. Once again, the Delaware are a perfect example. After the conflict ended, most Delawares were forced out of Kansas and relocated to Cherokee lands, where many who had served Watie and the Confederacy lived. Union-allied Delawares were also required by federal treaty to become citizens of the Cherokee Nation!

The advances in military technology developed in four years of war were soon employed in pacification campaigns against American Indians defending their homelands on the Great Plains and in the Southwest. The passage of the Pacific Railroad Act and the Homestead Act in 1862 contributed to the disruption of traditional Plains Indian life, resulted in the extermination of bison herds, brought massive non-Indian populations westward, increased tensions between Indians and whites, and led to reservation existence and overall Indian dependence. These acts further opened the Trans-Mississippi West to non-Indian settlement and resource development, putting even more pressures on native peoples and their lands, eventually leading to federal allotment policies and to even more dispossession. Thus, to American Indians, the war brought only misery, followed by even more misery.



Monuments such as this one to the Catawbas in Fort Mill, South Carolina, remind us of the important role American Indians played in the Civil War.

LAURENCE HAUPTMAN

To the Indians, the war brought only misery, followed by even more misery.



LOGAN MAXWELL HAGEGE

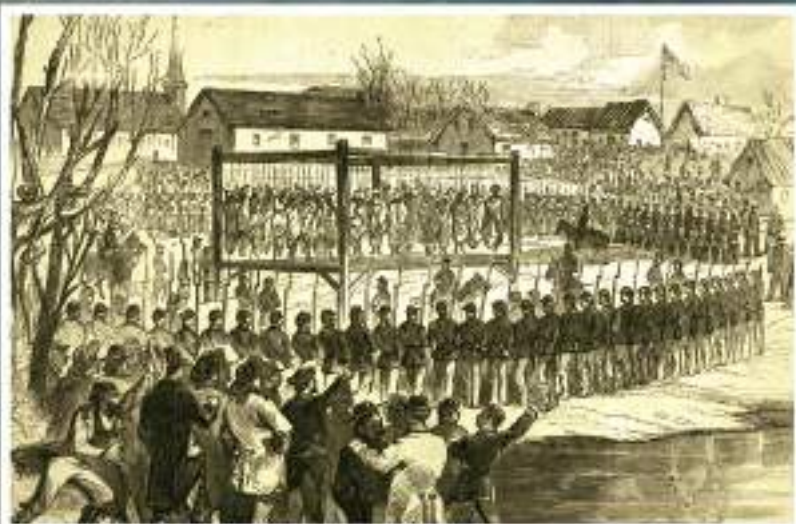
Violence and the Dakota War of 1862

Janet Youngholm, University of Wyoming

As the Civil War raged in the summer of 1862, another war exploded on the Minnesota frontier. Dakota peoples, confined on limited lands along the Minnesota River, held long-standing grievances against the federal government and local settlers. Betrayed by the failure to live up to treaty promises, provoked by near-starvation the winter before, bands of Dakota attacked Minnesota settlers in August 1862. The Dakota War lasted several weeks and culminated in the execution of 38 Dakota men on December 26, 1862. Over 800 settlers and 150 Dakota died as a result of the war. Yet the violence unleashed that summer, and expressed in the American government's Indian policy both before and after the war, continues to haunt both Dakota and settler descendants.



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The execution of 38 Dakota men (soldiers) by the US government for their participation in the Dakota War.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Abraham Lincoln's advocacy of African American rights during the Civil War stands in stark contrast to his policies toward American Indians that soon unleashed unprecedented violence in the Indian Wars of the West.

On Sunday, August 17, 1862, during the second year of the American Civil War, four Dakota young men killed five white settlers near Acton, Minnesota. Shocking to both white Minnesotans and some Dakota people, yet predicted by others, this seemingly unprovoked attack sparked the Dakota War, inspired Abraham Lincoln to militarize the federal government's Indian policy, and inaugurated the final phase of American Indian removal that culminated at Wounded Knee in 1890.

Republican Party ideology that advocated “free soil, free labor, free men” imagined the West into which white settlers continued to flood in the late 1850s and early 1860s as vacant land ripe for economic development. Such a vision adamantly precluded slavery; it also assumed the continued removal of



American Indians from their traditional homelands. The Dakota War of 1862, sparked by the killings of Minnesota settlers that August Sunday, manifested unprecedented violence on the Minnesota prairie, unleashed increasingly unbearable tensions festering among Dakota peoples, and resulted in the exile of Dakota and Winnebago peoples from their lands.

Implicit in Lincoln's antislavery ideology of "free soil, free labor, free men" was the expansion of white settlers onto American Indian homelands.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



For centuries, good relations between the Dakota and fur traders made the fur trade successful. But for newcomers during the land rush days of the 1850s and 60s, there was little incentive to befriend the Indians.

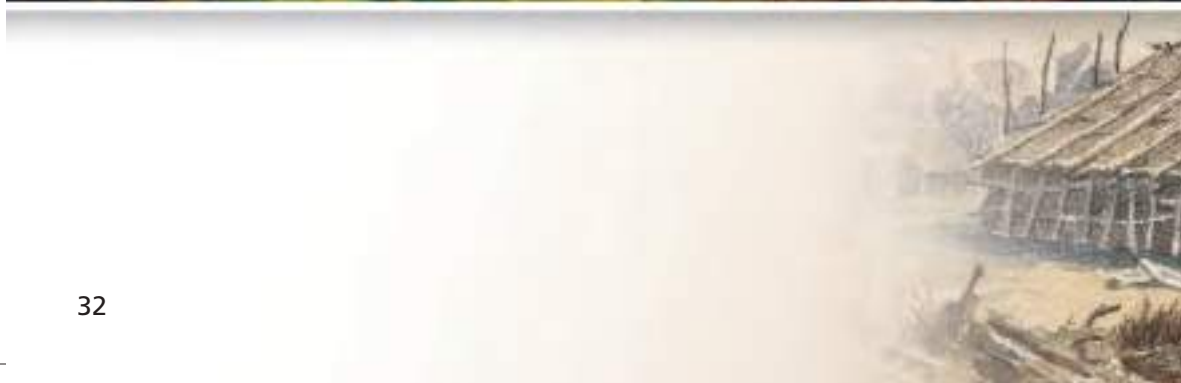
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Reliant on federal annuities promised in exchange for the sale of their lands, Dakota peoples faced starvation as they awaited delayed government payments and food shipments.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

At the time of the Civil War, the Dakota or Eastern Sioux consisted of four tribal groups: Mdewakanton, Sisseton, Wahpeton, and Wahpekute. Having ceded ancestral lands along the upper Mississippi River and in central Minnesota to the United States through successive treaties since the early 1800s, by 1862 several thousand Dakotas resided on a narrow strip of land on the southwestern banks of the Minnesota River at the Redwood and Yellow Medicine Agencies. These Dakotas exchanged their lands for guarantees of annuities of cash, food, and materials from the





JANET YOUNGHOLM



US government, but according to Dakota customs, this exchange did not concede sovereignty or infer inferiority. Annuities symbolized the benevolent nature of the “Great Father,” embodied in the person of the American president, and affirmed the reciprocal nature of Dakota kinship ties. According to the kinship practices of the Dakota, the US government held a position of trust, responsibility, and obligation inherent in this relationship.

The Dakota felt the United States was not living up to the trust relationship of kinship implicit in the treaties. “The ultimate aim of Dakota life... was quite simple: one must obey kinship rules; one must be a good relative . . .” Ella Deloria, Yankton Dakota

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY





Tensions grew between “farmer” Dakotas who took part in government “civilization” programs, dressing like whites and engaging in agriculture, and the “blanket” Dakotas who maintained traditional ways.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Government agent Thomas Galbraith showed favoritism to the Dakota who assimilated into white culture.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



By the time the Lincoln administration took office in the spring of 1861, it inherited a deteriorating situation in Minnesota. Unfulfilled treaty obligations by the American government fueled mistrust. Disputes between Dakota people and federally licensed traders over trader claims of unpaid debts and Dakota counter-claims of fraudulent bookkeeping practices brought the two groups to the verge of violence. Abuse of Dakota women by government-sponsored traders severely violated Dakota kinship customs and infuriated Dakota men. At the same time, divisions within Dakota society between the “farmer” bands who participated in US government-sponsored “civilization” programs and the “blanket” Dakotas who rejected such accommodation, threatened cultural cohesion. Groups of “farmer” Dakotas who adopted settler styles of dress, cut their hair, and practiced hoe-based farming became targets of sabotage and physical intimidation by “blanket” Dakota who rejected such practices. Thomas Galbraith, the Lincoln-appointed agent at the Yellow Medicine and Redwood Agencies, further fueled divisions by giving more food, money, and goods to the Dakota who showed an inclination to become farmers.

*Jacob Nix's
store in
New Ulm,
Minnesota*

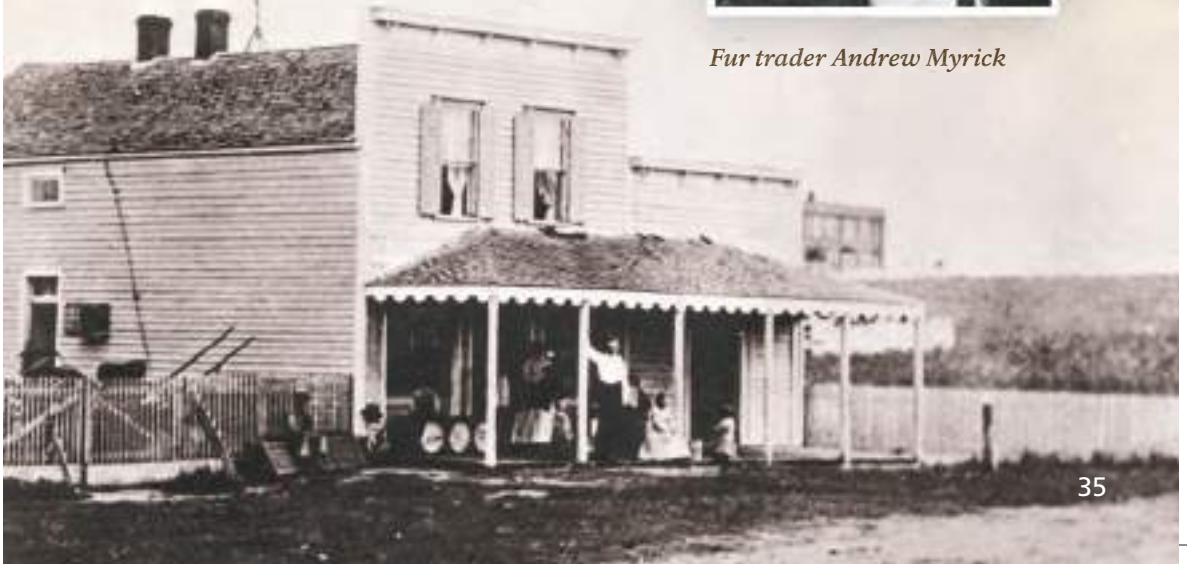
MINNESOTA
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

*Relationships with
traders deteriorated.
Each accused the other
of fraud. Trader Andrew
Myrick told the starving
Dakota they could “eat
grass or their own dung.”*

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Fur trader Andrew Myrick





With no legal recourse, Dakota men seethed over the insults white settler men committed against Dakota women. To many Dakota, defense of their customs and their lands justified the war.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

By August 1862, despite the promising harvest due that fall, most Dakota suffered from hunger and the threat of starvation. Tensions rose to a critical level as Galbraith's favoritism deepened divisions within Dakota society. Hungry, internally divided, confined to shrinking land bordered by settler communities, increasingly dependent on government annuities, and suspicious of unscrupulous traders, some Dakota men decided to take back their lands through violent means. Fueled by rumors that the rebellion in the East distracted the Lincoln government, members of the Dakota war faction, made up of both "blanket" and "farmer" Indians, decided not to turn the killers of the Acton settlers over to US authorities. Instead, on August 18, the day after the killings, the pro-war faction attacked traders at the Redwood Agency.

Violence spread to the Yellow Medicine Agency and throughout western and central Minnesota. For three months the Minnesota frontier burned and bled. Desperate fighting occurred in pitched battles at Fort Ridgely, New Ulm, and Birch Coulee as well as in countless encounters at settler farms and homes. President Lincoln, alarmed by reports of spreading violence between indigenous peoples and white settlers, contemplated the possibility this "fire in the rear" could be the result of Confederate designs. In early September,

he established the Department of the Northwest to subdue the Dakota by military means. By late that month, after the Battle of Wood Lake, the Dakota War ended.

Not all Dakota people engaged in the fighting. The pro-government Dakota faction secured the safe release of over a hundred settler prisoners held captive by pro-war Dakota bands and then turned themselves in to US government forces for protection. Remaining members of the Dakota war faction fled north and west, seeking allies among other tribes and sanctuary in Canada.

To most white settlers, Dakota people had committed unprovoked, outrageous, and murderous acts of violence. In many cases Dakotas attacked people they had known as neighbors and with whom they had weathered frontier hardships. To Dakota historian Waziyatawin, the violence resulted from “the invasion and theft of our homeland, loss of life due to disease, repeated incursions into what was left of our land-base, and daily assaults on our way of life.” Most of settler society, unable to separate pro-war from pro-government Dakota factions, believed all American Indians to be inherently violent. As Lincoln told a March 1863 audience of American Indian visitors to the White House, “the great difference between this pale-faced people and their red brethren” rested in the nature of the latter “to fight and kill one another.” Despite complex and competing opinions within Dakota society over the efficacy of the war against the whites, the idea of the savage Indian dominated settler views of the violence on the Minnesota frontier.



Brutality was rampant on both sides. This Dakota doll was found in a field after a battle. More than 150 Dakota people were killed in the conflict.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

An estimated 20,000 white settlers fled the attacks of the Dakota. Approximately 800 were killed in the conflict.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



The impression of Indian “savagery” was further fueled by Col. Henry Sibley’s exaggerated claims of the Dakotas’ abuse of white women.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Official reports to the War Department’s telegraph office in Washington, D.C., during the late summer and early fall of 1862 drew on the settler idea of the imagined Indian. Lurking within the notion of savage Dakota men fighting on the Minnesota prairies and farmlands resided the natural predilection that Indian men lusted after, captured, and raped settler women. Numerous dire and hysterical accounts from US military commanders Col. Henry Sibley and Gen. John Pope, the men charged with pacifying the Minnesota situation, confirmed this perception. Sibley wrote on September 17, 1862, that “brutes in human shape have fearfully abused their white captives, especially the young women, and girls of tender age.” Pope wrote on October 2: “Sibley recovered most of the white prisoners. Many of them were killed, and nearly all those recovered are young girls, who have been shockingly abused.”

Sibley’s claims surfaced as the military phase of the Dakota War ended, in large part, due to the actions of members of the pro-government Dakota faction. At great personal risk, they secured the release of settler prisoners from the war faction and made camp alongside Sibley’s forces at Camp Release, the army’s bivouac site on the upper Minnesota River. Almost 2,000 Dakota people believed that as US allies they would return to pre-war conditions in their homes along the banks of the Minnesota River. But Minnesota settlers could no longer imagine living in proximity to any Indians. The killings of hundreds of settlers, many of whose bloated carcasses still dotted the prairie, and the enduring

Not all Dakota people engaged in the fighting. Pro-government Dakota secured the release of over 100 settler prisoners held captive by pro-war Dakota bands, delivering them safely at Camp Release.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY





Some military tribunals lasted less than five minutes. Here, a white boy accuses a Dakota of involvement in the uprising.

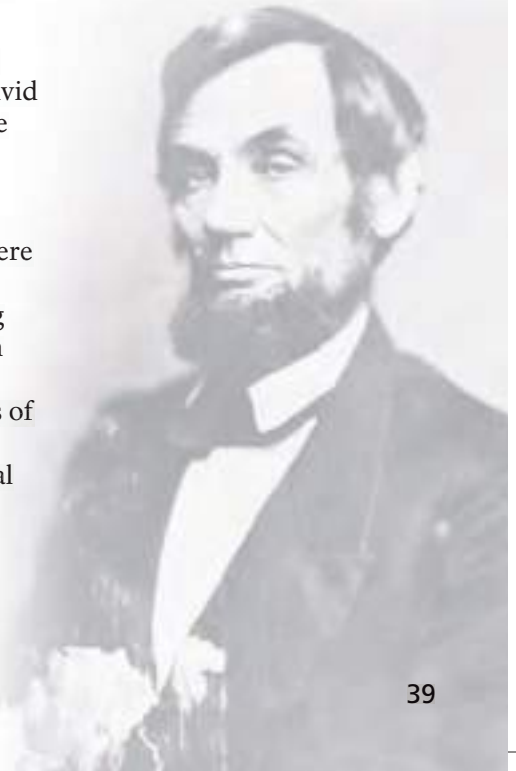
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

desire to secure Dakota and Winnebago lands for white settlement left the fate of the pro-government Dakota in the hands of grieving and vengeful representatives of the federal government.

The military commission established at Camp Release by Col. Henry Sibley gathered testimony from Dakota men and witnesses against them. Vivid accounts of rampant sexual assaults against white settler women dominated much of the reporting from Minnesota and the commission's work. By early November, 393 Dakota men had been tried before a military tribunal. Of that number, 303 were convicted and sentenced to death; some of their trials lasted less than five minutes. The remaining men received lesser sentences. President Lincoln likely assumed that dozens, if not hundreds, of the condemned Dakota deserved to die for rapes of white women. Concerned about the effects of a mass execution on his government's international standing and on the reputation of a Republican government fighting for its very existence, Lincoln urged caution until he could have the trial testimonies reviewed.

From the reports he'd received from Pope and Sibley, Lincoln assumed hundreds of Dakota men deserved to die for crimes against white women. Only two were found guilty of this charge.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS





The Dakota, who had long held back their anger over other abuses, began to speak of how the traders had treated Dakota women over the years.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In late November the president assigned two members of the Justice Department to review the military commission's trial transcripts. Fearing undue clemency from Lincoln, Minnesota politicians joined the cries to execute all the condemned men, writing the president that Dakota men captured "nearly one hundred women and young girls, and in nearly every instance treated them with fiendish brutality." Graphic accounts fueled existing beliefs about the savage nature of the Indian and convinced Lincoln that the Justice Department review would uphold the convictions of sufficient numbers of Dakota men "proved guilty of violating females." The review determined that two cases of the 303 confirmed the rape of white women. Still, Lincoln determined that the blood lust of the Minnesota settlers could not be assuaged by the execution of only two Dakota warriors. He ordered a second examination of the trial transcripts, seeking to execute people who participated in "massacres" of settlers as distinguished from those who participated in battles against government forces. Lincoln's political calculus, as he wrote in his report to the US Senate in December 1862, "to not act with so much clemency as to encourage another outbreak. . . nor with so much severity as to be real cruelty," resulted in the condemnation of 40 Dakota soldiers. On December 26, after two of the condemned received





Though investigations found only two Dakota guilty of crimes against women, Lincoln felt only two executions wouldn't satisfy the settler's sense of justice. He ordered the hanging of 36 others who'd taken part in attacks against settlers rather than against soldiers.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



clemency, 38 Dakota soldiers swung from the gallows erected in Mankato, Minnesota, for their participation in the Dakota War. It remains the largest mass execution in United States history.

Even as the US and Confederate governments sought to adhere to the emerging rules of war, violence against women remained an integral aspect of the expression of belligerent power. Perceptions of Dakota violence against settler women shaped the punishment meted out to Dakota men by the Lincoln administration. The experience of violence and violation endured by Dakota women at the hands of settler men and US soldiers, on the other hand, remained obscured. By the 1850s "abuse of marriage customs" disturbed Dakota men who felt government-sponsored traders took young girls for sexual partners and then abandoned them, a severe violation of Dakota kinship customs. Dakota descendent Elden Lawrence speculates that violations of Dakota gender customs by James Lynd, a clerk at a store on the Redwood Agency, led to his killing on August 18. Married to a Dakota woman with whom he had a child, his Dakota family believed "he deserted them for another Indian girl months before" the war. Historian Mark Diedrich concludes that as traders withheld credit from starving Dakota families during the summer months of 1862, "Dakotas, who had long held back their anger over other abuses, began to speak of how the traders had treated the Dakota women over the years."

James Lynd's violations of Dakota kinship customs allegedly led to his killing on August 18. The Dakota believed he deserted his Indian wife and child for another woman months before the war.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Before the war, Episcopal Bishop Henry Whipple wrote President Lincoln, "The United States has virtually left the Indian without protection. Thefts, murders and rapes are common and no one pays. . . attention."

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



In fact, instead of rampant and random violence against whites on the Minnesota frontier, Dakota soldiers spared dozens of settlers due to the existence of kinship relationships. But violations of such kinship obligations by settler men, especially the abuse and abandonment of Dakota women, infuriated Dakota men. According to Wamditanka, a Mdewakanton veteran of the Dakota War, "some of the white men abused the Indian women in a certain way and disgraced them, and surely there was no excuse for that." Renowned Indian reformer and Minnesota Episcopal Bishop Henry Whipple wrote to President Lincoln in March 1862, five months before the Dakota War: "The United States has virtually left the Indian without protection. Thefts, murders and rapes are common and no one pays more attention to them than if they were swine." Without recourse to law or federal policy, Dakota men seethed over the insults white settler men committed against Dakota women. In part, the Acton killings released their fury.

Subject to abuse, sexual violence, and abandonment before the Dakota War, Dakota women faced more threatening circumstances after the war. As pro-government Dakota bands camped alongside Colonel Sibley's forces at Camp Release, Sibley ordered the arrest of several hundred unsuspecting Dakota men. Without their husbands and nominal protectors, Dakota women and girls at Camp Release faced ominous fates. Sibley's accounts confirm the desperate, vulnerable situation in which hundreds of Dakota women found themselves. Sibley wrote on October 13: "The poor women and children in the lodges were the very picture of distress, when they learned that they were to proceed to join their kindred at Yellow Medicine without their natural protectors." A few days later Sibley documented the audible anguish of Dakota women: "The poor women's wailings when separated from their husbands, fathers, & sons, are piteous indeed." By October 25, Sibley's diary confirmed the worst fears of Dakota women as he described the infiltration of the Dakota camp by his men: "I find the greatest difficulty in keeping the men from the Indian women when the camps are close together. I have a strong line of sentinels entirely around my camp, to keep every officer and soldier from going out without my



permission; but, some way or other, a few of the soldiers manage to get among the gals,—and the latter, I notice, take care not to give any alarm.”

Sibley’s accounts of sexual assault of Dakota women by soldiers under his command at Camp Release contrast starkly with the rabid descriptions of Dakota men raping settler women forwarded to President Lincoln. Sibley’s words implied mutuality and consent: “I have about two thousand men. . . . With that number of men, most of them wild as deer, and two thousand Indians of all ages and both sexes, I have my hands full in enforcing strict discipline, but I have succeeded pretty well in doing so.”



Separated from their husbands, fathers, and sons, Dakota women had no protection from the soldiers guarding them.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The bulk of Sibley’s forces in the fall of 1862 were mustered from Minnesota towns and farms. These recent volunteers had little military training and often bore hostility toward Dakota people. Unfamiliar with death and decaying bodies, many of these men returned to camp from burial detachments during which they handled the bloated bodies of settler men, women, and children, some scalped, others appearing mutilated due to exposure, or showing evidence of brutal murder. Amidst such an atmosphere, Sibley’s suggestion of consensual sexual liaisons between his soldiers and Dakota women adds to the offenses his words obscure.

Sibley described his men as “wild as deer” and noted, “I find the greatest difficulty in keeping the men from the Indian women when the camps are close together.”

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Dakotas
imprisoned in
stockade at
Fort Snelling.*

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Policies and attitudes which permitted rape, assault, and murder of Dakota women by US soldiers continued at Fort Snelling, near St. Paul. With their food supplies destroyed by US soldiers and most Dakota men either held captive or in flight, more than 1,000 pro-government Dakota elderly, women, and children spent the winter of 1862-63 imprisoned behind a stockade fence below the walls of Fort Snelling. Guarded by the perpetrators of sexual violence and removed from their male protectors, Dakota women became common and public targets of violence. The St. Paul *Daily Union* wrote on November 22:

A day or two ago the newspapers announced that a squaw had been accidentally shot at the Fort, by some soldiers engaged in target practice. The truth of the matter appears to be, that the squaws have been in a habit of gathering wood for their campfires and one of them, thus engaged, having wandered some little distance from the encampment, was seized by a number of soldiers and brutally outraged.



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Where Dakota people once lived
peaceably in the shadow of
Fort Snelling, they were now
imprisoned below its walls.*

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



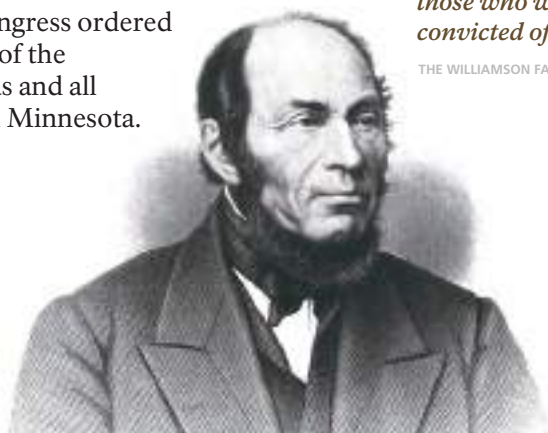
Dakota women imprisoned at Fort Snelling suffered in the aftermath of the Dakota War as the idea of the “savage Indian” erased the distinction between ally and enemy in the minds of many white settlers. Missionary Thomas Williamson wrote on December 1, 1862:

The popular feeling in Minnesota demands the execution of all who are in confinement Many suppose they are all murderers and say whether . . . murderers or not they ought all to be killed because they are of the same race as the murderers and almost all insist that the whole race be exterminated or at least driven far from the borders of Minnesota.

In the spring of 1863, Congress ordered the forced exile of most of the pro-government Dakotas and all Winnebago people from Minnesota.

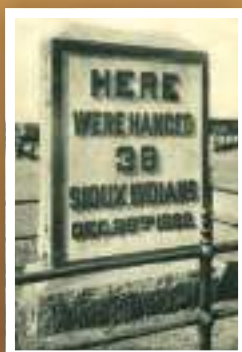
A friend of the Dakota, missionary Thomas Williamson was concerned about the demand of many white settlers to execute all Dakota people, not just those who were convicted of crimes.

THE WILLIAMSON FAMILY COLLECTION



Though much healing has occurred, anger and sadness of the settlers' descendants over the Dakota War continued for decades and still lingers today.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Letters, written by the Dakota men spared from execution and imprisoned at Camp McClellan near Davenport, Iowa, confirm the insidious nature of violence against Dakota women perpetrated by those assigned to guard and protect Dakota people in the aftermath of the war. Translated by Clifford Canku, a Dakota elder and professor at North Dakota State University, the letters detail the rapes of Dakota women who worked at the prison by US soldiers.

Guards would rape the women at night near the prison cells. When they [guards] came after the women at night, they [Dakota men] didn't have no recourse but to sing and to let them know, and pray to let the women know 'we're leaving you in the presence of God. Because if we were able to help we would have stopped what's going on. But we can't.'

Settler and soldier acts of violence against Dakota women, heinous in nature, represented a continuation of the assault on Dakota culture encoded in removal, concentration, and civilization policies sponsored by the federal government. Despite decades of adaptation and reliance on kinship networks, by the 1850s Dakota society experienced the ultimate nullification of kinship customs through the violation of Dakota women at the hands of federally licensed traders and US soldiers. Once Dakota men went to war to defend their honor, their land, and their cultural practices, settler society, confirmed in its imagined view of the savage Indian,



unleashed savage violence in response, making no distinction between Dakota allies and enemies. Abraham Lincoln directed the turning point in Dakota history and in US Indian policy. In August 1862, as Lincoln awaited news from Gen. John Pope during the Battle of Second Manassas, the settler town of New Ulm, Minnesota, lay burned and abandoned. The pro-war Dakota faction's aim of securing better treaty terms by killing as many settlers as possible and thereby instilling "fear through vigorous action" seemed imminent. Lincoln administration officials suspected that the violence in Minnesota represented a "fire in the rear," a Confederate led conspiracy to encourage a generalized Indian resistance movement throughout the West. British support for the Confederacy and perhaps for the Dakota War seemed plausible. The threatened division of the United States into two rival republics mitigated federal power and made Dakota goals conceivable. During the Union's most vulnerable year of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln directed a militarized Indian policy against Dakota peoples, ordered the largest mass execution in American history, and endorsed the forced removal of Dakota and Winnebago peoples from Minnesota, actions which initiated the Indian Wars in the years to come.



Every generation of Dakota people must deal with the sorrow and tragedy of the 1862 war. The quest for reconciliation and justice continues.

HOWARD M. CHRISTOPHERSON

Some Dakota seek healing through spiritual means. "This painting depicts a Dakota man during the Vision Quest. He is seeking an answer to the troubles of this physical world." -Lyle Miller, artist and teacher of Dakota heritage

LYLE MILLER

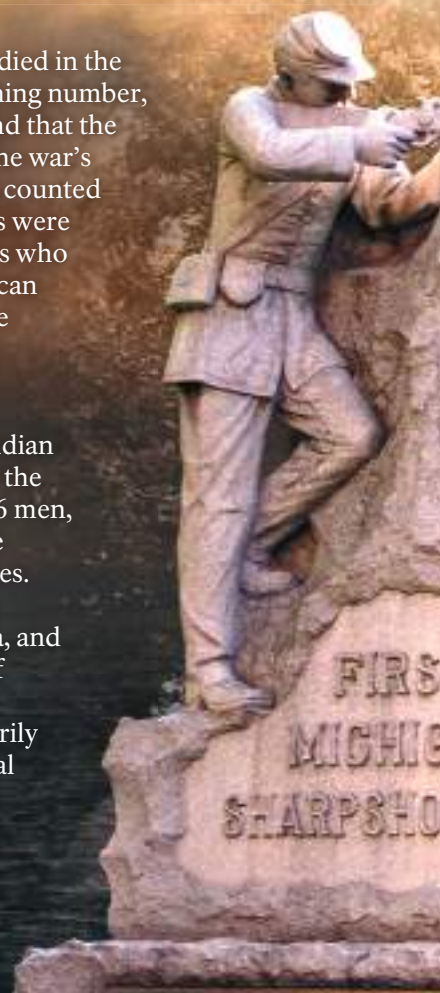
Soldiers in the Shadows: Company K, 1st Michigan Sharpshooters

*Eric Hemenway, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
Sammye Meadows, American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association*

Company K of the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters gives us one of the most interesting and lesser known stories of the war. In 1863, as the Union Army was desperate for more soldiers, Michigan enlisted natives from the Odawa/Ottawa, Ojibway/Chippewa, Potawatomi, and other Great Lakes tribes into this company. Company K joined the Army of the Potomac in its Overland Campaign in 1864, and participated in the Battle of the Crater at Petersburg in July 1864. The members of Company K served through the remainder of the war, and returned to their homes in Michigan.

By recent estimate, 750,000 people died in the American Civil War. It's an astonishing number, given that 3,000,000 men fought, and that the population of the United States at the war's onset was less than 31,000,000. Not counted in that 31,000,000 American citizens were the 20,000 American Indian soldiers who fought, despite being denied American citizenship at the time, including the Anishnaabek of Michigan.

Company K of the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters was the largest all-Indian regiment in the Union Army east of the Mississippi River. It consisted of 146 men, 139 of whom were Anishnaabek, the indigenous people of the Great Lakes. The Anishnaabek is made up of the Odawa/Ottawa, Ojibway/Chippewa, and Potawatomi tribes. The members of Company K hailed from various regions within Michigan, but primarily from the Lower Peninsula. Ancestral communities such as Cross Village, Bear River (Petoskey), Isabella,



Harbor Springs, Pentwater, Mackinac, Charlevoix, Burt Lake, Sault Ste. Marie, Saginaw, St. Ignace, and Northport saw their young men join the ranks of Company K.

Why would a group of American Indians from the ancient forests and lakes of Michigan, who were not recognized as US citizens, who had no voting rights, and who were being ruthlessly dispossessed of their lands and rights, fight in the Civil War? The compelling story of Company K does not necessarily lie in the details of the battles they fought, but rather in the history of the Michigan tribes leading up to the Civil War and the complexities of Indian Country during the 1860s.

Why would a group of American Indians from the ancient forests and lakes of Michigan, who were not recognized as US citizens and who were being ruthlessly dispossessed of their lands and rights, fight in the Civil War?

With this monument in front of its Capitol building, the State of Michigan pays tribute to the service of its native sons in the Civil War.

CHRIS CZOPEK

Long before the Civil War, long before the United States became a nation, the Anishnaabek had been fighting for centuries to continue calling their towns and villages home. They had successfully resisted Andrew Jackson's removal and relocation policies of the 1830s. At the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, the Michigan tribes were still reeling from treaty negotiations in 1836 and 1855, which forced them to cede away millions of acres of their traditional homelands in order to stay in Michigan. Within a few decades following the War of 1812, the Odawa, Potawatomi, and Ojibway lost free access to entire northern states and became confined to a mere few counties. By the time the men of Company K were allowed to serve in the Union Army, their tribal communities had been marginalized, fragmented, and disenfranchised. So, what compelled these men to fight?

As the war began, many tribes, including the northern Michigan Odawa, were trying to renegotiate their treaties. It is possible that some of the men of Company K saw their participation in the war as political leverage when the time came for the Odawa, Ojibway, and Potawatomi to enter into new treaties that would secure more rights to land, hunting, and fishing for their people.

The struggle to obtain equal social standing was also a strong motivator for Anishnaabek men to join Company K, as was the offer of financial security in difficult economic times. American Indian soldiers wore the same uniform and received the same pay and benefits as white soldiers. Many probably hoped they would gain the right to vote. But voting rights were extended to Indians only if they were a "civilized male inhabitant of Indian descent, a native of the United States and not a member of any tribe," reported the *Detroit Daily Advertiser* in 1860. Indians had to "prove" they were civilized and had to renounce their tribal identity. From the French and Indian War of 1754-61 to Pontiac's Rebellion in 1763 to the War of 1812, the Anishnaabek had fought the British and Americans in order to retain their homelands and their cultural identity. Since the men in Company K were still fighting hard for their treaty rights and for recognition as the independent sovereign nations they had been for centuries, the right to vote was not as important to them as might be expected.



From the French and Indian War of 1754-61 to Pontiac's Rebellion in 1763 to the War of 1812, the Anishnaabek fought the British and Americans to retain their homelands and their cultural identity.

*Odawa War Chiefs
Jean-Baptiste Assiginac
and Mookmanish of the
Little Traverse Band
fought in the War of 1812.*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

*Odawa War Chief
Mookmanish*

UNKNOWN ARTIST. PORTRAIT OF
LITTLE KNIFE, CWM 19810269-121
BEAVERBROOK COLLECTION OF WAR
ART@CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM



*Odawa War Chief
Jean-Baptiste Assiginac*

THE STARK MUSEUM, ORANGE, TEXAS



Many Anishnaabek supported the Union cause because they were strongly antislavery. Gaminoodhich, a Burt Lake Odawa correspondent for the *Grand Traverse Herald* wrote a lengthy article in 1862 calling for equality among all men, including slaves. “To be driven to the man-market for sale is, we think, a rank offense before the Great Spirit,” he wrote, “and a foul blot on the Grand Republic.”

Considered only semicivilized by some, Indians were initially denied the opportunity to enlist. But when white soldiers began dying in mass numbers, they were allowed to join. Despite this discrimination, Indian soldiers of Company K fought fiercely for the Union.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Whatever their motivations to fight, Anishnaabek from all over Michigan originally mustered in 1861 but were refused official enlistment. Public opinion at the time was adamantly against them. Newspapers called them



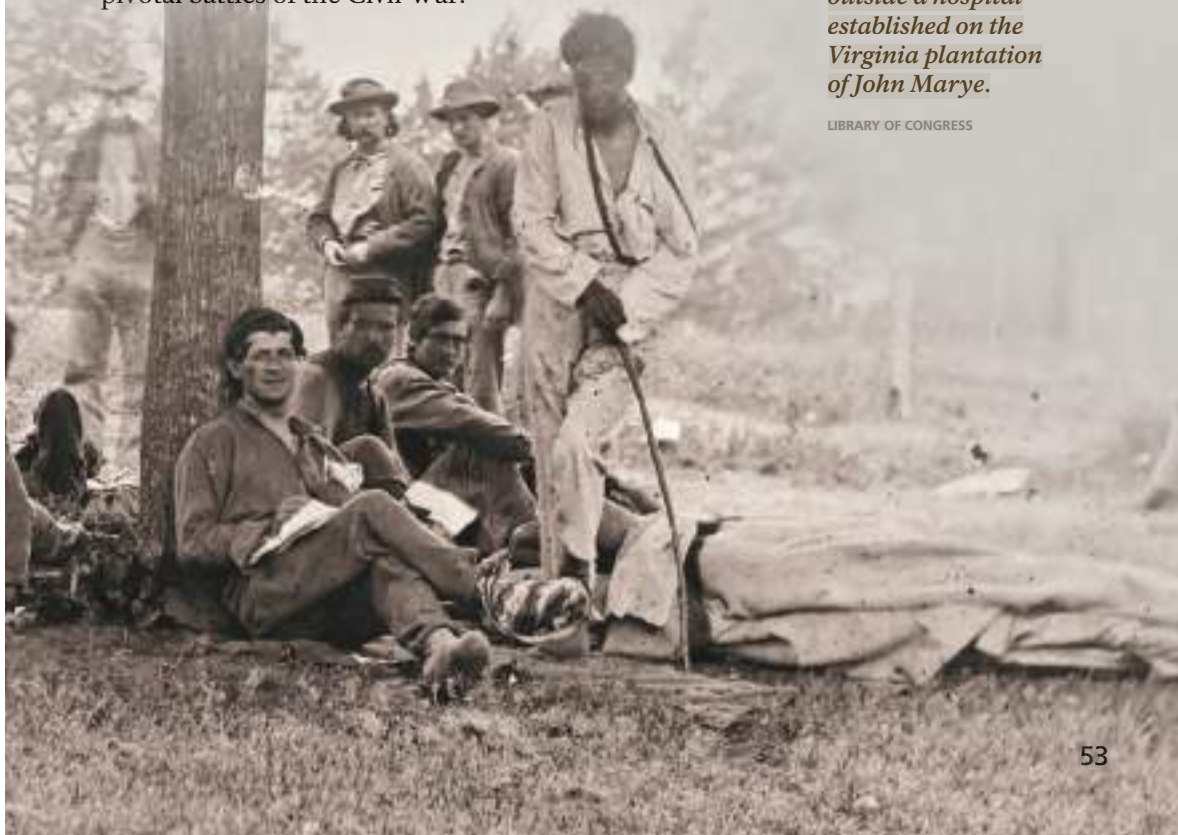
“demi-savages.” On May 14, 1861, the *Detroit Free Press* wrote that “a project was started in the Legislature at Lansing last week, which was very fortunately nipped in the bud, for arming and equipping a regiment of Indians at the expense of the State, to be used in the war.”

It went on to say that “all these projects of employing either Indian or Negro troop[s] cannot be too strongly reprobated and their authors cannot be subjected to, too great a degree of public scorn....”

By 1863, however, with heavy losses at Shiloh, Second Manassas, Antietam, and elsewhere, the Union Army was desperate for more soldiers, prompting the acceptance of Indian enlistment from Michigan. Anishnaabek were allowed to enlist and fight for the Union cause, but hostility toward them had not diminished. In 1863, the *Detroit Advertiser and Tribune* wrote that as a race, “they [the Indians] have not yet reached that degree of civilization which should entitle them to all the rights, and place on them all the responsibilities of citizenship.” It continued, “at the best they are but semi-civilized, ... a poor, ignorant and dependent race.” Despite obvious prejudices against them, the Odawa, Ojibway, and Potawatomi enlisted and fought fiercely against the Confederacy in some of the most brutal and pivotal battles of the Civil War.

Soldiers from Company K wounded during the Petersburg campaign receive treatment outside a hospital established on the Virginia plantation of John Marye.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS





Indian Soldiers in the Wilderness

When the opposing armies clashed in the Wilderness of Spotsylvania County, both sides had American Indians on the firing line. Confederate soldiers included men from the Catawba Nation. The Union Army boasted Chippewa and Seneca warriors and a Tuscarora and a Pequot served with the 30th US Colored Troops. The largest contingent of Indians in either army, however, was from Company K, 1st Michigan Sharpshooters.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



The members of Company K, 1st Michigan Sharpshooters were elite marksmen, quick and silent. They could kill with a single shot at 600 yards. In February 1864, the 1st Michigan joined the Army of the Potomac under Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and deployed entirely in the war's Eastern theatre. From May 1864 to April 1865, Company K fought at the battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Courthouse, and the Siege of Petersburg. The bravery and "civilized" nature of Company K may have been doubted when they first joined the army, but once in battle, their heroic actions erased any doubt. After the May 8-21 Battle of Spotsylvania, Capt. Edwin V. Andress, commander of Company K, reported to the *Detroit Free Press* that Company K "fought with the greatest courage." A subsequent newspaper story stereotypically praised the men, "as brave a band of warriors as ever struck a war-path." They "suffered dreadfully, but never faltered nor moved, sounding the war-whoop with every volley."

One Anishnaabek soldier, Daniel Mwa-ke-we-naw of Petoskey, Michigan, deserves particular attention for his part in the Battle of the Wilderness. In "the first fight of the wilderness he killed not less than 32 rebels, a number of them officers," reported the *Saginaw Enterprise* on June 30, 1864. Daniel's marksmanship is even more remarkable when compared to the heroics of arguably the most decorated sharpshooter/soldier in American history, Sgt. Alvin York. York killed 28 Germans in World War I, received the Medal of Honor, and had a veteran's hospital in Tennessee named in his honor. Daniel exhibited this extraordinary heroism and marksmanship despite having been shot three times during the fight. He died from his wounds a short time later.

Cannon at Spotsylvania battlefield

NPS/FREDERICKSBURG & SPOTSYLVANIA

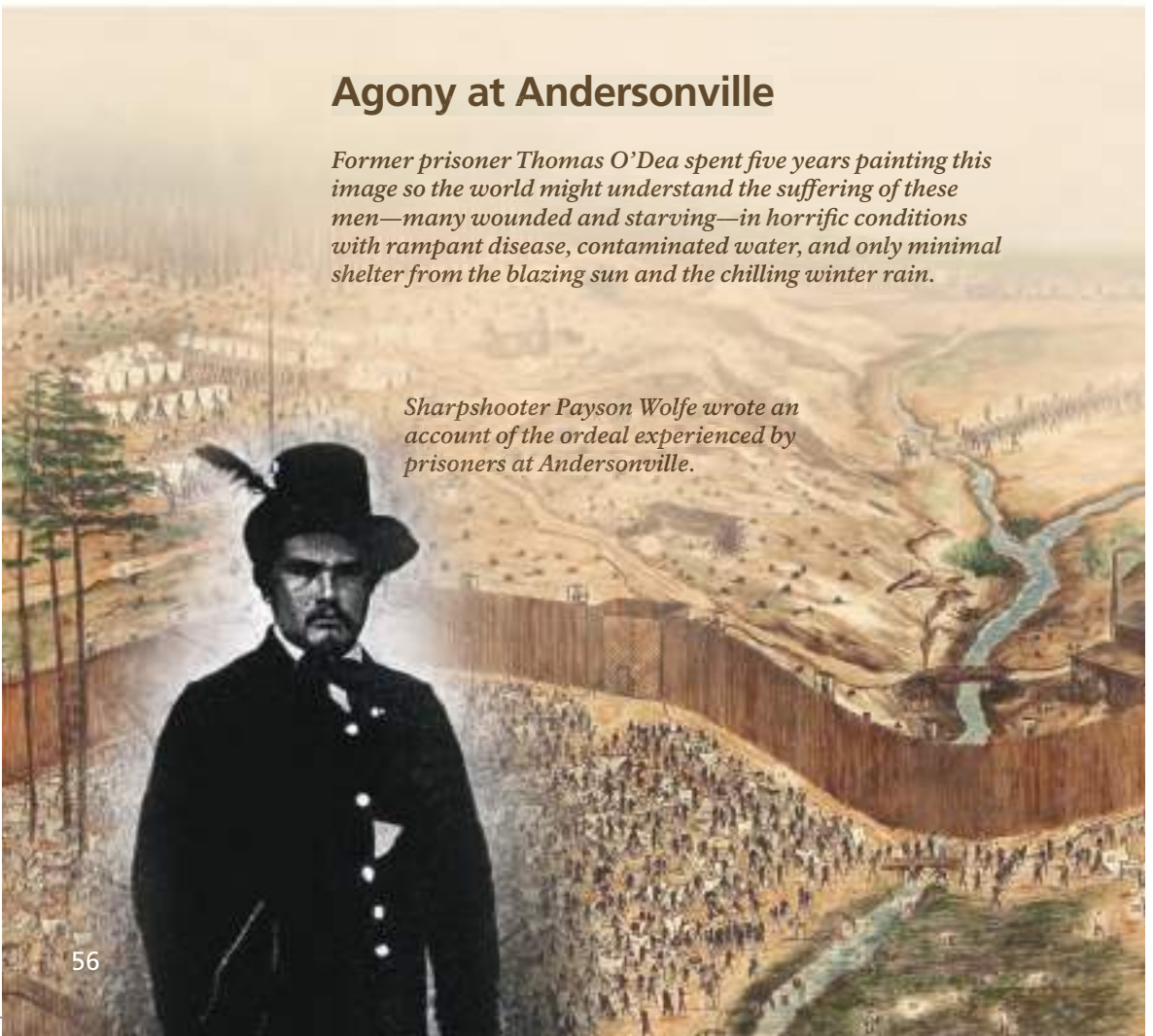
After Spotsylvania, the Army of the Potomac aimed to win control of the rail lines at Petersburg, Virginia, with the goal of capturing the Confederate capital of Richmond. The Union and Confederate armies reached a stalemate at Petersburg and settled into a siege with trenches that eventually stretched for 30 miles and that lasted for over nine months.

In mid-June 1864, 15 Indian sharpshooters were among those captured by the Confederates at Petersburg and sent to the South's infamous prisoner of war camp at Camp Sumter, Georgia, also known as Andersonville. Seven of the 15 died there. Upon returning home from the war, Payson Wolfe, a Company K sharpshooter from Northport, wrote his account of their ordeal. Sometimes, prisoners went "2 to 3 days and a number of times 4 days without eating at all. They were robbed of their blankets and overcoats and lived and slept in open

Agony at Andersonville

Former prisoner Thomas O'Dea spent five years painting this image so the world might understand the suffering of these men—many wounded and starving—in horrific conditions with rampant disease, contaminated water, and only minimal shelter from the blazing sun and the chilling winter rain.

Sharpshooter Payson Wolfe wrote an account of the ordeal experienced by prisoners at Andersonville.



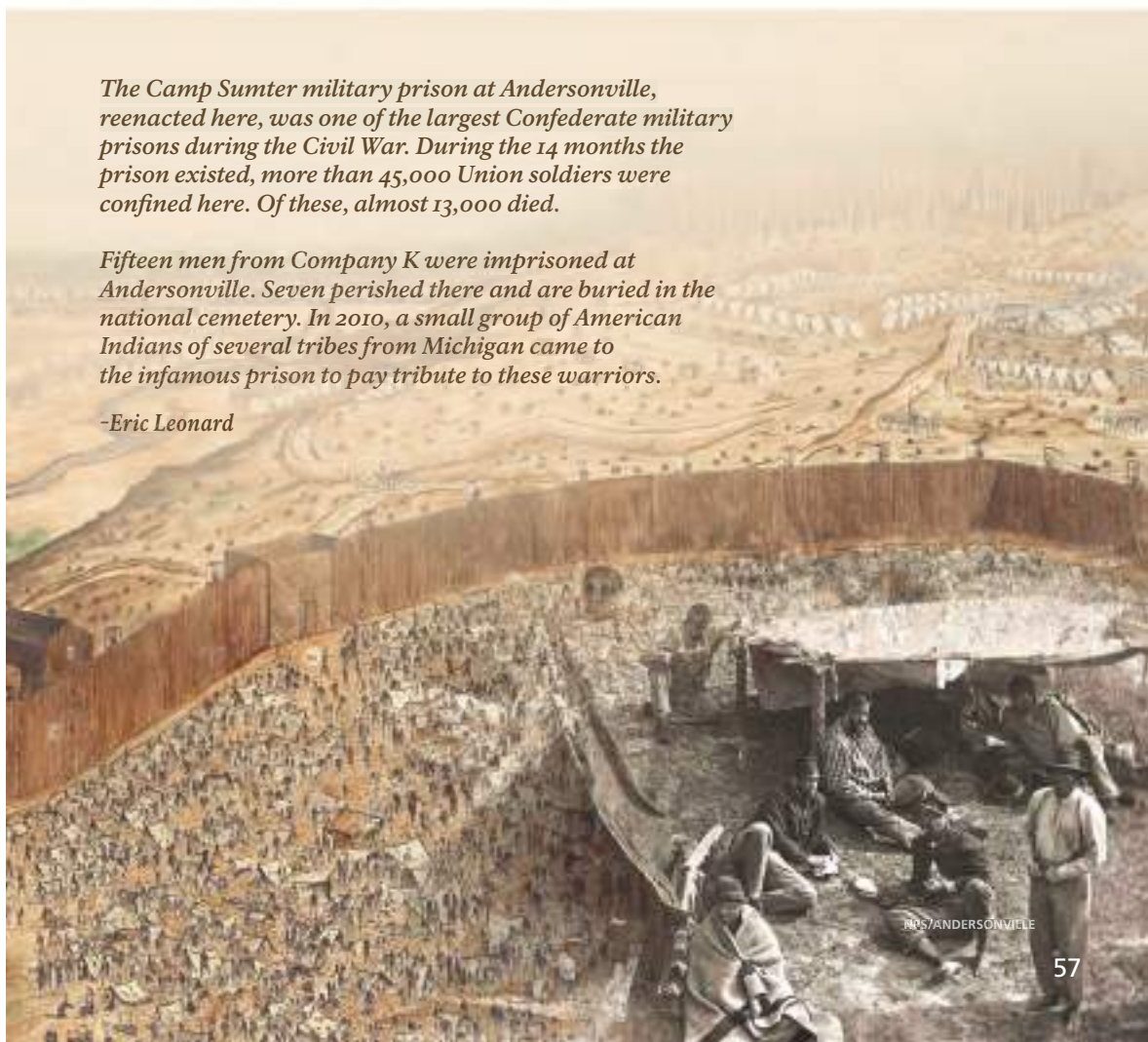
weather....” He continued, “the water was sometimes 4 inches deep where they had to lie ... [and] often the boiled rice would be alive with full grown maggots.”

The cruel treatment was administered not only by Confederate guards, but also by a group of captured Union soldiers known as the “Raiders,” who notoriously preyed upon their fellow prisoners. Charles Bibbins of Company E, 1st Michigan Sharpshooters gave his testimony on how the men of Company K dealt with the Raiders. He wrote that the Anishnaabek “were great lovers of trinkets ... which they refused to give up to their captors. [The Raiders] proceeded to relieve them of the jewelry ... but the Indians, back to back in a bunch, cut and slashed the ‘raiders’ until they were obliged to quit the fight, with two killed and several wounded. They were not bothered after that.”

The Camp Sumter military prison at Andersonville, reenacted here, was one of the largest Confederate military prisons during the Civil War. During the 14 months the prison existed, more than 45,000 Union soldiers were confined here. Of these, almost 13,000 died.

Fifteen men from Company K were imprisoned at Andersonville. Seven perished there and are buried in the national cemetery. In 2010, a small group of American Indians of several tribes from Michigan came to the infamous prison to pay tribute to these warriors.

-Eric Leonard



Seven men of Company K survived the Siege of Petersburg and imprisonment at Andersonville. But, the trials did not end there for two of the survivors, Louis Miskogoun of Charlevoix and Amos Ashkebugnekay of Elbridge. While on their way home after the war, these two men also survived the worst maritime disaster in American history. They were aboard the *Sultana* on April 27, 1865, when it caught fire, exploded and sank in the Mississippi River near Memphis, Tennessee. Louis and Amos escaped death once more, and both men returned home to Michigan. Some 1,700 died in the disaster, more than those lost on the Titanic in 1912. Most of these were Union troops who were coming home from Confederate prisoner of war camps.



*The Sultana sinks on
the Mississippi River.*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Pvt. Joseph Gibson

Na-bah-na-ya-sung (Joseph Gibson) was an Odawa from Michigan. The chief of his tribe regretted not being able to read the treaty he'd signed for his people, so he urged parents to send their children to the mission school. When Joe was 10 he broke his leg. To make sure he didn't miss a day, his mother carried

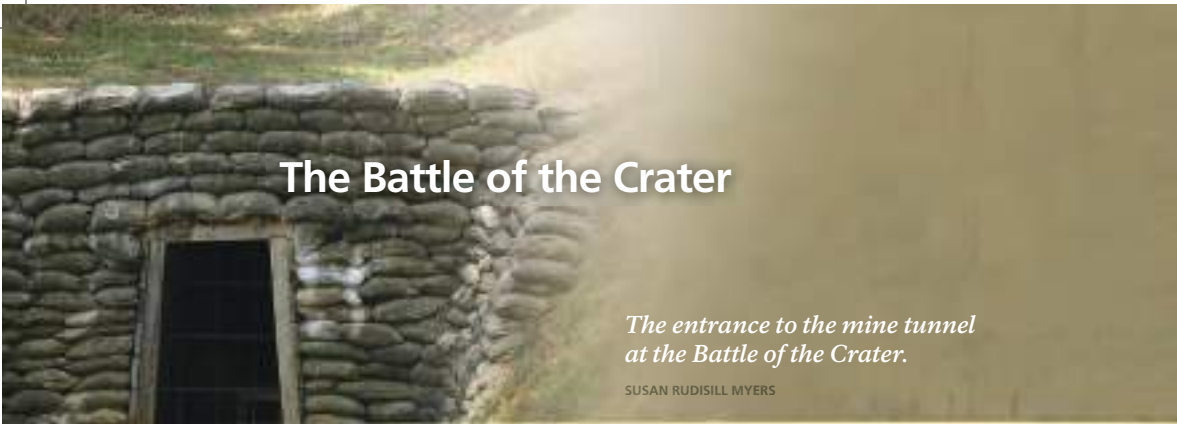


Lake Michigan

him to school on her back. Years later, Joe used his education to write a note to the local general store. He was joining the army and the note asked the proprietor to give his mother whatever food she needed. Private Gibson served with the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters. He died while imprisoned at Andersonville.

—Chris Czopek, Author, Who's Who in Company K

CHRIS CZOPEK



The Battle of the Crater

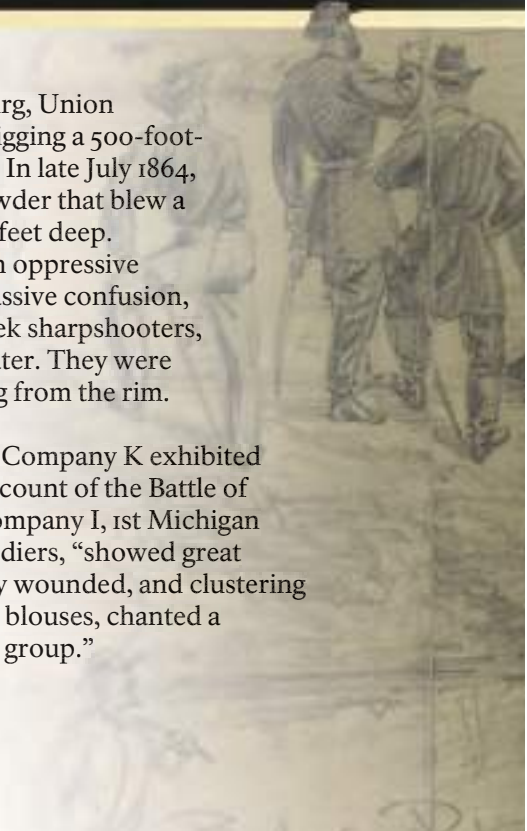
*The entrance to the mine tunnel
at the Battle of the Crater.*

SUSAN RUDISILL MYERS



*To break the long stalemate of the Siege
of Petersburg, Union forces spent a month
digging a tunnel underneath Confederate
lines which they filled with gunpowder
and detonated on July 30, 1864.*

NPS/GIL COHEN



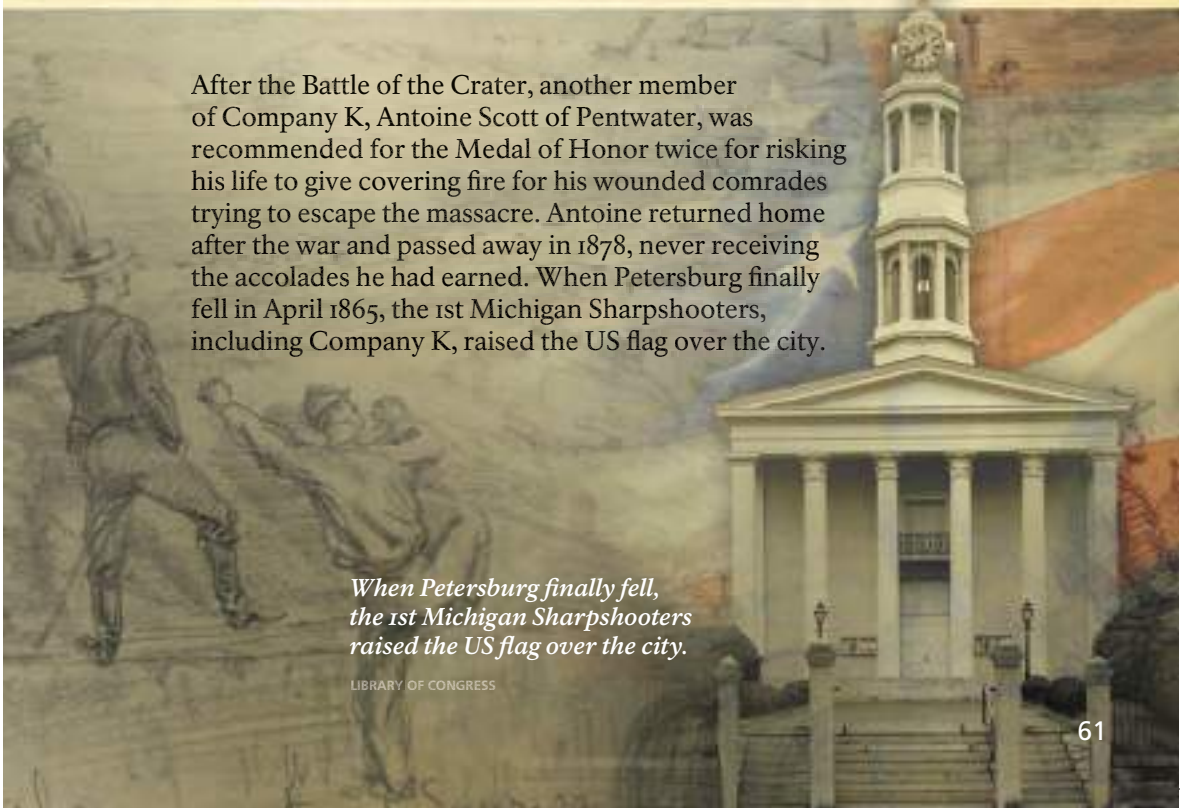
As the stalemate dragged on at Petersburg, Union officers tried breaking the standoff by digging a 500-foot-long tunnel under the Confederate line. In late July 1864, they detonated 8,000 pounds of gunpowder that blew a crater 170 feet long, 60 feet wide and 35 feet deep. Remnants of it can still be seen today. In oppressive summer heat, thick smoke, flies, and massive confusion, Union troops, including the Anishnaabek sharpshooters, followed their commanders into the crater. They were picked off by Confederate soldiers firing from the rim.

Throughout the terror, the members of Company K exhibited great courage and composure. In his account of the Battle of the Crater, Lt. William H. Randall of Company I, 1st Michigan Sharpshooters wrote that the Indian soldiers, “showed great coolness.... Some of them were mortally wounded, and clustering together, covered their heads with their blouses, chanted a death song, and died – four of them in a group.”



The explosion blew massive holes in the ground. In the confusion, Union officers led their men into the crater, rather than around it. They became trapped while Confederates shot them “like fish in a bucket.” American Indian soldiers fought on both sides of this battle.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



After the Battle of the Crater, another member of Company K, Antoine Scott of Pentwater, was recommended for the Medal of Honor twice for risking his life to give covering fire for his wounded comrades trying to escape the massacre. Antoine returned home after the war and passed away in 1878, never receiving the accolades he had earned. When Petersburg finally fell in April 1865, the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters, including Company K, raised the US flag over the city.

When Petersburg finally fell, the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters raised the US flag over the city.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Though an officer of the Grand Army of the Republic post in his community, Francis Tabasash, like others in Company K, had to fight again and again to receive his military pension.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Company K officially mustered in 1863 because of notable recruitment efforts by the company's only Indian officer, 2nd Lt. Garrett Graveraet. He was not the typical Company K soldier. Garrett was half German and half Ojibway, and fluent in French, English, and Ojibway—but not in German. He taught at the government school in Harbor Springs and was a noted musician. Garrett came from an affluent family who had made its money in a mercantile business in northern Michigan. Not only did Garrett fight, he also recruited his 55-year-old father, Henry Graveraet, who became a sergeant in Company K. Father and son fought together until the elder Graveraet was killed at the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse in May 1864.

In 1863, the future was bright for the talented 23-year-old Garrett, yet he chose to join his Anishnaabek brethren in the uncertainties of war. Poverty, discrimination, and inequality were probably unfamiliar to Garrett in his daily life, though these were conditions that many of his fellow tribal members dealt with on many levels. Garrett was wounded at the Siege of Petersburg and died on July 10, 1864, at the Armory Hospital in Washington, D.C. In a deathbed letter written to his mother and sister, he told them: “This fighten [sic] for my Country is all right.” The two Graveraets, father and son, are buried together on Mackinac Island, Michigan, land that was sacred to their family and their ancestors.

Francis Tabasash, an Odawa, was one of the older enlistees for Company K, mustering in at the age of 38. He survived the war, and returned to his home in Cross Village, Michigan, at war's end. The war must have been an adventure for Francis, for this was the only time he ever left his home in northern Michigan. He married

Maria Mekokwe, also from Cross Village, and the couple had seven children; but sadly five died before the age of two. Upon returning home, Francis worked as a farmer and carpenter, as did most Odawa men during the late 1800s. Francis and many members of Company K were continually denied military pensions. He had to apply repeatedly before he was finally successful. Francis lived to be 83 and was the Officer of the Guard of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) post in Cross Village, where he is buried.

All the men of Company K were volunteers. Garrett Graveraet and Francis Tabasash, in many ways, came from opposite ends of the social and economic spectrum. Although different in wealth, age, and social standing, both freely volunteered to join Company K and fight with other Anishnaabek soldiers from their homelands in Michigan. Of the original 146 members of Company K, 43 died in the Civil War. The survivors marched with their fellow soldiers in the Grand Review victory celebration in Washington, D.C. on May 23, 1865, and mustered out of the Union Army on July 28. When they arrived home, however, they did not receive a hero's welcome from the citizens of Michigan. Many white veterans were promised and received lands, but the members of Company K did not. As the state's post-Civil War population grew, and as resort communities were becoming popular, Indian reservation lands were often illegally allotted to non-Indian families. White settlers also "squatted" on American Indian lands, claiming they were abandoned. When Indians took their arguments to court, their pleas fell on deaf ears. Burt Lake, a community from which three members in Company K came, suffered one of the worst land grab atrocities in 1901. The local sheriff and a group of white settlers burned the Odawa village to the ground, drove out the Indian inhabitants, and stole their lands.

Lt. Garrett Graveraet was the only officer of Indian descent in Company K. His promising future was cut short at the Siege of Petersburg. His final resting place is on Mackinac Island, a land sacred to his family and his ancestors.



Mackinac Island, Michigan

HIROYUKI OMURA

After the Civil War, it took many more decades for American Indians to enjoy the same rights and privileges as white and black American men and women. In 1924, the Indian Citizenship Act granted American citizenship to American Indians, but many states were slow to adopt the law. The Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 allowed tribal members to practice openly their religions and beliefs. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 empowered tribes to reclaim ancestral human remains and sacred items and to protect burials on federal and Indian lands.

Several tribes in Michigan finally had their federal status as sovereign nations reaffirmed in the 1990s, after battles lasting over 150 years. Today, the Anishnaabek like to think—and justifiably so—that Company K's brave actions in the Civil War were instrumental in bringing about these positive changes.

Over 6,000 Union soldiers are buried at Poplar Grove National Cemetery near Petersburg National Battlefield in Virginia. In December 2010, while restoring the cemetery, the National Park Service discovered the graves of several American Indian soldiers from Company K and some Wisconsin units. The National Park Service contacted the soldiers' tribes and arranged nation-to-nation consultations under the provisions of NAGPRA. Odawa, Ojibway, and Potawatomi tribal representatives, along with a group from the Mohican Nation Stockbridge-Munsee Band in Wisconsin, visited Poplar Grove. They put tobacco on their ancestors' graves and began a groundbreaking partnership with the National Park Service to tell the stories of these remarkable men.

Descendants pay tribute to their ancestors buried at Poplar Grove National Cemetery.

NPS/PETERSBURG

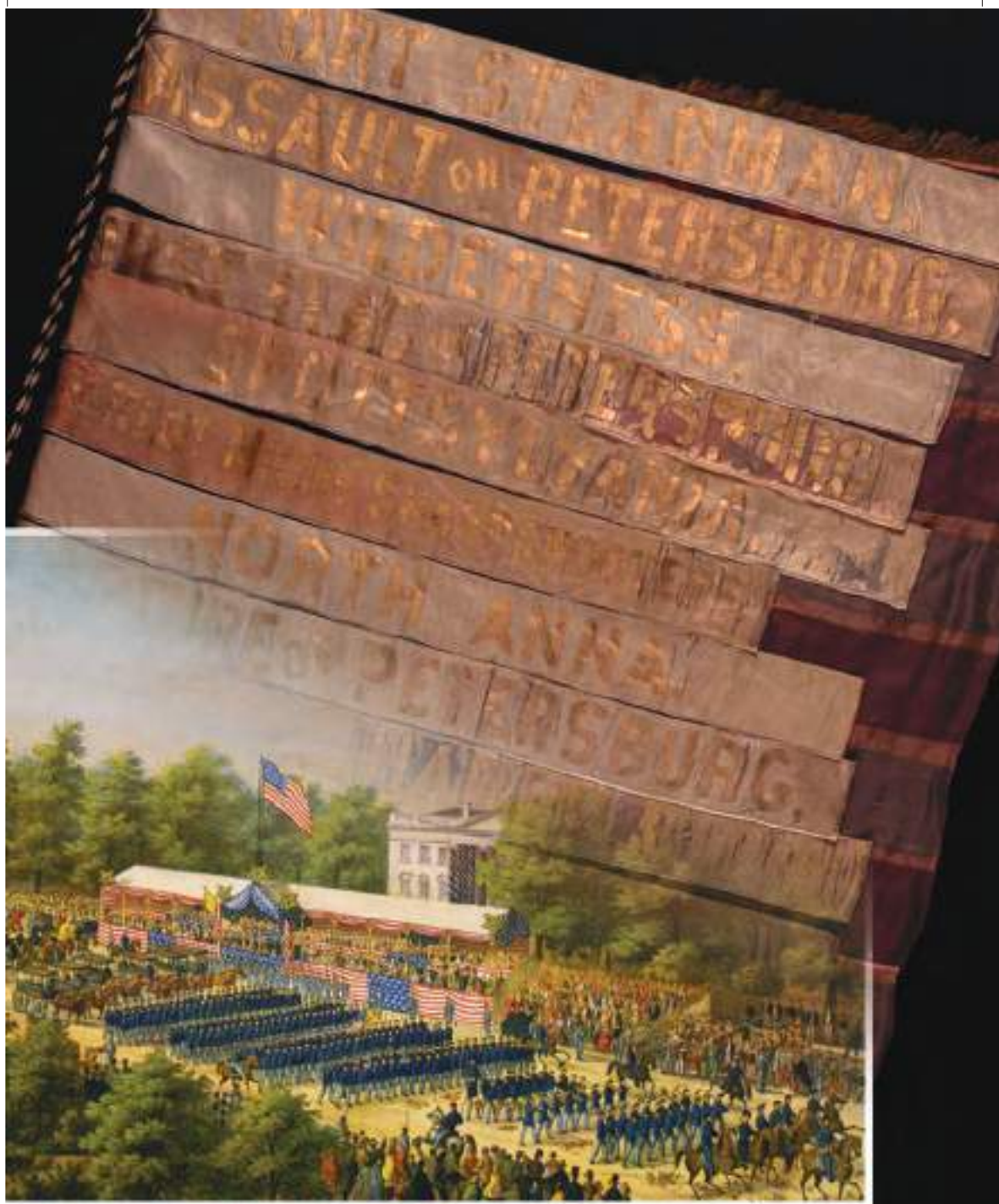


The tattered US flag of the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters chronicles their proud history. The stripes of the battle-worn flag are covered by ribbons marking the battles in which they fought.

MICHIGAN CAPITOL
COMMITTEE/PETER
GLENN DWINING



JEANNE M. JULIAN



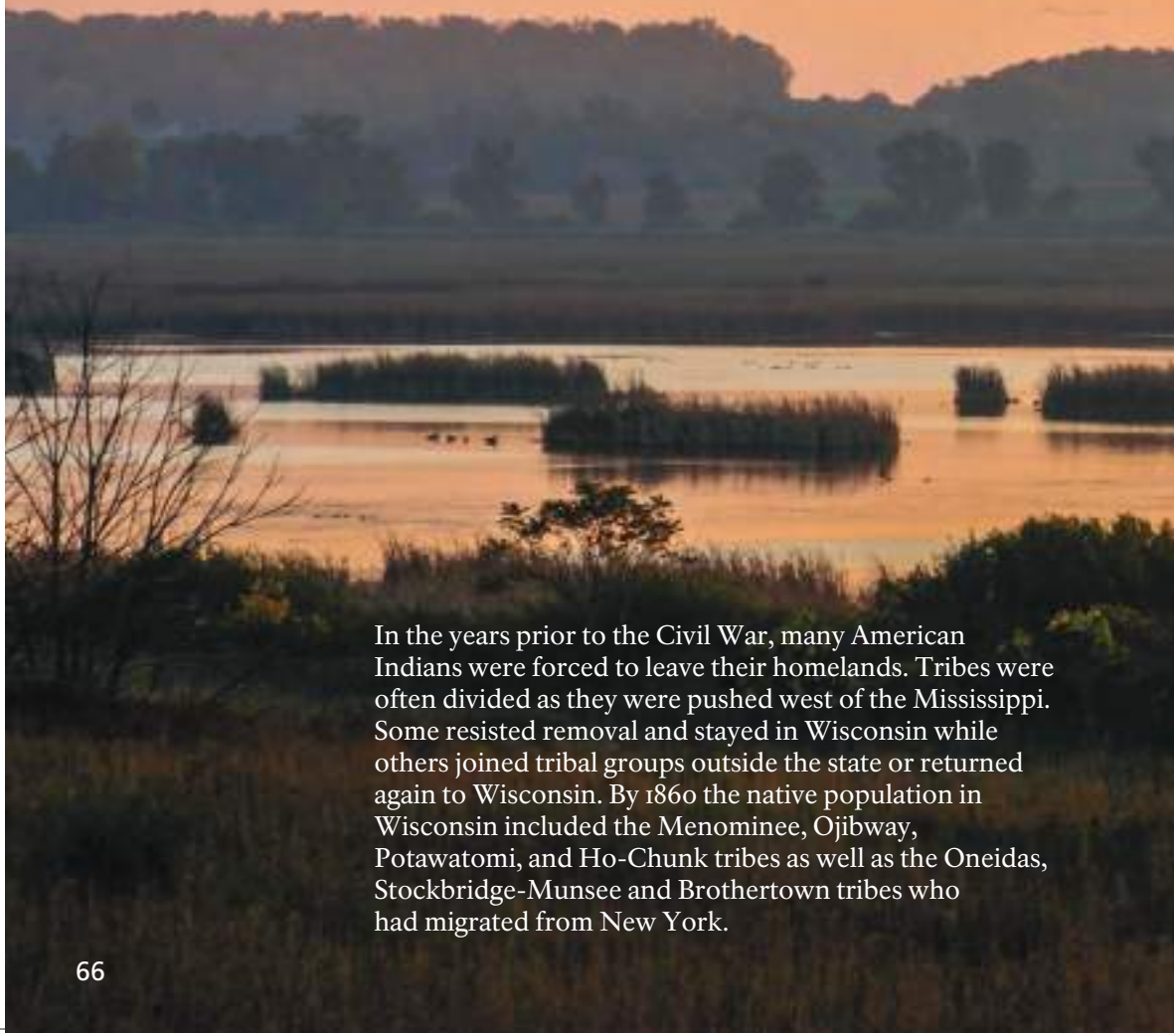
At war's end, Company K survivors marched with fellow soldiers in President Johnson's Grand Review of the troops.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Wisconsin American Indians in the Civil War

*Maj. Jo Ann P. Schedler, US Army, retired
Mohican Nation, Stockbridge-Munsee Band*

From the Menominee, Ojibway, Potawatomi, and Ho-Chunk who had lived in the Great Lakes region for many years to the more recent arrivals—the Oneida, Mohican Stockbridge-Munsee, and Brothertown—the indigenous people from Wisconsin sent several hundred men to fight for the Union Army. Some were killed in battle, some died from disease, and some were captured and died in prison camps. Many wrote letters home, providing us with windows into their service, their commitments, and their lives as Union soldiers.



In the years prior to the Civil War, many American Indians were forced to leave their homelands. Tribes were often divided as they were pushed west of the Mississippi. Some resisted removal and stayed in Wisconsin while others joined tribal groups outside the state or returned again to Wisconsin. By 1860 the native population in Wisconsin included the Menominee, Ojibway, Potawatomi, and Ho-Chunk tribes as well as the Oneidas, Stockbridge-Munsee and Brothertown tribes who had migrated from New York.

*Mohican Indians of the
Stockbridge-Munsee band
swear into the US Army.
Who were they and
why did they join?*

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY WHS 1909

DAVID ZIMMERMAN

Wisconsin's American Indian service during the Civil War is little known. In his 2005 article, "Unwanted in a White Man's War," Russell Horton wrote that "an estimated five to six hundred American Indians from the Badger State, out of a total native population of 9,000, joined the Union Army during the war." Most Indians were not US citizens at the time and were not called to enlist at the beginning of the war. Who were they and why did they join the Union army?

In 2009, in an effort to recognize Civil War veterans buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in Shawano, Wisconsin, I found out my great-great-grandfather Stephen Gardner and his brother Simeon were soldiers in the Civil War. My cousin Roger Miller and I helped with the rededication ceremony along with other Mohican Veterans and local veterans groups. The ceremony was conducted by Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War Old Abe Camp # 8. I came away very proud of my ancestors and had many questions. How many other Stockbridge-Munsee men participated in the Civil War? What was life like in 1861 - 1865 in America's Civil War for the Stockbridge and Munsee people?

The Wisconsin Indian Civil War story is documented from the soldiers' own letters, pictures, family histories, and tribal histories. For decades, few family and tribal members knew that their ancestors fought in the Civil War. Fewer still were aware of their service or sacrifices. Most did not even know that their forefathers were involved in this conflict. With the 150th anniversary of the war, however, many Wisconsin native people now know these stories. I would like to share their stories with you here.



*Author Jo Ann Schedler and
her cousin Roger Miller participate
in a ceremony honoring fellow
Stockbridge-Munsee Indians
who served in the Civil War.*

KIRBY SCOTT





Menominee soldiers fought in the Siege of Petersburg, Virginia.

NPS/GIL COHEN

The Bad River Chippewa Nation refers to itself as “Chippewa.” There are six federally recognized tribes in this group—some call themselves Chippewas, others Ojibways. Throughout its tribal history, the Bad River Chippewa have either fought for or against the United States. During the Civil War, when the Union called for volunteers, their response was “conspicuously notable” according to Bad River historian Barb Bell. The Ho-Chunk tribe responded as well, sending at least 10 members to battle for the Union, according to the Ho-Chunk Veterans Service Office.

The Menominee, one of the larger Wisconsin Indian nations, contributed a number of soldiers to the Union effort, as documented in the Menominee Tribal Historic Preservation Office’s 2010 book, *Menominee Veterans, A Photo History of Our Land, Our Battles, Our Victories*. Company K of the 37th Regiment, consisted of 71 Menominee men. Many “men took their war bundles with them” for protection, the authors wrote, and the Indian soldiers frequently participated in drum and warrior dances.

On July 23, 1864, the Menominee men and remnants of Company K joined the rest of the 37th Wisconsin Infantry regiment in the Siege of Petersburg, Virginia. On the morning of July 30, the Menominee soldiers participated in the



ill-fated Battle of the Crater along with Anishnaabek Indians of Company K, 1st Michigan Sharpshooters (their story is told elsewhere in this book). Six Menominee were killed in action, five were captured and died in prison camps, and eight were wounded. In total, between 1863 and 1865, 141 Menominee men fought for the Union.

Elsewhere in this volume, authors have posed the question: why did American Indians fight in the Civil War? Alan Caldwell, Commander of the Veterans of the Menominee Nation, suggests possible reasons why Menominees fought in the Civil War and why they have enlisted to fight in other wars. He points out that historically American Indians have the highest volunteer rate per population for military service of all racial and ethnic groups in the United States. He believes that carrying on the “warrior traditions found in Indian culture, family traditions of military service, economic reasons, a sense of adventure, and a sense of obligation to their family, tribe, and nation” are among the factors for indigenous military service. In addition, Caldwell notes that many treaties signed in the 1800s contained loyalty oaths requiring tribes to “come to the aid of the United States.”



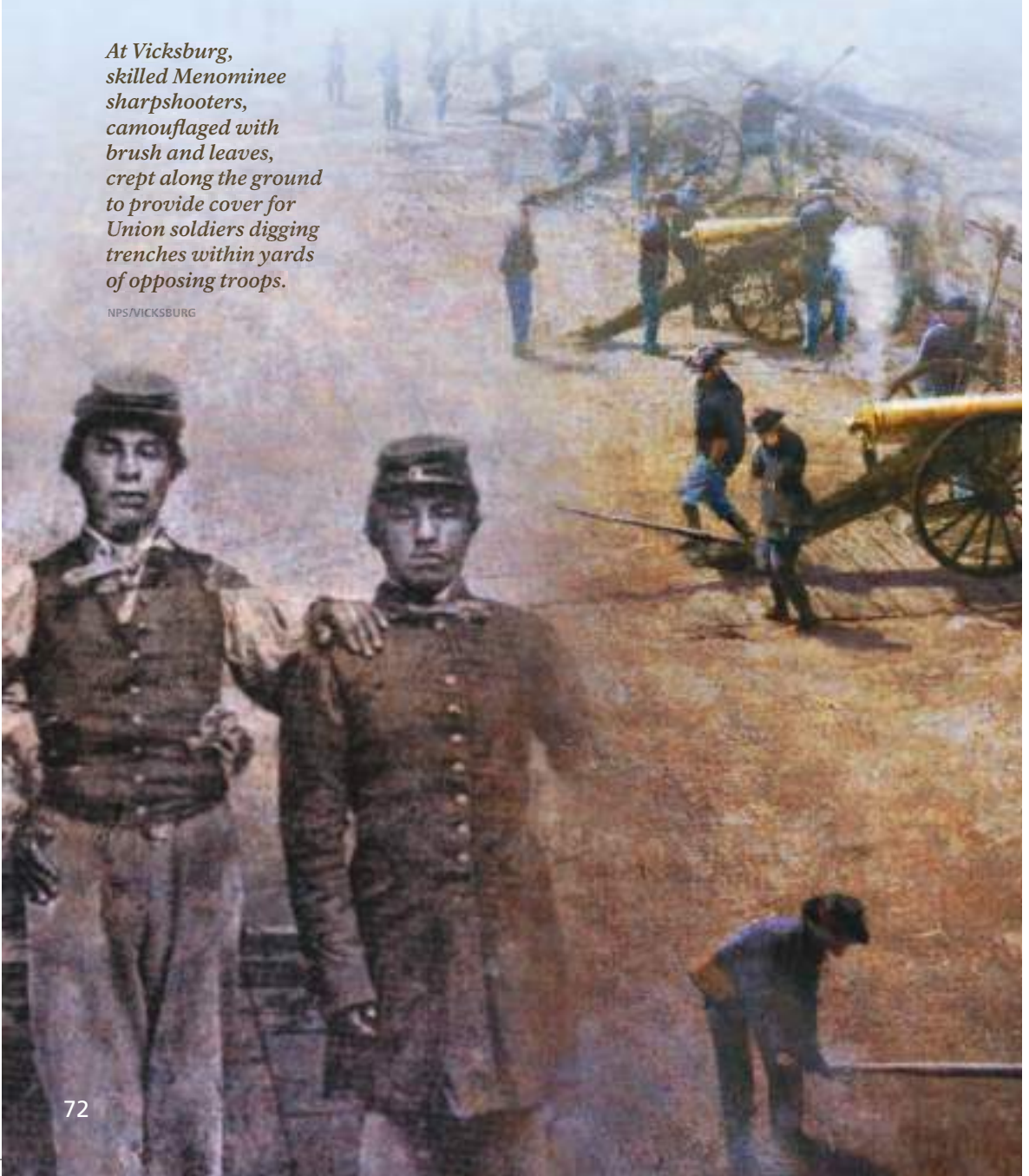
With warrior traditions as a part of their cultures, American Indians have long had one of the highest rates of volunteerism for military service in the country. Pictured here is Amiskqew, a Menominee warrior in the 1840s.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

In *The Iroquois in the Civil War*, Laurence M. Hauptman notes that between November 1864 and March 1865 a major smallpox epidemic devastated the Oneida people (part of the Iroquois Confederacy of tribes) in Wisconsin, causing a population decline of around 5 percent. An early 1860s drought and a severe winter caused further hardship for the Oneida economy. Hauptman writes that on a reservation of about 1,100 residents, “military service, despite the risk, became a way out of their desperate

At Vicksburg, skilled Menominee sharpshooters, camouflaged with brush and leaves, crept along the ground to provide cover for Union soldiers digging trenches within yards of opposing troops.

NPS/VICKSBURG



economic condition.” Bounties of \$300 or more for three years of service in 1863 and 1864 provided even more incentives for enlistment.

Some Oneidas enlisted in the 3rd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry and 49 joined the 14th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. According to Hauptman, “The Oneida troops were members of a much traveled unit; some on detached service in different theaters of the war. Indians died in Cairo, Illinois; Atlanta, Big Shanty, and Rome, Georgia; Montgomery and Spanish Fort, Alabama; Keokuk, Louisiana; and Memphis, Tennessee.” One Oneida, Henry Hill, was wounded at the Battle of Spanish Fort in Alabama on April 9, 1865, and was one of the last casualties of the Civil War. Loretta Metoxen and Reggie Doxtator, Oneida Nation historians, stated that 147 Oneida men fought in the Civil War, reporting that “Of these men 46 were killed, missing in action, or died of disease.”

The Seige of Vicksburg, Mississippi

NPS/VICKSBURG-MATT HALL





*Abner Abrams,
served in the US
Army at age 14.*

THE ABRAMS FAMILY





Decades of growing strife erupted in civil war on April 12, 1861, when Confederate artillery opened fire on Fort Sumter, South Carolina. When President Lincoln called for a militia to defend the United States, Stockbridge-Munsee men were among the first to enlist.

NPS/FORT SUMTER

The story of the Brothertown Indians is unique in that they were the first American Indians to become United States citizens in 1839. In doing so, they were required to denounce their tribal affiliation and divide their communal lands into individual ownership. In his book, *Red Brethren*, David Silverman writes that they “judged citizenship a risk worth taking” to avoid forced removal to Kansas and to keep their lands in Wisconsin. Brothertown Indians also enlisted in the Union Army. In *Letters Home from the Brothertown “Boys,”* Caroline K. Andler, a historian for the Brothertown people, documents over 90 Brothertown Indians who fought in the Civil War from 1861 to 1865.

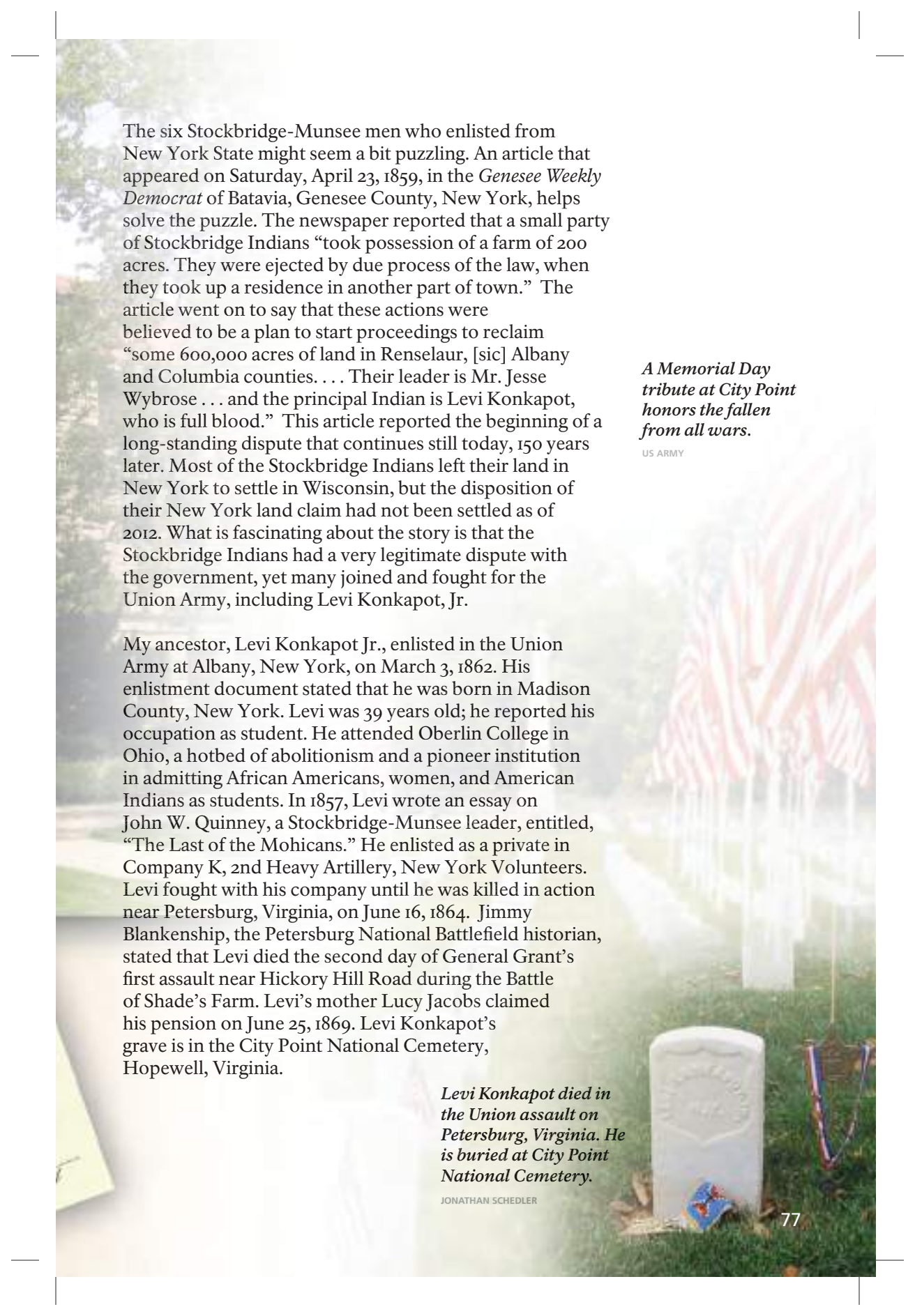
The Brothertown Collection located at the Oneida Cultural Heritage Archives in Green Bay, Wisconsin, includes letters from several of these soldiers. J.W. Dick wrote on September 23, 1864 near Petersburg,

the Johnnies [sic] came around our left and in our rear and attacked and overpowered our picket lines and captured quite a herd of cattle numbering 2,470 head and drove them off and got away I am sorry to say with the whole herd and took some of the guard along . . . And since then the Johnney Rebs [sic] have their pickets hallowing to our pickets Beef, Beef! and imitating cattle driving.

My research into the history of my people—the Stockbridge-Munsee—found that 58 Stockbridge-Munsee men and five Brothertown Indian men married to Stockbridge women, a total of 63 Civil War soldiers, came from the Stockbridge community. Of these soldiers, four were among the first American Indians to enlist in the Civil War on April 27, 1861 when President Lincoln called for a militia, and 23 others also enlisted that year, the first of the war. Digging a little deeper, I found that three others fought for the Union Army in Kansas and six enlisted in New York.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

[illegible]



The six Stockbridge-Munsee men who enlisted from New York State might seem a bit puzzling. An article that appeared on Saturday, April 23, 1859, in the *Genesee Weekly Democrat* of Batavia, Genesee County, New York, helps solve the puzzle. The newspaper reported that a small party of Stockbridge Indians “took possession of a farm of 200 acres. They were ejected by due process of the law, when they took up a residence in another part of town.” The article went on to say that these actions were believed to be a plan to start proceedings to reclaim “some 600,000 acres of land in Renselaer, [sic] Albany and Columbia counties. . . . Their leader is Mr. Jesse Wybrose . . . and the principal Indian is Levi Konkapot, who is full blood.” This article reported the beginning of a long-standing dispute that continues still today, 150 years later. Most of the Stockbridge Indians left their land in New York to settle in Wisconsin, but the disposition of their New York land claim had not been settled as of 2012. What is fascinating about the story is that the Stockbridge Indians had a very legitimate dispute with the government, yet many joined and fought for the Union Army, including Levi Konkapot, Jr.

*A Memorial Day
tribute at City Point
honors the fallen
from all wars.*

US ARMY

My ancestor, Levi Konkapot Jr., enlisted in the Union Army at Albany, New York, on March 3, 1862. His enlistment document stated that he was born in Madison County, New York. Levi was 39 years old; he reported his occupation as student. He attended Oberlin College in Ohio, a hotbed of abolitionism and a pioneer institution in admitting African Americans, women, and American Indians as students. In 1857, Levi wrote an essay on John W. Quinney, a Stockbridge-Munsee leader, entitled, “The Last of the Mohicans.” He enlisted as a private in Company K, 2nd Heavy Artillery, New York Volunteers. Levi fought with his company until he was killed in action near Petersburg, Virginia, on June 16, 1864. Jimmy Blankenship, the Petersburg National Battlefield historian, stated that Levi died the second day of General Grant’s first assault near Hickory Hill Road during the Battle of Shade’s Farm. Levi’s mother Lucy Jacobs claimed his pension on June 25, 1869. Levi Konkapot’s grave is in the City Point National Cemetery, Hopewell, Virginia.

*Levi Konkapot died in
the Union assault on
Petersburg, Virginia. He
is buried at City Point
National Cemetery.*

JONATHAN SCHEDLER

Electa Quinney

Daniel Adams wrote letters home to his mother Electa Quinney Adams Candy. Electa, a Stockbridge Indian, was one of the first professional teachers in Wisconsin, teaching at Kaukauna territory in 1828. Today, the Electa Quinney Institute for American Indian Education and Policy Studies, named in her honor, is located at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Like Levi Konkapot, many of the Stockbridge-Munsee men were educated and were able to write home. Their letters help paint a picture of the lives of Wisconsin's indigenous people during the war. Among the most interesting are letters from Daniel J. Adams, who in October 1861, enlisted in Wisconsin's Company A, 2nd Cavalry. In letters he wrote to his mother, Electa Quinney Adams Candy, from Springfield, Missouri, in 1862, Daniel talked about his scouting trip, illness, and efforts to recover. He also sought her advice, "I don't think that the Hospital Doctors know any to [sic] much. There are a great many of our boys getting sick.... Do you know what would be good for them[?]"

Daniel reminded his mother that he was sending her money; he heard she had received money from the state, which he would supplement from his pay. He inquired if she knew the regiment and company Levi Konkapot had joined. The politics of the Stockbridge Nation was on his mind, as he told his mother that Abram Pye, Sr. was running for sachem (paramount chief), and he added, "I think if that is the case that they are mighty heard [sic] up for men. I believe in a chief knowing how to read and write[;] don't you think so too?" He finishes this letter: "The Capt says that us boys are a set of high headed Indians...I will try and come home when peace is declared, if health and life is spared, and not before." Daniel's letters demonstrate a sense of humor and show his patriotism in his dedication to two nations.

Dear Mother
write to you, so
back to Springfield
arrived here last
see a rebel, & he
I don't feel very
three or four
to help me
that the you
Doctors
sick, & he
I will try

Electa Quinney

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

"We have lost another man, he died about [20] minutes ago... I will try and come home when peace is declared, if health and life is spared..."

Daniel Adams in a letter to his mother

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Daniel's second letter of September 9, 1862, explained that he was in the hospital but was getting better. He was grateful that the nurse was kind and was taking good care of him. "I shall remember him as long as I live." He laments, "we have lost another man, he died about [20] minutes ago." He tells his mother that his captain has not visited the men who are ill and wonders how the captain expects them to like him. Later that month, on September 25, 1862, still in Springfield, Missouri, Daniel wrote, "tell Sarah not-to-get discouraged about marriage for I read an account of a lady 60 years getting married to a young man 16, what do you think of that?" We're not sure who Sarah is, but clearly she is not yet married. He finishes his letter with good thoughts and loving greetings to his mother and family.

Daniel Adams died of disease on February 21, 1863, in Springfield, Missouri. Like two out of three Civil War casualties, he succumbed to disease rather than a bullet. Daniel was buried in the Springfield National Cemetery. Electa applied for her son's military pension and finally received \$8 a month in 1882. She was living in Stockbridge according to Wisconsin pension records.

Of the five Stockbridge-Munsee men who enlisted in Company A, 2nd Cavalry, Daniel was one of the first to enlist and the only one to die during service. He had signed up on October 16, 1861, just six months after the war's beginning, along with two other Stockbridge Indian men, Peter Metoxen and Abraham Pye, Jr.

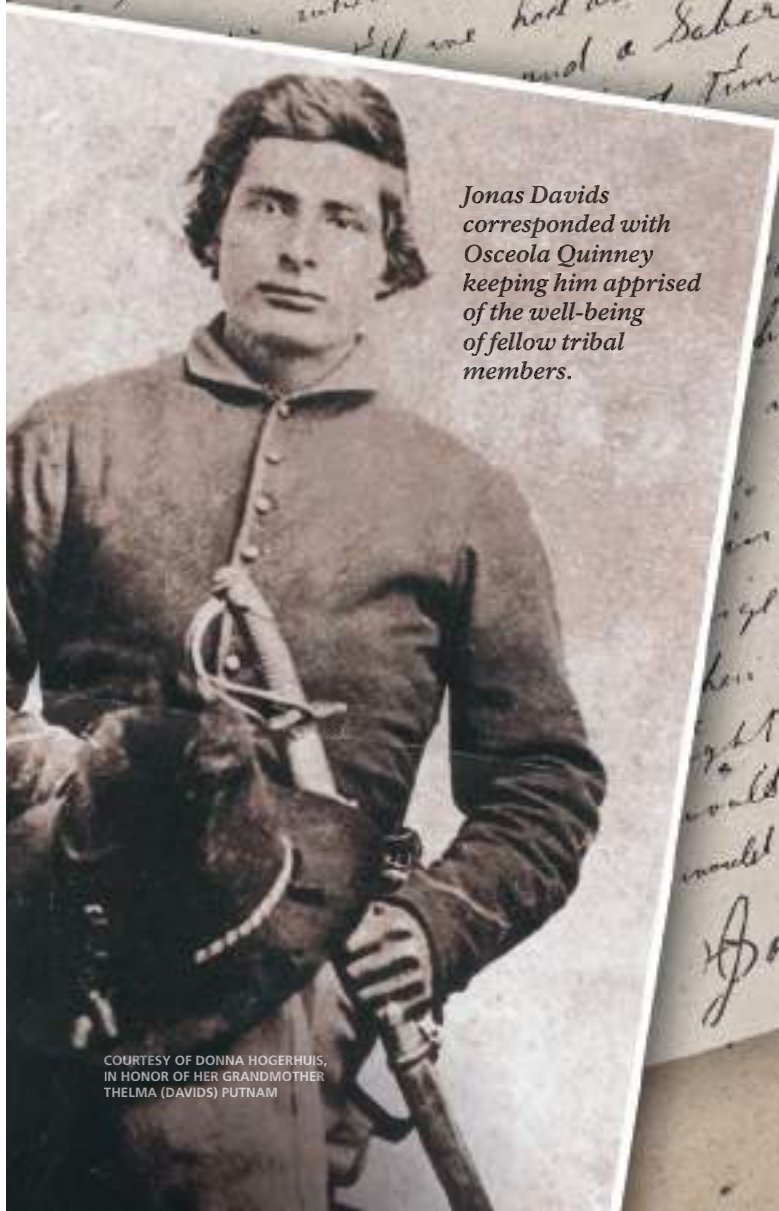
Another Stockbridge man, Jonas C. Davids, from Waupun, joined Company A on January 21, 1865. He wrote to Osceola Quinney on March 2, 1865, discussing new weapons and a bay horse with military experience. Jonas was stationed in Memphis, Tennessee when he wrote:

I have seen some of the boys. I seen the fourteenth regt. pass threw here I seen Abraham Israel, Dan Tousey, David Dean and John Dean and old Tinker and a number of the Oneida boys Obed Dodge is in the hospital yet but he is better he came in our barracks yesterday he looks quite smart, the rest of the boys are well.

Jonas had not received a letter from Stockbridge since he left Wisconsin. The recipient of his letter, Osceola Quinney, corresponded with Daniel Adams, Peter Metoxen, and Jonas Davids, keeping in touch with his fellow tribal members. On June 19, 1865, Jonas was discharged with a disability. He is one of 13 Civil War soldiers buried in the Red Springs Cemetery on the Stockbridge-Munsee Reservation in Shawano, Wisconsin.

HEAD-QUARTERS
Department of Mississippi,
Memphis, Tenn., March, 2nd, 1865.

Osceola Quinney Sir I will sit down to
write in haste to let you know that I am well
and I hope these few lines will find you
I have had very good times ever since
when I first came here I did
not have had arms about me
and a saber and we
at time I should



Jonas Davids
corresponded with
Osceola Quinney
keeping him apprised
of the well-being
of fellow tribal
members.

I should
have and
I have got
the company
he has been
here in a while for
right on his traps
would ground he would
would not to run
James Davids

COURTESY OF DONNA HOGERHUIS,
IN HONOR OF HER GRANDMOTHER
THELMA (DAVIDS) PUTNAM

ARVID E. MILLER LIBRARY/MUSEUM

Three other Stockbridge-Munsee men enlisted in the Union forces of Kansas; they were Abner W. Abrams, Jacob Dick, and Levi Konkerparte (also spelled as Konkapot; not the Levi Konkapot whose story was told above.) Abner was born in Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, on February 14, 1847. His family had migrated from Wisconsin in 1839. He enlisted at Ft. Lincoln on August 25, 1862 with the 2nd Light Artillery Battery, mustered out on August 11, 1865, and died on January 9, 1927. He is buried in the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) cemetery in Miami, Oklahoma.

Abner Abrams served with the Kansas 2nd Light Artillery Battery based out of Fort Scott. The unit saw action in many western engagements.

NPS/FORT SCOTT



*Abner Abrams and
his Cherokee wife,
Maria Gafford.*

THE ABRAMS FAMILY



We have a glimpse of their motivations from the letters and stories of Wisconsin's American Indian soldiers, showing pride and commitment to duty to their tribal nations and the United States. They relate hope for the future and the desire to have land and make a living from mother earth. They show a love for family and friends, a sense of patriotism, and tradition. Daniel Adams summed up the belief of many of these soldiers, when he wrote: "I will try and come home when peace is declared, if health and life is spared, and not before." As we know, Daniel died of disease and was buried at the Springfield National Cemetery. He gave his life for two nations.



Menominee Civil War Veterans Post No. 261 was the only Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) post to exist on an Indian Reservation.

MENOMINEE TRIBAL HISTORIC
PRESERVATION OFFICE



A large, colorful poster for the Grand Army of the Republic. It features a man in a blue uniform and cap standing next to a woman in a red dress. A child is also present. The background is light blue with a large American flag in the upper left corner. The text 'GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC' is at the bottom in blue letters. A red banner with the word 'CHARITY' is also visible.

Grand Army of the
Republic poster

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Other Unsung Heroes of the Northwoods: Mistaken Identities, Unmistakable Valor



Like other soldiers, some American Indians were captured in battle and imprisoned. John Ransom, a prisoner at Andersonville, Georgia, wrote that his survival depended greatly upon his friendship with "a Minnesota Indian" named Battese. It appears that this name is incorrect as he cannot be located in Minnesota military records. While his true identity may be forgotten, his kindness is not.

—Eric Leonard

A photograph of the Kentucky Monument at the Chickamauga Battlefield. The monument is a tall, white, columnar structure with a statue of a soldier on top. It is surrounded by trees and a path.

Kenshottentyche served in Company H, 9th Kentucky. Most accounts report he was Mohawk, but there is no definitive evidence of this. Fellow soldiers quickly befriended Kenshottentyche, better known to them as Flying Cloud. In the battle of Chickamauga, Georgia, a bullet struck the handsome soldier, tearing away much of his upper jaw and leaving him horribly disfigured. After recuperating in a Georgia hospital, Flying Cloud returned to fight with his Kentucky comrades throughout the war. Pictured here is the Kentucky Monument at Chickamauga Battlefield.

—Chris Young

In June 2012 at the Poplar Grove National Cemetery in Petersburg, Virginia, several Menominees' gravestones, and that of a Brothertown Indian, John B. Coyhis, were identified by the National Park Service. Plans are underway to rehabilitate this historic Civil War cemetery and to give these and other American Indian soldiers the recognition they deserve. This is a fitting tribute not only to these soldiers, but to the great tradition of American Indian military service in the United States in every war from the Revolutionary War to the present. Little has been known or written about the service of indigenous people during the Civil War. Even less is known of the reasons why they served. Was it for tradition, patriotism, or economic reasons? I believe it was for all of the above.



*In June 2012, several
gravestones of Menominee
and Brothertown Indians
were identified by the
National Park Service at
Poplar Grove National
Cemetery.*

JO ANN SCHEDLER

*A Luminary Event at Poplar Grove on
Veteran's Day honors the soldiers who fell at
Petersburg, including American Indian soldiers
from Wisconsin and Michigan.*

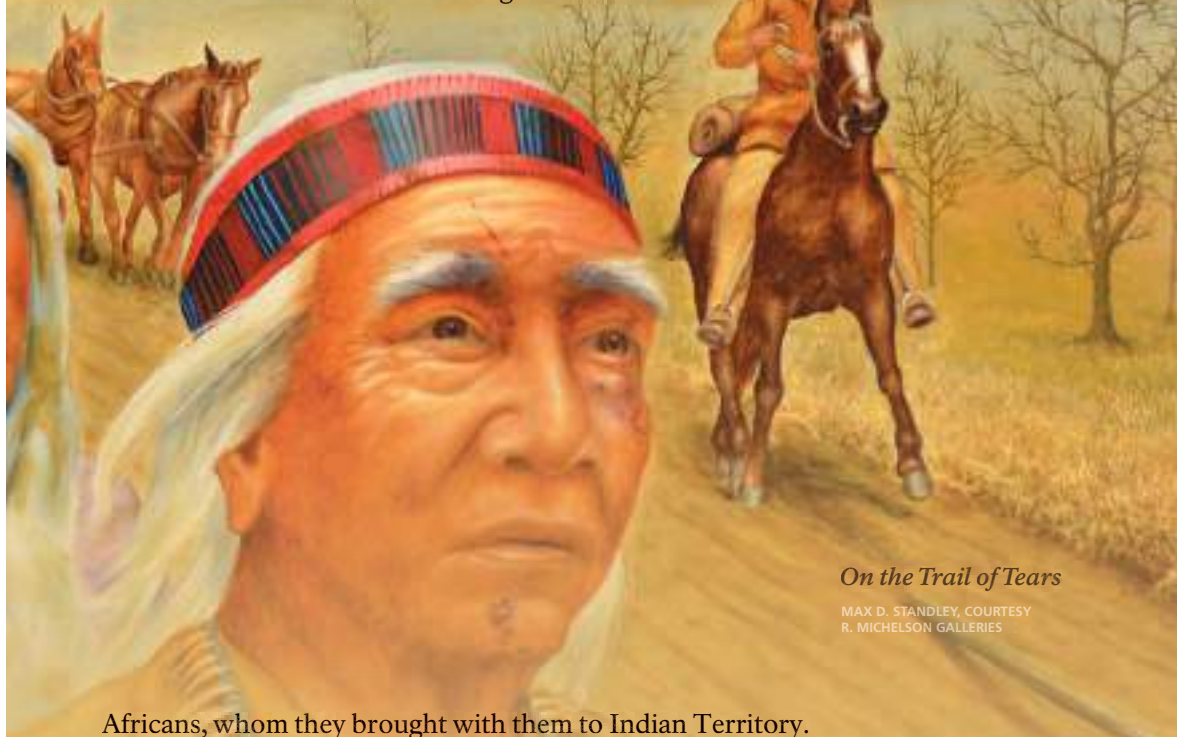
The Civil War in Indian Territory

*Theda Perdue, Atlanta Distinguished Professor Emerita
of Southern Culture and History
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*



In the early 1800s, the United States tried to concentrate its Indian population west of the Mississippi River. Passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830 accelerated this effort and resulted in the forcible relocation of five large Indian nations from the Southeast to what is today the state of Oklahoma. As the Civil War approached, the US government reassigned the soldiers stationed in Indian Territory to support the Union war effort. The Confederate government moved into this breach and negotiated new treaties with leaders from the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole Nations. The war did not end well for these nations. The United States forced them to cede much of their land, and they suffered privations long after the conflict ended.

The Chickasaws, Cherokees, Choctaws, Creeks, and Seminoles who lived in Indian Territory during the Civil War came from the southeastern United States. Forced from their homelands in the 1830s, they traveled what came to be known as the Trail of Tears to lands west of the Mississippi River. These tribes brought with them much of their indigenous culture, but they also brought ideas and practices acquired from over two centuries of contact with Europeans and Africans. In particular, some Indians had adopted the attitudes held by non-Indians in the South and bought enslaved



On the Trail of Tears

MAX D. STANDLEY, COURTESY
R. MICHELSON GALLERIES

Africans, whom they brought with them to Indian Territory. Some purchased slaves after the forced removal, as well. The five tribes also brought with them strong connections to the United States. Treaties between the United States and the sovereign Indian Nations defined their remaining rights, identified their territorial boundaries, provided compensation for land ceded, and delineated mutual obligations between each tribe and the United States. Missionaries who built schools and churches in some of the Indian nations often came from northern states and had Union sympathies. A third factor in the mix was factionalism dating back to when tribal members disagreed over the issue of removal. Ultimately, this baggage—southern roots, northern relationships, and internal divisions—drew the five nations into the American Civil War.

Like all Americans, Indians were divided over slavery during the Civil War. The percentage of African Americans enslaved in the Indian nations was similar to that in the upland South.

RESEARCH DIVISION, OKLAHOMA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

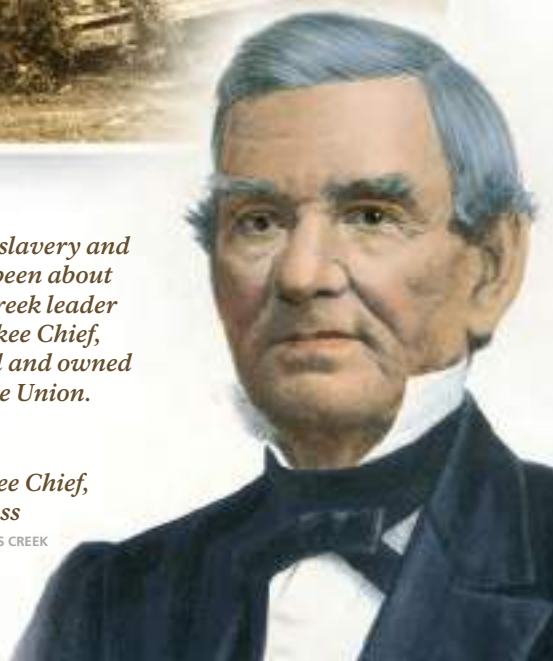
At the time of the Civil War, tribal laws established the legitimacy of slavery and regulated relations between the races in the five nations. Southern Indians enslaved over 8,000 Africans who comprised 14% of the total population in their nations, greater than the percentage of enslaved people in neighboring Missouri and comparable to that in the upland South. Even so, not all southern Indians owned slaves or approved of the institution of slavery: opinions differed from tribe to tribe as well as slaveholder to slaveholder. The Chickasaw and Choctaw nations, whose land bordered Texas, were the tribes most committed to slavery; they became the most steadfast in their support of the Confederacy.



Indians were divided over slavery and secession, just as they had been about Indian removal. Though Creek leader Opothle Yohola and Cherokee Chief, John Ross opposed removal and owned slaves, they aligned with the Union.

*Cherokee Chief,
John Ross*

NPS/WILSON'S CREEK

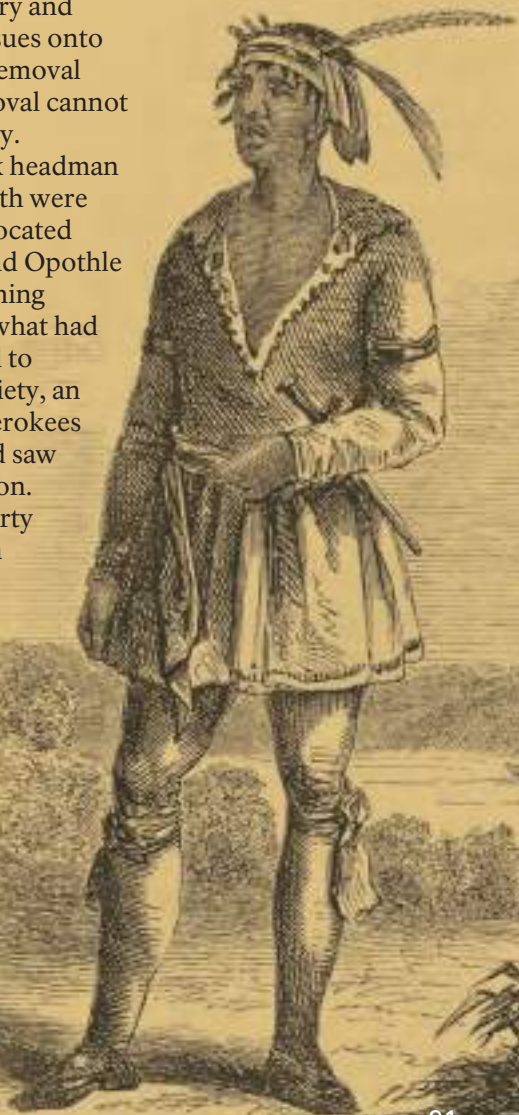


The Seminole Nation was the most ambivalent of the five nations about slavery. Before their expulsion from the Southeast, Africans who had escaped from slavery in the United States or the Creek Nation had joined the armed Seminole resistance to removal. Now free, these former slaves feared re-enslavement upon the arrival of the tribes in the West. As a result, they refused to move into the territory the Seminoles shared with the Creeks until 1856 when the lands and governments of the two nations became separate. Most Seminoles did not consider these free blacks their equals, but shared struggle made many Indians squeamish about enslaving them or, for that matter, other people of African descent.

Escaped African slaves had helped the Seminoles in their resistance to removal. This made them squeamish about enslaving others. Pictured here is black Seminole, John Horse I.

FOLLET, FOSTER & CO.

Creeks and Cherokees were divided over slavery and secession, in part because they grafted these issues onto the factionalism that had emerged during the removal crisis. Creek and Cherokee divisions over removal cannot be neatly categorized, at least in terms of slavery. Cherokee Principal Chief John Ross and Creek headman Opothle Yohola ardently opposed removal; both were slaveholders as were their opponents who advocated removal. As the Civil War approached, Ross and Opothle Yohola favored neutrality, which meant remaining aligned with the United States. The leaders of what had been pro-removal factions in each tribe tended to support the Confederacy. The Keetoowah Society, an organized group of culturally conservative Cherokees who had resisted removal, opposed slavery and saw themselves as protectors of the Cherokee Nation. Surviving leaders of the pro-removal Treaty Party formed the Southern Rights Party to champion slavery and a Confederate alliance.



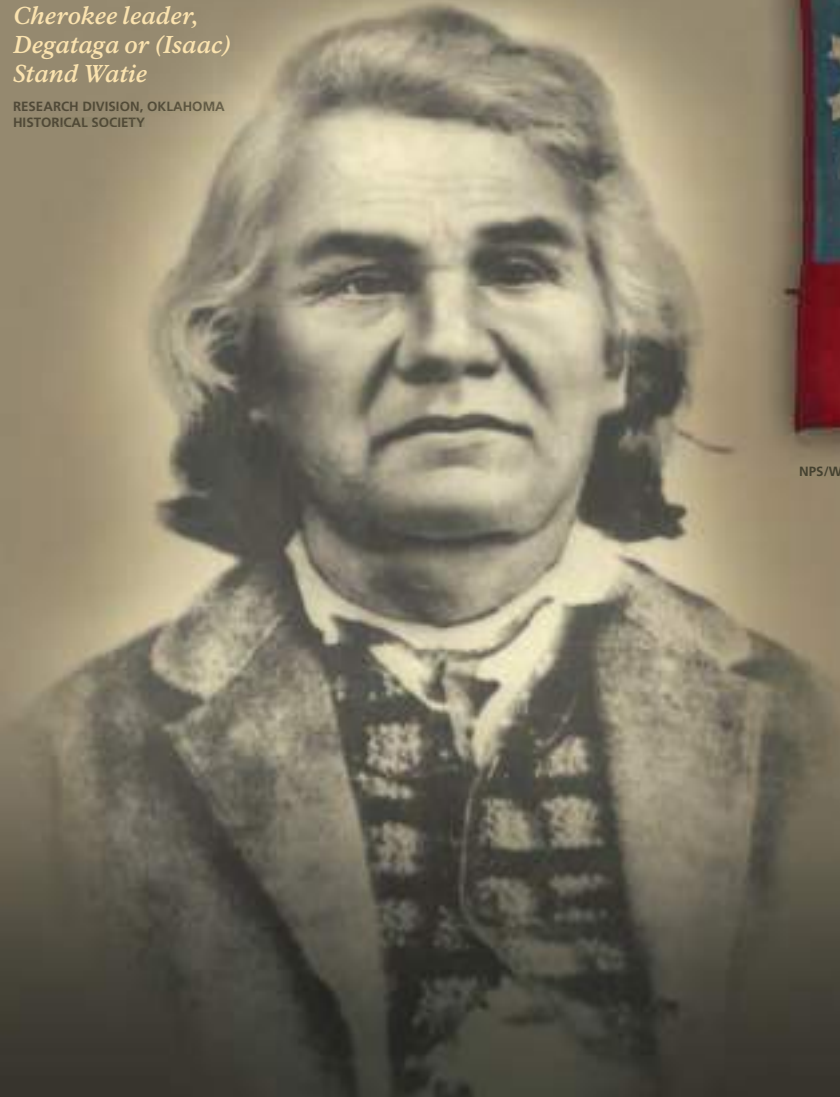
*Creek leader,
Opothle Yohola*

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
LIBRARIES, SPECIAL
COLLECTIONS MAH071

Whatever their personal views, southern Indians ended up having little choice in which side they initially took. In May 1861 the United States withdrew its troops stationed in Indian Territory, a surprising decision that denied the Union an invasion route into Texas while it opened the door for a Confederate assault on Kansas. The Confederacy did not hesitate: soldiers from Texas occupied the abandoned forts, and President Jefferson Davis appointed Arkansan Albert Pike to negotiate treaties with the tribes in Indian Territory. By the first of August, he had a treaty with four of the southern nations. The Cherokees signed in October. In the interim, other tribes to the west, including the Comanches, also allied with the Confederacy. These alliances voided treaties with the United States and cancelled the annuity payments that had helped fund tribal governments and services.

*Cherokee leader,
Degataga or (Isaac)
Stand Watie*

RESEARCH DIVISION, OKLAHOMA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NPS/WILSON'S CREEK



*Cherokee
leader
John Drew*

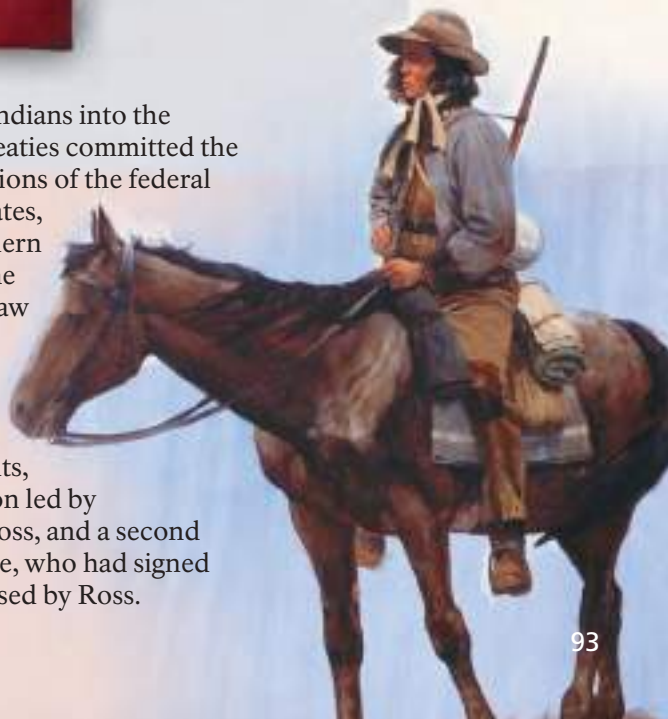
NPS/WILSON'S CREEK

CHEROKEE BRAVES

*Expert horsemen
and marksmen,
the Cherokee
Mounted Rifles
were known for
their daring
and effective
guerilla tactics.*

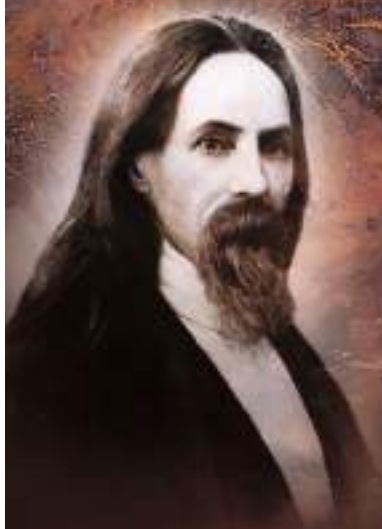
NPS/KEITH ROCCO

The South moved to incorporate Indians into the Confederate States of America. Treaties committed the Confederacy to assume the obligations of the federal government. Unlike the United States, the Confederacy granted the southern Indian nations representation in the Confederate Congress. The Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations and the Creek and Seminole Nations mustered soldiers into two Confederate regiments while the Cherokees assembled two regiments, one under the auspices of the nation led by John Drew, a supporter of Chief Ross, and a second under the command of Stand Watie, who had signed the Cherokee removal treaty opposed by Ross.



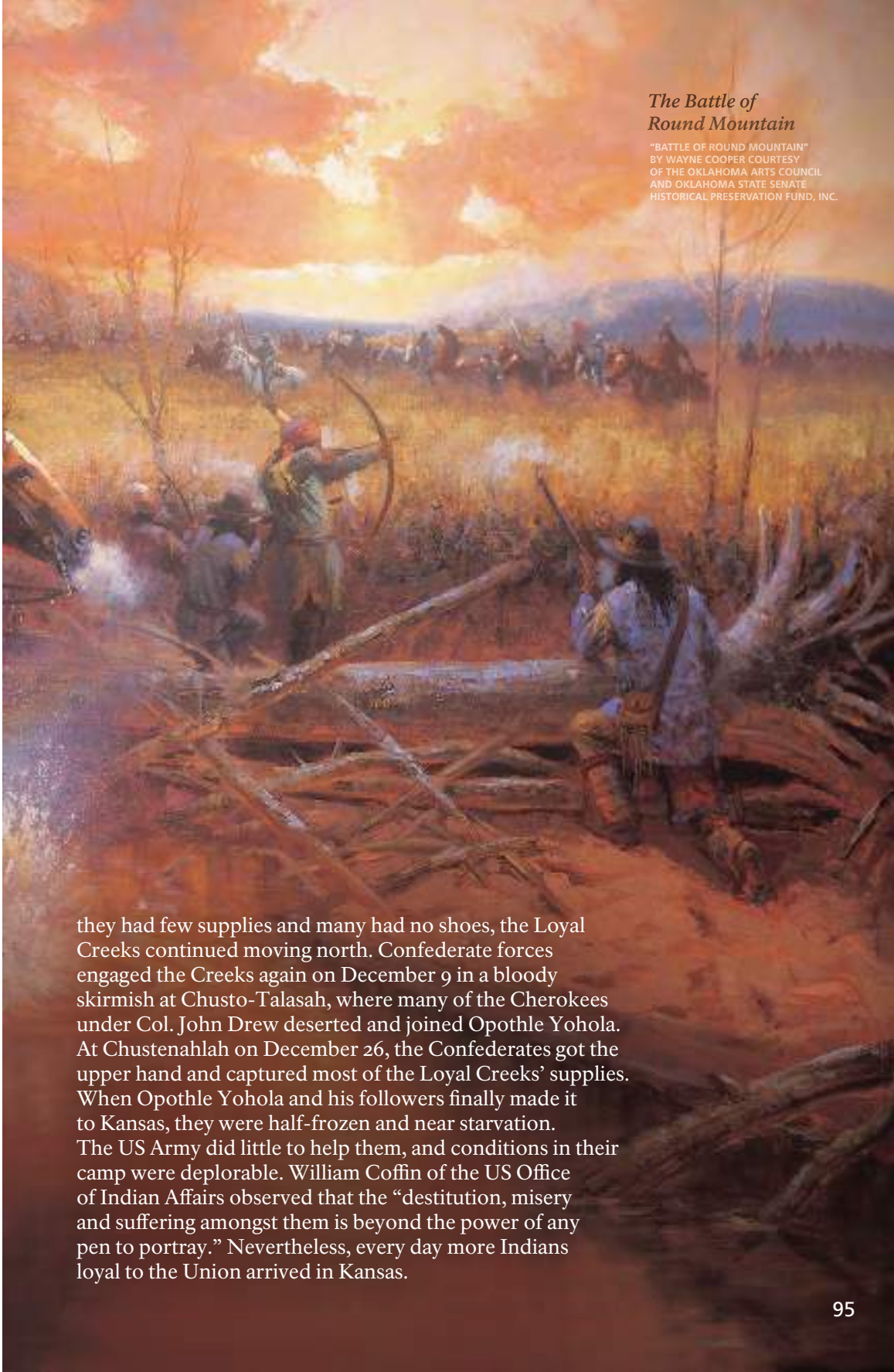
*Creek Indian,
Col. Daniel N.
McIntosh*

RESEARCH DIVISION
OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



In fall 1861 Opothle Yohola assembled Creeks and other Indians who took issue with the Confederate alliance at his plantation. They affirmed their loyalty to the Union. When Confederate forces moved to attack, these Loyal Creeks headed for Kansas with the Confederate soldiers in pursuit. Among the pursuers were Creeks under the command of Col. Daniel N. McIntosh, son of William McIntosh whom Creeks executed in 1825 for selling Creek land in Georgia. Opothle Yohola had been an official of the Creek National Council when it condemned the elder McIntosh to death.

On November 19, Loyal Creek scouts surprised the Confederates at Round Mountain. The battle was indecisive, and the Creeks escaped capture. Although



The Battle of Round Mountain

"BATTLE OF ROUND MOUNTAIN"
BY WAYNE COOPER COURTESY
OF THE OKLAHOMA ARTS COUNCIL
AND OKLAHOMA STATE SENATE
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION FUND, INC.

they had few supplies and many had no shoes, the Loyal Creeks continued moving north. Confederate forces engaged the Creeks again on December 9 in a bloody skirmish at Chusto-Talasah, where many of the Cherokees under Col. John Drew deserted and joined Opothle Yohola. At Chustenahlah on December 26, the Confederates got the upper hand and captured most of the Loyal Creeks' supplies. When Opothle Yohola and his followers finally made it to Kansas, they were half-frozen and near starvation. The US Army did little to help them, and conditions in their camp were deplorable. William Coffin of the US Office of Indian Affairs observed that the "destitution, misery and suffering amongst them is beyond the power of any pen to portray." Nevertheless, every day more Indians loyal to the Union arrived in Kansas.

"On the Battery"
The Battle of Pea Ridge

ANDY THOMAS



The major military engagement involving the Confederate Indian regiments took place at the Battle of Pea Ridge, fought March 6-8, 1862, in northwestern Arkansas. There Union forces dealt the Confederates a stinging defeat. For the Indian soldiers, they added insult to injury by claiming that Cherokee soldiers under the command of John Drew had scalped Union casualties, a charge that was never substantiated but got more play than the capture of Union artillery by Col. Stand Watie's Cherokee troops. Demoralized by the defeat as well as the accusation of scalping, the Indian regiments withdrew to Choctaw lands. This retreat left the Cherokee and Creek Nations exposed. Not surprisingly, in June 1862 the Union Army invaded. The advancing soldiers pushed south through the Cherokee Nation to Fort Gibson on the border with the Creek Nation. They routed Indian troops at Cowskin Prairie (June 6-7), Locust Grove (July 3), and Bayou Menard (July 27). The Union commander made overtures to Cherokee Chief Ross, who at first rebuffed him in honor of his nation's Confederate treaty. But in early August, Ross and his family along with most of Colonel Drew's remaining soldiers accompanied the Union Army as it withdrew to Kansas. In October, Union forces captured Old Fort Wayne in the Cherokee Nation just west of the Arkansas line.



An Osage warrior

NPS/WILSON'S CREEK

In October 1862, Union Cherokees, Delawares, Osages, and Seminoles attacked the Wichita Agency, killing approximately 150 men, women, and children of the Tonkawa Confederate Indians.

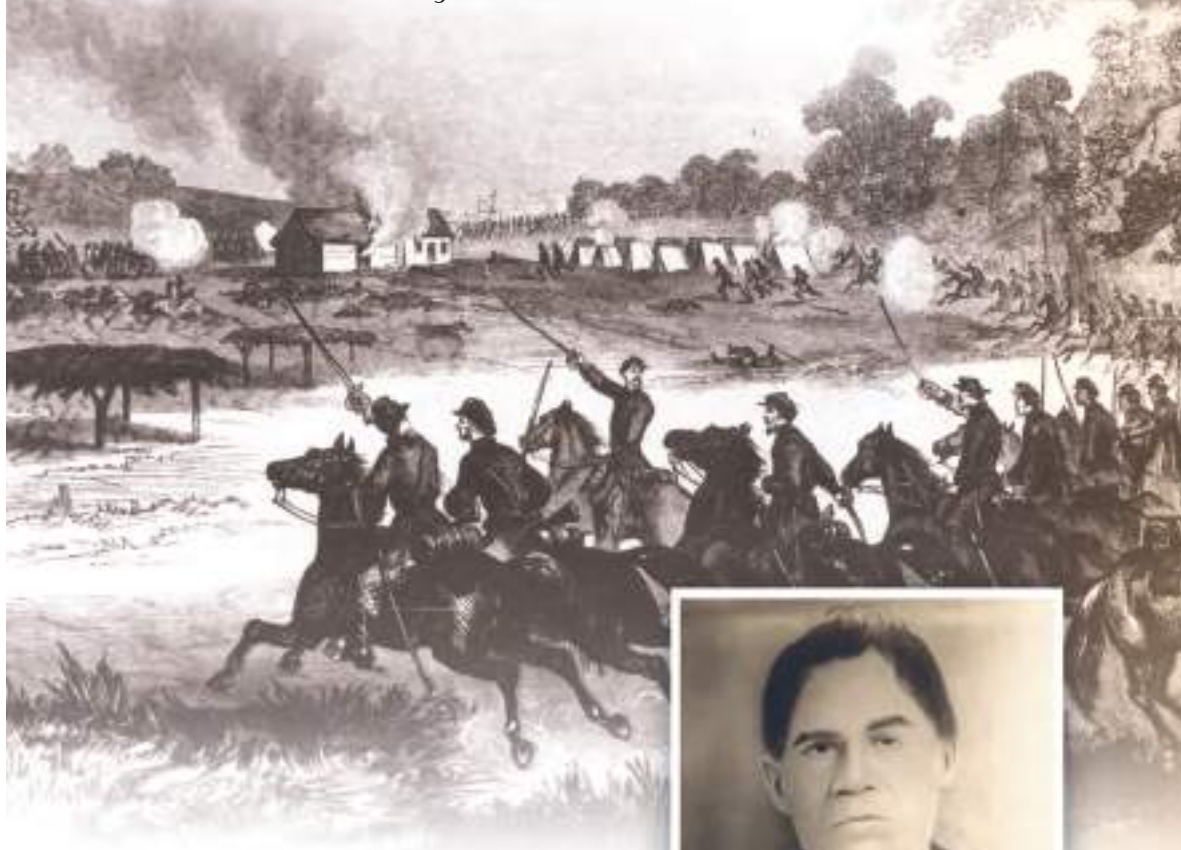
RESEARCH DIVISION, OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

As the Union presence waxed and waned, civilians increasingly became the victims of both armies and of irregulars. In October 1862, Union Cherokees, Delawares, Osages, and Seminoles attacked the Wichita Agency, which was west of the Chickasaw Nation, and killed approximately 150 men, women, and children of the Tonkawa Confederate Indians. Individual attacks killed even more Indians. Union partisans killed fellow Unionist Cherokee Abijah Hicks, whose wife Hannah lamented, "How gladly I would have given up everything if they only would have spared my husband." Left to raise five children, one of whom was an infant, her anguish intensified when she learned "that my poor husband was killed by 'Pins [Cherokee Union soldiers distinguished by the crossed pins they wore]' but through mistake, intending to kill another man." Like many civilians in Indian Territory, she lost her provisions to Confederate soldiers. Desperate for supplies, Confederate Colonel Watie reportedly ordered that his men confiscate them from the wives of Union men. "The Federals come through and give us good words," Hannah Hicks wrote in her journal, "then pass right on and leave us to a far worse fate than would have been ours if they had not come."

At the battle of Honey Springs, Indian and African American soldiers outnumbered white soldiers.

RESEARCH DIVISION,
OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

A second Union invasion came in April 1863. Federal troops occupied Fort Gibson and engaged Confederate forces under the command of Colonel Watie, who had laid claim to the title of Cherokee principal chief upon Ross's withdrawal. The Union Army routed Watie's troops at Webbers Falls on April 25. In the first days of July, Union forces fended off the Confederates as they attempted to capture a Union supply train at the First Battle of Cabin Creek. On July 17, Confederate forces mobilized to retake Fort Gibson, but the Union Army met them at Honey Springs, approximately 25 miles southwest of the fort in the Creek Nation.



*Creek Indian,
Col. Chilly McIntosh*

RESEARCH DIVISION,
OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

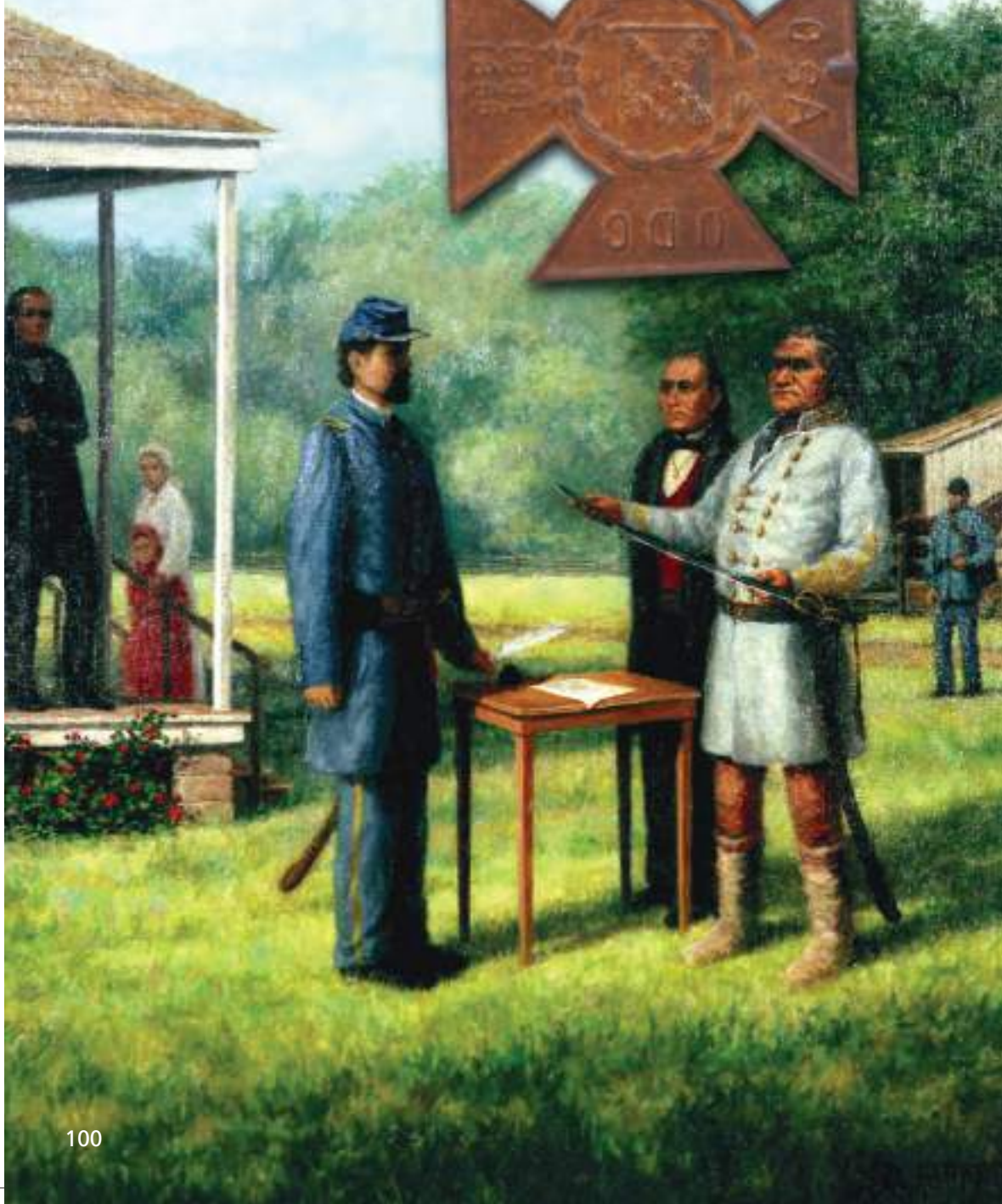


Creek George Washington Grayson later remembered the “war-speech” that Col. Chilly McIntosh delivered to the Confederate soldiers under his command: “Man must die sometime, and since he must die, he can find no nobler death than that which overtakes him while fighting for his home, his fires, and his country.” Grayson and McIntosh survived, but the Union Army dealt the Confederates a resounding defeat.

Fort Gibson was central to the storm of Civil War battles and skirmishes that swept through Indian Territory.

RESEARCH DIVISION,
OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

The iron Confederate cross placed on Brig. Gen. Stand Watie's grave testifies to his leadership in the Civil War.



In the aftermath of the defeat, most of the Confederate Army in Indian Territory withdrew to the valley of the Red River, which separated the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations from Texas. The families of Confederates fled as well, often taking their slaves with them. Once they reached safety from the Union Army, life became a struggle. In December 1863, Watie's wife Sarah wrote to him from Rusk, Texas, that she "had not a scrap of meat or grease . . . fit to use" and that, except for two of her children, "all are bare of clothing." For enslaved people, conditions were far worse. Sarah Wilson of the Cherokee Nation recalled that her master, Ben Johnson, "hired the slaves out to Texas people because he didn't make any crops down there and we all lived in kind of camps." Most of the Confederate refugees and their slaves spent at least two years in exile.



Skirmishes continued through 1864 with the Confederates ultimately having some success. In 1864, Watie's command captured a Union steamboat carrying supplies to Fort Gibson on June 15, surprised a hay cutting party near Fort Gibson where they killed 40 African American soldiers on September 16, and took a Union supply train on September 18-19. Such exploits earned Watie promotion to brigadier general. The final Union victory in Indian Territory took place in a minor skirmish at Old Boggy Depot in the Choctaw Nation on April 24, 1865. Watie's surrender on June 23 at Doaksville, near Fort Towson in Indian Territory came two months after Gen. Robert E. Lee had surrendered at Appomattox and made the Cherokee the last Confederate general to surrender. The Chickasaws and Caddos, who lived further west, finally surrendered on July 14, bringing the Civil War in Indian Territory to an end.

After the defeat at Honey Springs, civilians allied with the Confederacy suffered greatly, with little food or clothing. Some spent more than two years in exile.

RESEARCH DIVISION,
OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Stand Watie was the last Confederate general to surrender in the Civil War.

DENNIS PARKER, COURTESY OF
OKLAHOMA STATE SENATE



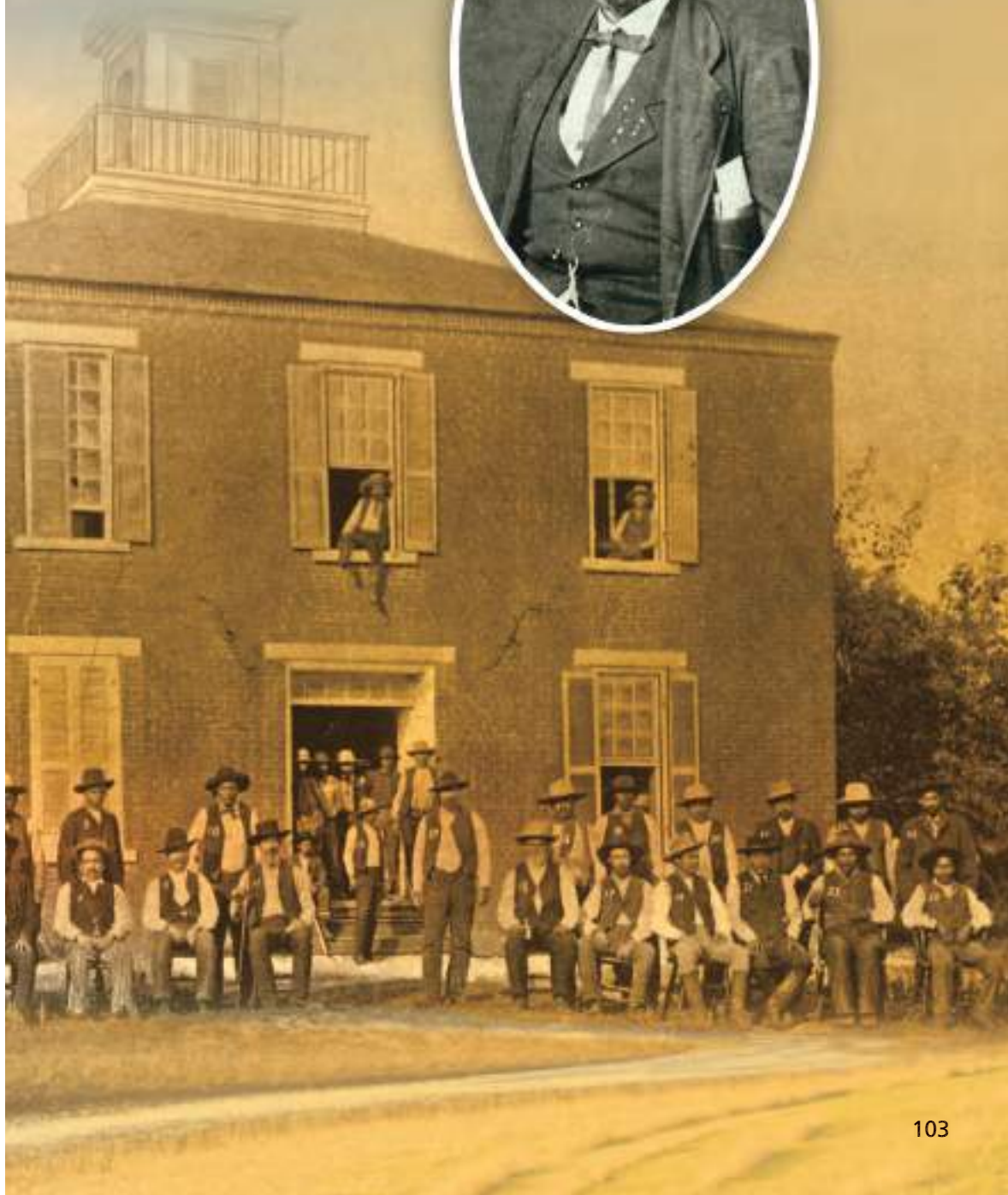
The Civil War devastated the five nations, especially the Cherokee Nation, which had suffered most of the military action and guerilla raids. Estimates of the war dead range from 6,000 to 10,000 and among the Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles reached 25% of their total population. Homes, farms, public buildings, businesses, schools, and churches lay in ruins and approximately 300,000 head of cattle as well as other livestock had been lost. The violence that had erupted among the Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles meant that the war ended with these nations deeply divided, as they had been at the end of the removal era.

The Choctaws and Chickasaws had been largely united in their support of the Confederacy, but among the other three nations rival governments threatened to emerge. In the end, the nations had to work out their internal problems for themselves. The Seminoles had two principal chiefs until 1872. The Creeks managed to write a unifying constitution in 1867, but factionalism rooted in removal and the Civil War continued until Oklahoma statehood in 1907. Cherokee Confederates initially demanded a division of their nation but got only the right to live in a separate district. Surprisingly, the Cherokees, who perhaps had been the most bitterly divided, managed to come together after the death of Chief John Ross in 1866. Prominent members of his party joined with the old pro-removal party to elect Lewis Downing chief and usher in a period of political stability.

Each of the five nations had to undertake the hard work of healing and unifying among their own people. Here, Chickasaw leaders meet at their capitol building in Tishomingo, Oklahoma.

RESEARCH DIVISION, OKLAHOMA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Though justifiably proud of their service, the war that preserved the Union left the five nations as deeply divided as they had been at the end of the removal era. Pictured here is a Seminole veteran.

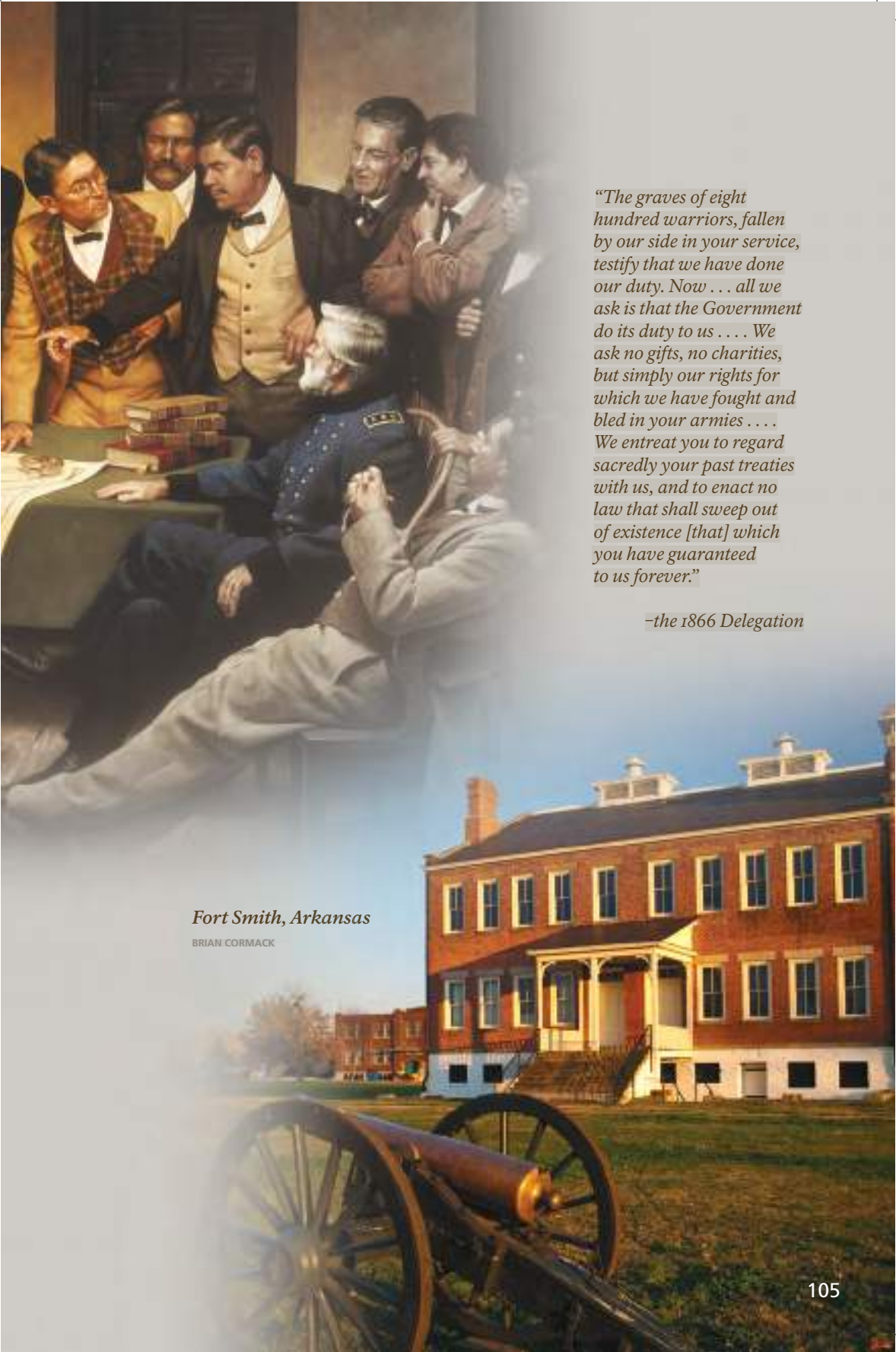




Horrified by the outcome of the Fort Smith meetings, the nations hoped for better news when they went to Washington, D.C. in 1866.

MIKE WIMMER

The federal government had based its relationship with the Indian nations on treaties that were nullified when those nations signed on with the Confederacy. Consequently, US officials summoned delegates from the five nations to Fort Smith, Arkansas, in September 1865 to negotiate new treaties. The US commissioners announced that by violating their treaties with the United States, the five nations had forfeited both their annuities and their lands. The five nations were horrified, especially the three that had provided considerable support to the Union, and they agreed to accept only treaties of peace and friendship at Fort Smith. They left thornier matters for a subsequent treaty conference in January 1866 in Washington, D.C.



"The graves of eight hundred warriors, fallen by our side in your service, testify that we have done our duty. Now . . . all we ask is that the Government do its duty to us . . . We ask no gifts, no charities, but simply our rights for which we have fought and bled in your armies . . . We entreat you to regard sacredly your past treaties with us, and to enact no law that shall sweep out of existence [that] which you have guaranteed to us forever."

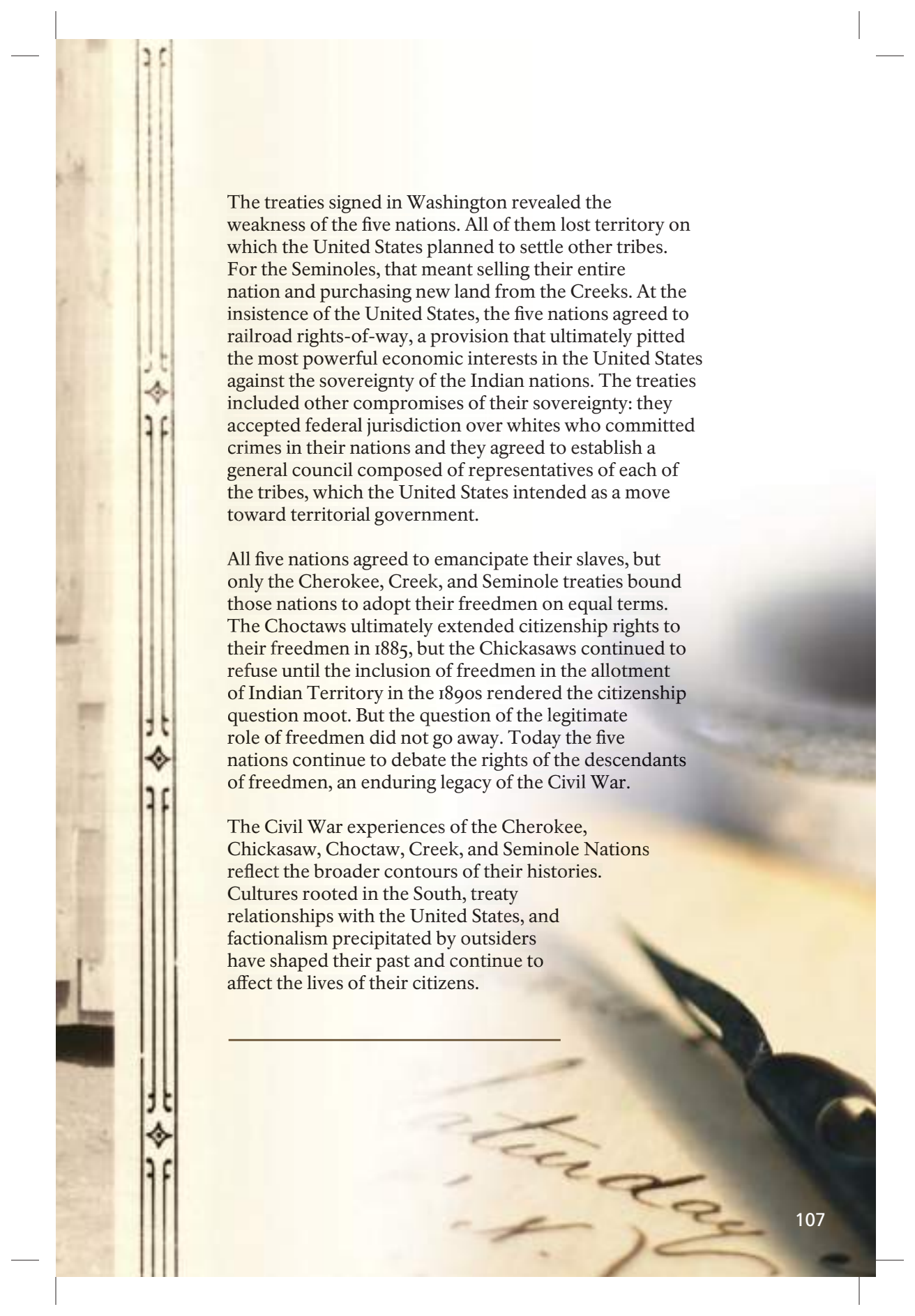
—the 1866 Delegation

Fort Smith, Arkansas

BRIAN CORMACK

All five nations agreed to emancipate their slaves, but they continue to debate the tribal rights of the freedmen's descendants even today, an enduring legacy of the Civil War.

RESEARCH DIVISION, OKLAHOMA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The background of the page is a photograph of an open book. On the left, the book's binding and a decorative vertical line with diamond-shaped motifs are visible. On the right, a fountain pen lies on a page with cursive handwriting, including the word "Saturday".

The treaties signed in Washington revealed the weakness of the five nations. All of them lost territory on which the United States planned to settle other tribes. For the Seminoles, that meant selling their entire nation and purchasing new land from the Creeks. At the insistence of the United States, the five nations agreed to railroad rights-of-way, a provision that ultimately pitted the most powerful economic interests in the United States against the sovereignty of the Indian nations. The treaties included other compromises of their sovereignty: they accepted federal jurisdiction over whites who committed crimes in their nations and they agreed to establish a general council composed of representatives of each of the tribes, which the United States intended as a move toward territorial government.

All five nations agreed to emancipate their slaves, but only the Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole treaties bound those nations to adopt their freedmen on equal terms. The Choctaws ultimately extended citizenship rights to their freedmen in 1885, but the Chickasaws continued to refuse until the inclusion of freedmen in the allotment of Indian Territory in the 1890s rendered the citizenship question moot. But the question of the legitimate role of freedmen did not go away. Today the five nations continue to debate the rights of the descendants of freedmen, an enduring legacy of the Civil War.

The Civil War experiences of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole Nations reflect the broader contours of their histories. Cultures rooted in the South, treaty relationships with the United States, and factionalism precipitated by outsiders have shaped their past and continue to affect the lives of their citizens.

Sharing Heritage

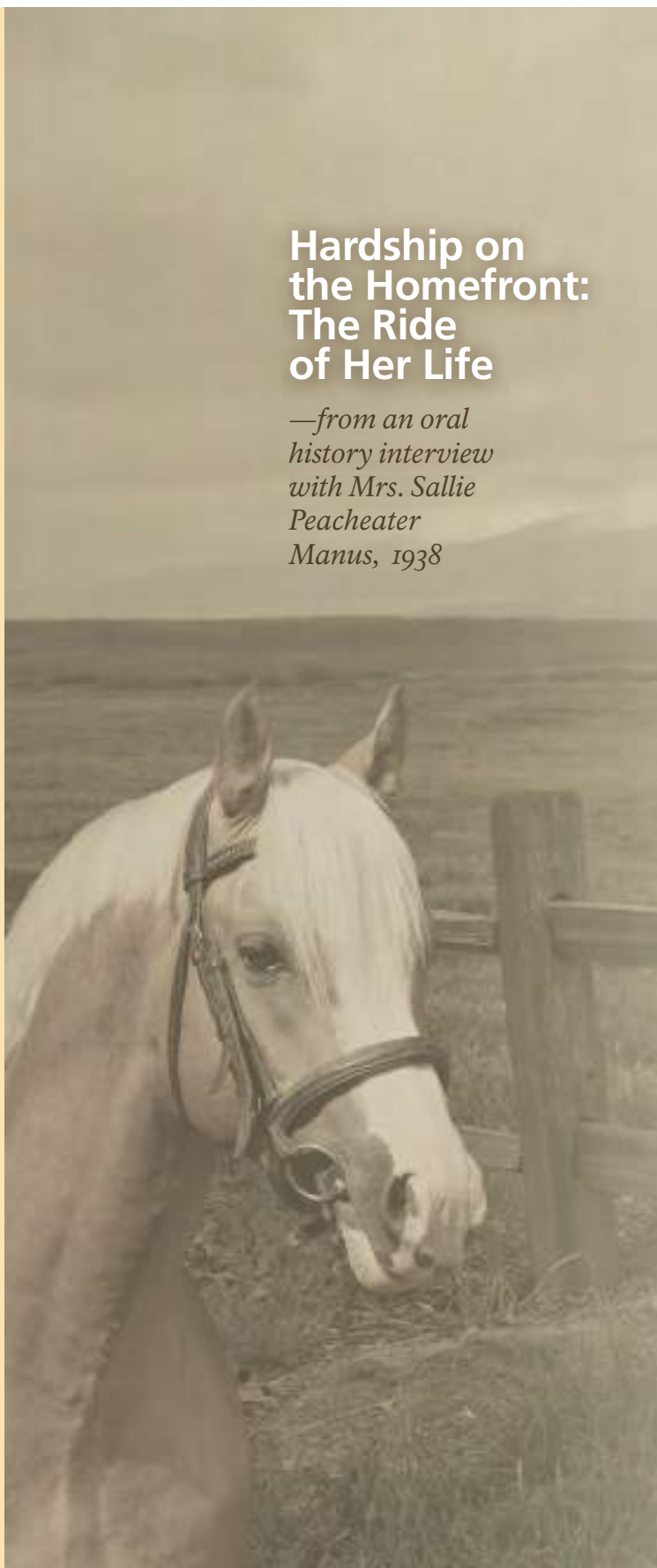
Dr. Richard L. Allen, Policy Analyst and Historian, and member of the Cherokee Nation, provided the story of Mrs. Sallie Peach eater Manus, whose Cherokee family supported the Union during the Civil War. It was originally recorded by the Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma in 1938.

Dr. Allen first became interested in the Cherokee Nation's connection to the Civil War when he read Rifles for Watie by Harold Keith as a boy. He notes that, "It provided me with an orientation to the Cherokee Nation's participation in the American Civil War in Indian Territory and made me more aware of the Cherokee Nation."

We hope that this book does the same for Indian youth of this and future generations.

Hardship on the Homefront: The Ride of Her Life

—from an oral history interview with Mrs. Sallie Peach eater Manus, 1938



I was pushed along by a bunch of Confederate soldiers once to a spot to be shot. . . . One of the officers recognized me and said, "Here men, this war will not be won by killing the women, I want her released." This officer was a preacher and a nearby neighbor who had joined the southern army. That is all that saved my life.

Once I was warned by a [Confederate] soldier who had left his camp . . . that they [the Confederates] intended to raid my house early the next morning and take my ponies; money, food, clothing or anything they could find. I thanked the stranger . . . put my clothes on, took my bridles for my only little pony. . . . I talked to him and said, "Pony Babe, you come here to me. You got to make your best run of your dear life. Our enemy is after us." He seemed to understand my begging voice and submitted very quickly and I took him to the house and I fed him the last food I had. . . . At daybreak I pinned \$50.00 to my apron and got on my pony, just as I saw figures of some men coming. I spoke to Babe, "Hurry Babe." He was such a tiny pony that I could almost touch the ground with my feet. I heard the soldiers whoop and the race was on. I heard a few shots fired at me and Babe and I couldn't tell whether I was gaining or losing for awhile, but Babe seemed to be just warming up to the race as we mounted first one hill and then another. I used the instructions my father had given me years before, as to what to do in a race of that kind. He had told me to never kick a horse with your heels but use your voice by talking to your mount or using a small limb on the shoulder, because kicking your mount only shortened the pony's breath. Anyway I out ran my enemies. I ran . . . to a [friend's house], though she was a Confederate supporter. I jumped off my perspiring and panting horse, and fell on her porch. She ran out excited to death, and I muttered out my reason for my presence and she said, "Give me here that money. They won't rob me for I am a Confederate." I shoved her the money and sure enough we got by with it.

This tree, planted by Cherokee landowners Redbird and Sarah Ellen Harris in 1858, has been witness to the ravages of war and progress toward peace.

LISA LARUE-BAKER



Connecting Past to Present Confederate Fort Davis

by Lisa LaRue-Baker

Redbird and Sarah Ellen Harris, Cherokees from Georgia, settled near present-day Muskogee, Oklahoma in 1858. The family brought a Catalpa tree sapling, which they planted on their property, and which stands today as a “witness tree” to an important part of the Civil War in Indian Territory—Confederate Fort Davis.

Fort Davis, named for President Jefferson C. Davis, was established in November 1861 by Brig. Gen. Albert Pike, commander of the Confederate Department of Indian Territory. Pike negotiated with Harris, who became a colonel in the Confederate Army, to use his property with its strategic location, directly across the Arkansas River from Union Fort Gibson. Harris sent the women and children of the family south of the Red River for safety during the war. Pike envisioned the fort as the headquarters for the Confederacy’s Indian Department. Rumors state that the Confederacy spent nearly \$1,000,000 to build barracks, a commissary, stables, and a number of other buildings on about eight acres of the Harris property.

Another advantage, and the centerpiece for the fort, was a pre-Columbian Indian Mound from which the Confederates could observe the activities at Fort Gibson. Stories were passed down that both sides constantly fired cannons at each other across the river, night and day. From their vantage point, the Confederates planned a raid on the Union’s herds, capturing more than 1,000 mules and horses. The Indian forces at Fort Davis also participated in the Battle of Pea Ridge.

Lisa LaRue-Baker and her husband John restored this home which was built by her relative, Cheasquah Harris. The original section of the house was part of Confederate Fort Davis.

LISA LARUE-BAKER & JOHN BAKER

Col. Redbird Harris

LILLIAN HARRIS WILSON



On December 27, 1862, Union Gen. W.A. Phillips led over 1,200 Indian troops from Fort Gibson across the river, capturing and burning Fort Davis. The attack occurred early in the morning while the soldiers were sleeping. It took a while before their leaders could rally them. In the end many of the Confederate defenders perished.

As late as the 1940s, people unearthed uniform buttons, spent shots, and other items from the war. Further, Cheasquah Harris, Redbird's son, stated in 1924 that plowing had unearthed hundreds of bodies of men. The site of Fort Davis was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.

Today, the Harris property is mostly developed. One family member owns the property where the mound is located and another family member owns the restored 1800s home of Cheasquah Harris. On a portion of the property still retained by family, there are several wells—one was dug by Union forces—and a family cemetery which also contains several Confederate soldiers whose bodies were unearthed around 1900, and were buried by the family in the plot.

Remembering and Healing



My tribe, the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, was an integral part of the Civil War. Even though I am Keetoowah and we fought with the Union, I live on the site of Confederate Fort Davis in Muskogee, where Confederate native soldiers were stationed by permission from my family. Thousands of lives were lost on the property and around my home. I live this history every day not only in my home, but in my job as Acting Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. The continuing factionalism that exists here in Indian country is a result and remnant of the events leading up to and during the Civil War. Learning the stories of our past can continue the healing process today.

AMY V. SIMMONS

2013

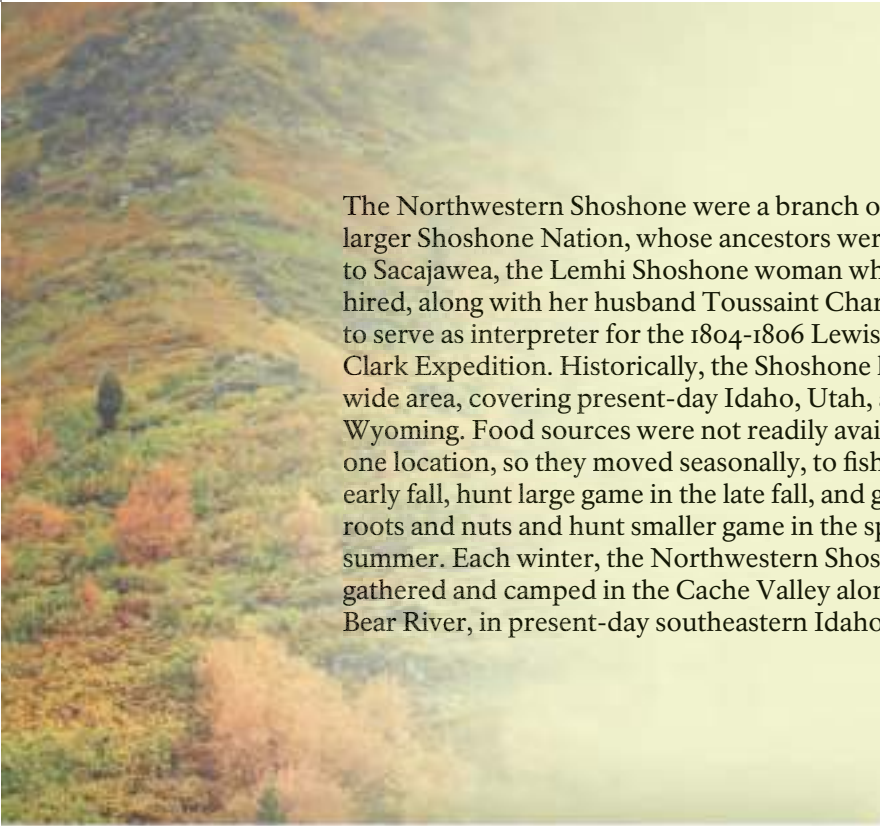
The Bear River Massacre

Mae Timbimboo Parry (1919-2007)

Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation

edited by Robert K. Sutton

The Bear River Massacre of the Northwestern Shoshone Indians by California Volunteers on January 29, 1863, has been described as “the first, the worst, and the most forgotten” of all Indian massacres. The brutality, loss of 250 to 400—perhaps more—Indian men, women, and children in far-away Idaho during the American Civil War received barely a ripple of news coverage in the East, and has since been relegated to the back pages, if mentioned at all, in the chronicles of atrocities inflicted upon American Indians.



The Northwestern Shoshone were a branch of the larger Shoshone Nation, whose ancestors were cousins to Sacajawea, the Lemhi Shoshone woman who was hired, along with her husband Toussaint Charbonneau, to serve as interpreter for the 1804-1806 Lewis and Clark Expedition. Historically, the Shoshone lived in a wide area, covering present-day Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming. Food sources were not readily available in one location, so they moved seasonally, to fish in the early fall, hunt large game in the late fall, and gather roots and nuts and hunt smaller game in the spring and summer. Each winter, the Northwestern Shoshone gathered and camped in the Cache Valley along the Bear River, in present-day southeastern Idaho.



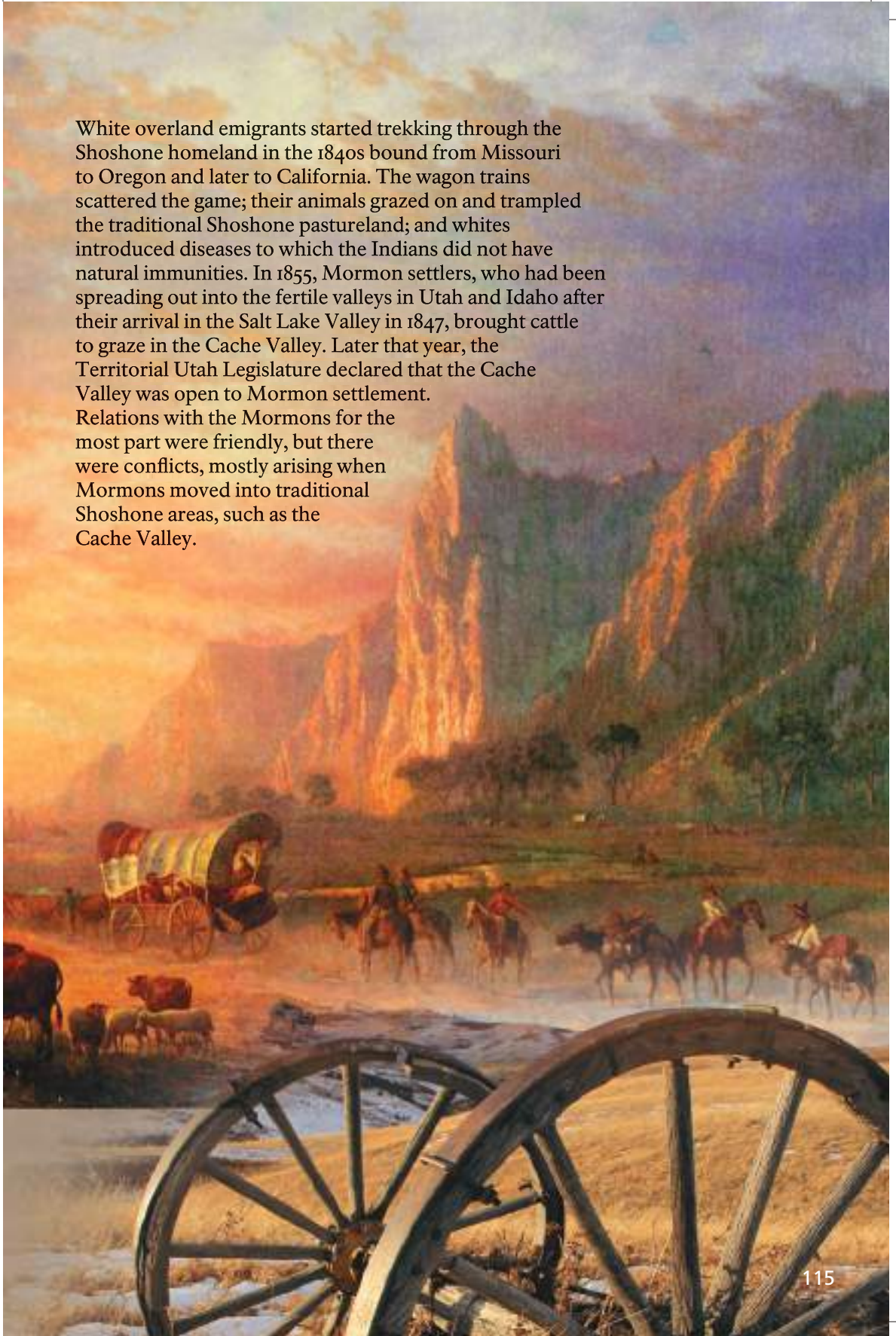
THE WALTERS MUSEUM



In the mid-1800s, wagon trains with white emigrants came through the Shoshone homeland along the Oregon, California, and Mormon trails.

ALBERT BIERSTADT

White overland emigrants started trekking through the Shoshone homeland in the 1840s bound from Missouri to Oregon and later to California. The wagon trains scattered the game; their animals grazed on and trampled the traditional Shoshone pastureland; and whites introduced diseases to which the Indians did not have natural immunities. In 1855, Mormon settlers, who had been spreading out into the fertile valleys in Utah and Idaho after their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, brought cattle to graze in the Cache Valley. Later that year, the Territorial Utah Legislature declared that the Cache Valley was open to Mormon settlement. Relations with the Mormons for the most part were friendly, but there were conflicts, mostly arising when Mormons moved into traditional Shoshone areas, such as the Cache Valley.



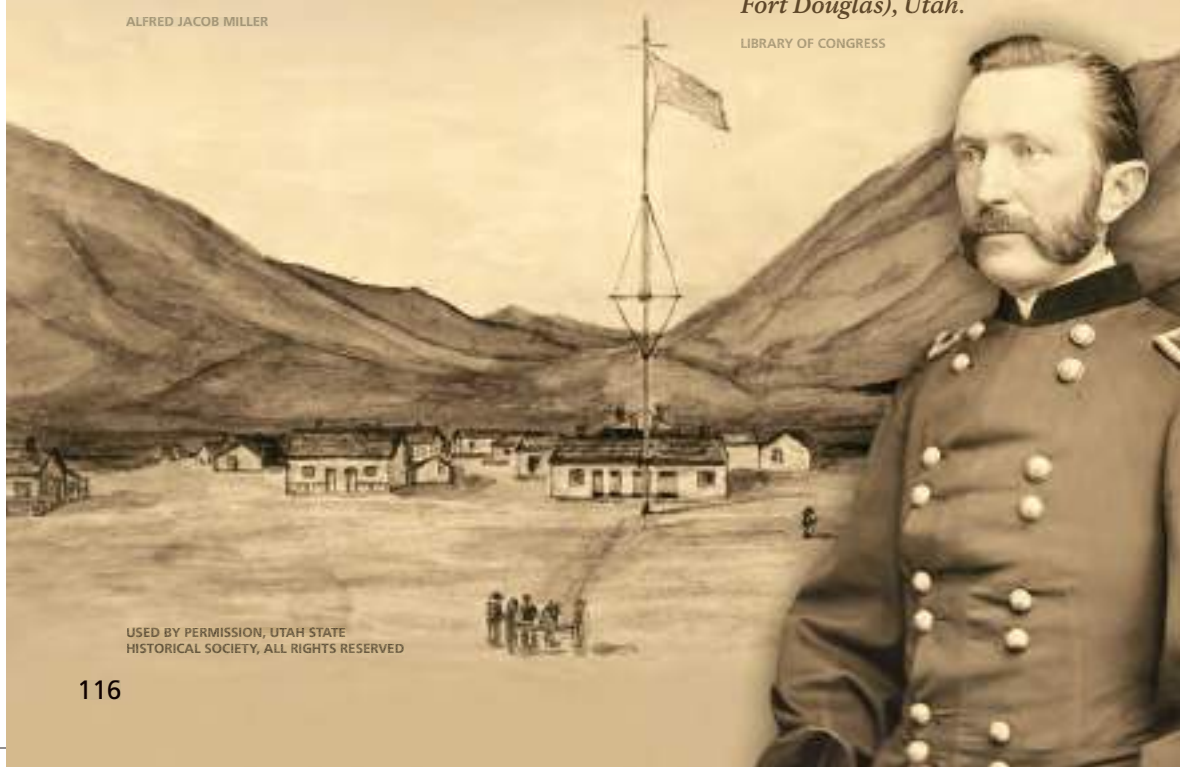


The 1862 Gold Rush in Montana heightened Indian-white tensions in the area. Ironically, Sacajawea's infant son, Jean Baptiste Charbonneau, who traveled on his mother's back with Lewis and Clark, was among those who, as an adult, flocked to these gold fields. He died in 1866 while en route there.

ALFRED JACOB MILLER

Col. Patrick Connor and the 3rd California Volunteer Infantry headquartered at Camp Douglas (later Fort Douglas), Utah.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



USED BY PERMISSION, UTAH STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



As more white immigrants moved into the area, and as the Northwestern Shoshone were squeezed into smaller land areas, the delicate balance of hunting and gathering food was disrupted, and as their way of life was threatened, there were more conflicts with whites. Many settlers who had settled in and near the Cache Valley felt threatened by the Shoshone, particularly when they camped in the valley during the winter. Finally, when gold was discovered on Grasshopper Creek in present-day Montana in the summer of 1862, miners from all over the West flocked to the discovery, which was the richest since the California Gold Rush. Salt Lake City became the main departure point, and the road to the diggings went directly through Northwestern Shoshone land. Indian-white tensions boiled over, with attacks on miners by Indians and by miners on Indians.

Before gold was discovered in Montana, and before Indian-white tensions intensified, the federal government requested the governor of California to raise a regiment of volunteers that would be sent to Utah, with the main purpose of protecting the overland mail route and the recently completed transcontinental telegraph lines from possible Indian attacks. In the summer of 1861, California Governor John G. Downey asked Patrick Connor, an immigrant from Ireland, former army officer, and veteran of the Mexican War to recruit and lead the volunteers. Connor recruited soldiers from his home town of Stockton and the surrounding area. By July 1862, Colonel Connor and his regiment of 850 volunteers had left Stockton for Salt Lake City, arriving in October and establishing their headquarters at Fort Douglas. Connor and many of his volunteers were hostile to native populations, and some expressed frustration that they were sent to protect settlers from Indians rather than being sent east to fight Confederates.

During the late fall and early winter, the volunteers had several encounters with Northwestern Shoshone in and near the Cache Valley, but the Shoshone were able to maneuver into defensive positions, and the engagements were mostly inconsequential for both sides. In early January 1863, tensions mounted as reports arrived in Salt Lake City that Northwestern Shoshones had killed two expressmen carrying messages from Montana to Salt Lake as well as 10 miners who had accidentally stumbled into the Shoshone winter camp on the Bear River. Both reports were exaggerated, but Colonel Connor decided to plan his attack on the Northwestern Shoshone for later that month.

Mae Timbimboo Parry

The following description of the massacre was passed down from Yeager Timbimboo, who was twelve years old in 1863, and survived the massacre, to his granddaughter, Mae Timbimboo Parry.



Ms. Parry (1919-2007) recorded the story as an appendix to Brigham D. Madsen's The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985). The description is edited by Robert K. Sutton, and is included here with permission from the University of Utah Press.

THE PARRY FAMILY

The Shoshone Indians were a large nation of Indians and they lived and traveled over a large territory. The Eastern Shoshones, under Chief Washakie, lived in the Wyoming area. Chief Washakie was known as their head chief. He was known all over the western country as one of the most intelligent and able Indian chiefs.

Chief Washakie had several sub-chiefs under his leadership. Among these was Chief Sagwitch Timbimboo and Chief Bear Hunter, leaders of the Northwestern Shoshone. These two leaders saw the entry of Brigham Young in the Salt Lake Valley. They knew from the actions of the pioneers that they wanted to be friends, so they welcomed the pioneers and their leaders in the Shoshone country.

The Northwestern Shoshones traveled with the changing seasons. They looked upon the earth not just as a place to live, but they called the earth their mother. They gathered pine nuts in western Utah and Nevada and fished on the Salmon River in the fall, then moved on to Wyoming to hunt buffalo, elk, moose, and antelope. In the spring, they gathered seeds, berries, and roots and hunted for small game in Utah. Every winter they settled in the Cache Valley along the Bear River in Southeastern Idaho.

A few weeks before the massacre of January 29, 1863, the Shoshones all gathered together near Bear River, at the Indian camping ground, and held what is referred to as the Warm Dance. This certain dance was to bring in the warm weather and drive out the cold. If Col. Patrick E. Connor [the commander who would lead the attack on the Shoshones on January 29] had only known the ways of the Red Man, he would have been able to kill thousands of Indians instead of hundreds. If the settlers had only known the nature and customs of the Indians, they would have sent for Colonel Connor and his men the first week of January.

The site of the Northwestern Shoshone winter camp at Bear River.

ROXIE CROUCH

USED BY PERMISSION, UTAH STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

*Chief Washakie's sub-chiefs
Sagwitch Timbimboo and
Bear Hunter saw the entry
of Brigham Young and the
Mormons into the Salt Lake
Valley and established
friendly relations with them.*

Shoshone Chief Washakie

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



As the Northwestern Shoshones were settling down from visiting and reminiscing, a few Indian trouble makers decided to go and steal some horses and cattle. They went into a nearby farmer's corral, drove the animals out, and headed north. Along the way, they killed the cattle and ate them. At about the same time some miners and Indians got into a fight and the miners were killed. These Indians were not from the Northwestern Shoshone group, but had come from Chief Pocatello's band [Pocatello was chief of the Hukandeka band of Shoshones]. The miners' horses and belongings were taken into their part of the country. The third incident the Indians believe led to the massacre was another fight between some white boys and some Indians, in which two white boys and two Indian boys were killed. Again, they were not Northwestern Shoshones involved in this incident. Because they were Indians, everything was blamed on them.

On the night of January 27, 1863, one of the older men by the name of Tin dup, foresaw the calamity which was about to take place. In his dream he saw his people being killed by the pony soldiers. He told the Indians of his dream and told them to move out of the area. "Do it now, tonight!" he said. Some of the families believed Tin dup's dream and moved, thus sparing their lives.

In the meantime a white friend of the Indians came to the camp and told them that the nearby settlers had made plans to get rid of the Northwestern Shoshones. Because of this, the Indians knew for days that Colonel Connor was going to come after them. They did not know, however, that the colonel would fire first and not ask questions.

Chief Sagwitch, being an early riser, got up just as usual on the morning of January 29, 1863. He left his teepee and stood outside surveying the area around the camp. The hills to the east of their camp were covered with a steaming mist. The mist crept lower down the hill and all of a sudden Chief Sagwitch realized what was happening. The soldiers from Camp Douglas from Salt Lake City had arrived.

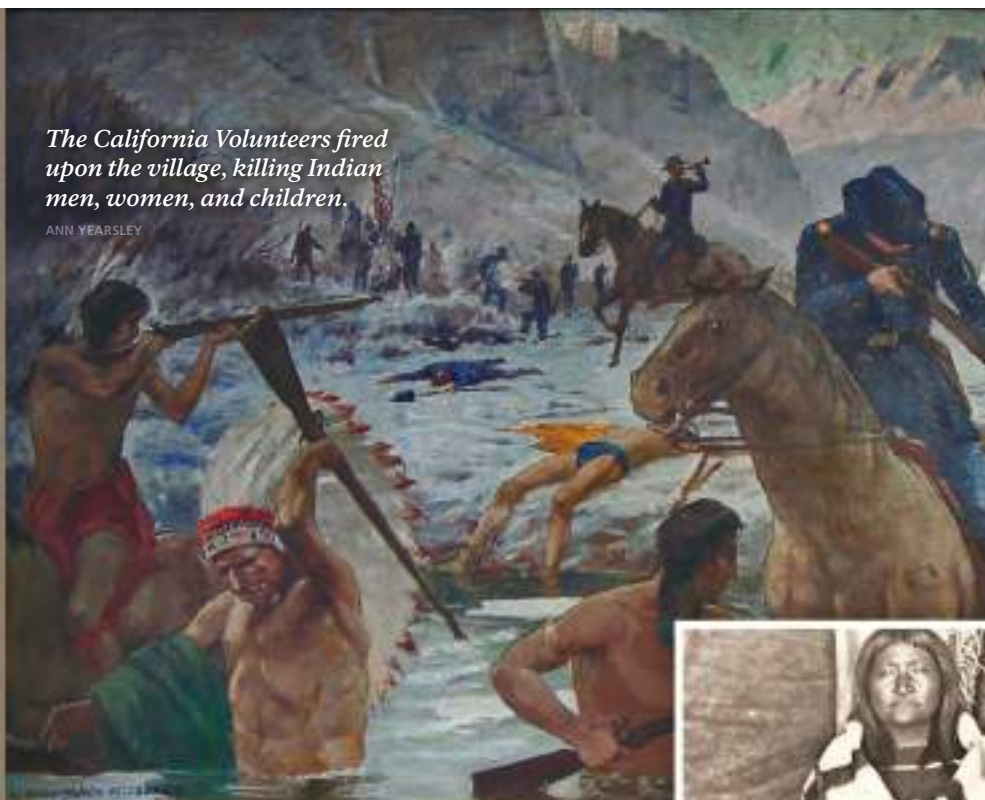


*Chief Sagwitch
Timbimboo and
his wife.*

COURTESY OF THE
CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The California Volunteers fired upon the village, killing Indian men, women, and children.

ANN YEARSLEY



The chief was not surprised. He started calling to the sleeping Indians. They quickly gathered their bows and arrows, tomahawks and a few rifles. Chief Sagwitch shouted to his people not to shoot first. He thought that perhaps this military man was a just and wise man. He thought that the colonel would ask for the guilty men, whom he would have immediately turned over to the soldiers. He felt that the rest of them would be saved by doing this. He told his people to be brave and calm. Many of the Indians ran toward the river and dropped into the snow. They knew that they were not all guilty but they had no choice but to fight for their lives if attacked.

Without so much as asking the Indians for the guilty party, the colonel and his men began to fire on the Indians. But what was an arrow compared to the muskets of the army? The Indians were being slaughtered like wild rabbits. Indian men, women, children, and babies were being slaughtered left and right. No butcher could have murdered any better than Colonel Connor and his vicious California Volunteers. Most of the action took place along the river banks and among the willows.



Many entire families were killed in the attack.

USED BY PERMISSION, UTAH
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



The massacre started early in the morning, according to the Indians, and lasted all day. The Bear River that was frozen solid a few moments before was now starting to flow. The Northwestern Shoshones were jumping into the river and trying to escape by swimming across the river. Ray Diamond, a nephew of Chief Sagwitch, was successful in his escape attempt. He swam across the river and found shelter away from the battle. He lived to be over one hundred years old. He told and retold the massacre of the Battle of Bear River to the younger generations until the time he died.

Many Indian women also jumped into the river and swam with babies upon their backs. Most of them died. One Indian lady, Anzee chee, was being chased by the soldiers. She jumped into the river and went under an overhanging bank. By keeping her head up under the bank she was saved. She watched the battle from her hiding place at the same time trying to nurse the shoulder and breast wounds she received. Anzee chee carried the scars from her wounds for the rest of her life.

The Indians who were still alive were calling to their chief to escape so he could be saved. Chief Sagwitch escaped with a wound in his hand, after having two horses shot from under him. Another Indian escaped by holding onto the tail of the horse Chief Sagwitch rode across Bear River.

Yeager Timbimboo [Mae Timbimboo Parry's grandfather] or Da boo Zee (cotton tail rabbit) a son of Chief Sagwitch, was about twelve years old and remembered the fight very well. He retold the story several times a year. He told of feeling excited as any young boy would have during the fighting. He felt as if he was flying around. He dashed in and out among the whizzing bullets but was not hit. He heard cries of pain and saw death all around him. The little Indian boy kept running around until he came upon a little grass teepee that was so full of people that it was actually moving along the ground. Inside the grass hut Da boo Zee found his grandmother, Que he gup. She suggested they go outside and lie among the dead. She feared the soldiers were going to set the teepee on fire any moment. The boy obeyed and pretended to be dead. "Keep your eyes closed at all times," his grandmother whispered. "Maybe in this way our lives may be saved." Yeager Timbimboo and his grandmother lay on the freezing battlefield all day. At the end of the day the soldiers were moving among the Indians in search of the wounded to put them out of their misery.

Yeager, being a curious boy, wanted to watch the fighting once more. This nearly cost him his life. A soldier came upon him and saw that he was alive and looking around. The military man stood over Yeager, his gun pointing at the young boy's head ready to fire. The soldier stared at the boy and the boy at the soldier. The second time the soldier lowered his rifle the little boy knew his time to die was near. The soldier then lowered his gun and a moment later raised it again. For some reason he could not complete his task.

After the massacre, Chief Sagwitch's son Da boo Zee (Yeager) played dead on the frozen battlefield to avoid being shot. A soldier pointed his gun at Yeager's head several times but did not shoot.

KEN LAAGER





Toward evening the field of massacre was silent, except for the cries of the wounded soldiers being carried away. The Northwestern Shoshones who had escaped watched as the wagons left the camp. As they drove off, the wagon wheels made a very mournful sound as they squeaked along the snow. Blood drippings could be seen along the trail they left. The Indians had done some damage to the military with the little they had. The Indians fought mostly by hand.

By nightfall the Indians who had escaped were cold, wet and hungry. There was no food to be found, for the soldiers had done a good job of scattering their food on the ground and setting fire to it. All of the teepees were burnt to the ground except one. The lone standing teepee looked as if it were made of a net [with all of the bullet holes]. This was the teepee of Chief Sagwitch and his family. After the soldiers had left, Chief Sagwitch made his way to his teepee. He opened the flap and found his wife lying there dead.

The Indians could not believe what had just taken place. Sagwitch was a very stunned and shocked man, stricken and sad at heart. He stood idly and mournfully gazed at the scene. He was remembering that just the day before their camp had been a happy place. He remembered the many seasons the Northwestern Shoshones had spent in and around Battle Creek on the Bear River. Dead Indian bodies were everywhere. The Indians realized they could not hold proper funeral services for their dead, so many were thrown into the still flowing Bear River. A water burial was better than having animals eat their bodies. Chief Sagwitch realized that there were two different worlds in which different people lived. One group was greedy and wanted everything. The other group only wanted to live and travel around their land as before. One group made their wishes and dreams come true by making themselves the conquerors and the other almost became a vanishing American.

*Connor
and the
California
Volunteers
were hailed as
heroes upon
their return to
Fort Douglas
after the
massacre.*

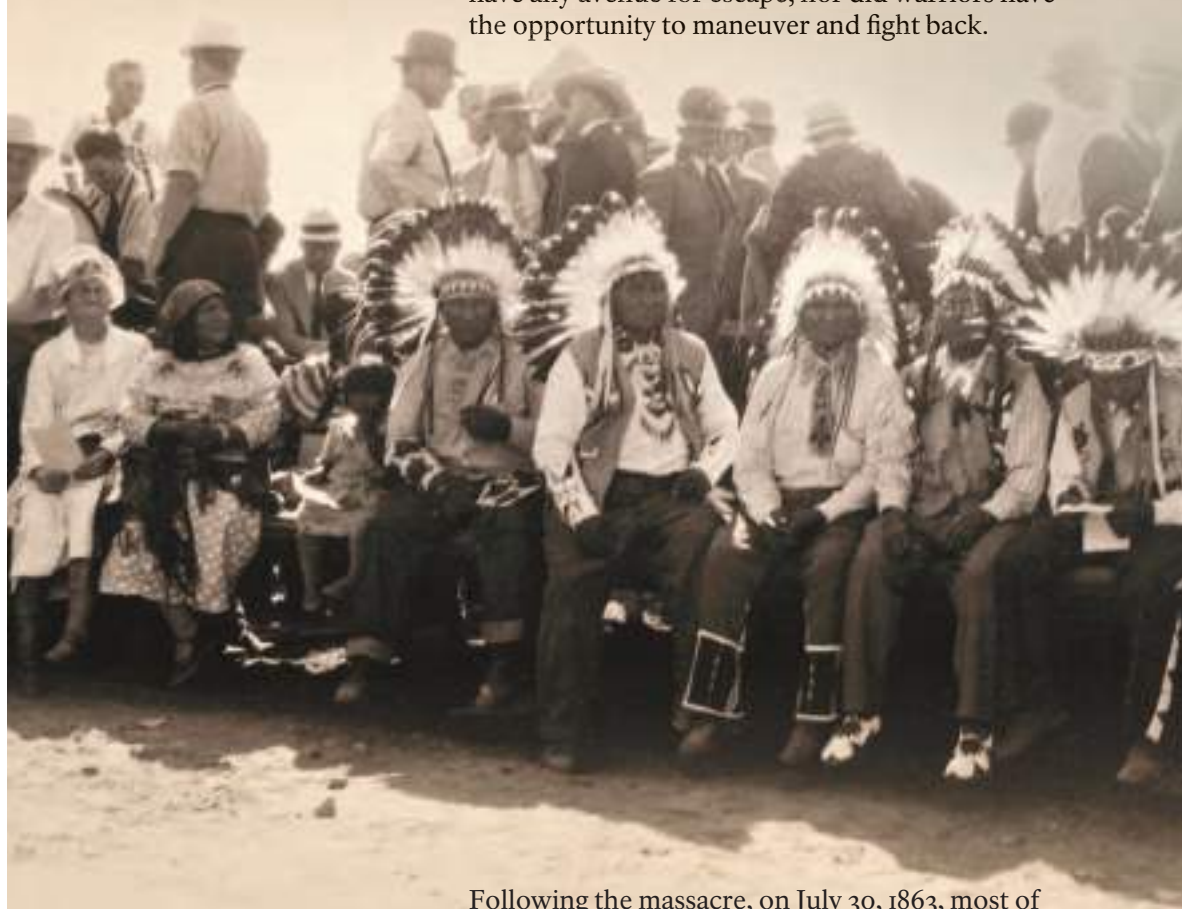
USED BY
PERMISSION, UTAH
STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY, ALL
RIGHTS
RESERVED



Some Northwestern Shoshone joined in the dedication of the monument at the massacre site in 1932.

THE PARRY FAMILY

Most accounts place the number of Northern Shoshone killed in the massacre at more than 250; some estimates list 400, or even more. Yet, in most history books on the subject of Indian massacres, the one at Bear River either is not included, or is referenced with only a sentence or two. In reality, more Indians were killed here than at Sand Creek, Washita, or Wounded Knee. Bear River also set a precedent for later massacres. Colonel Connor attacked in the dead of winter when the Shoshones had established their winter camp, and thus, did not have any avenue for escape, nor did warriors have the opportunity to maneuver and fight back.



Following the massacre, on July 30, 1863, most of the Northwestern Shoshone agreed to a treaty that allowed them to settle on the Fort Hall Reservation, where most of their descendants reside today. About 200 Northwestern Shoshone, however, sought refuge in the friendly Mormon community, and by 1875, many had joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, settling in the Malad Valley in present-day southeastern Idaho.



ROBERT SCOTT HORNING



Chief Sagwitch's grandson, Moroni Timbimboo, became a bishop in the Mormon church. He is pictured here (on the right) with Hitope Joshua in front of new Washakie Ward meetinghouse.

THE PARRY FAMILY

Today, the Fort Hall Reservation is the current home of about 6,000 enrolled Shoshone-Bannock tribal members who mostly live on or near the reservation. The reservation consists of 544,000 acres, reduced from the original 1.8 million acres. The tribes currently own 97% of the land within the reservation. The tribes manage their own schools, post office, grocery store, waste disposal, agriculture and commercial businesses, rural transits, casinos, and more. A recent economic impact study found that the Shoshone-Bannock tribal government, businesses, support agencies and lands generate more than 4,000 jobs and add \$330 million annually to the eastern Idaho economy.

Once called a battle, the encounter at Bear River was later acknowledged as a massacre. The site was designated as a national historic landmark on June 21, 1990.

NPS/NHL



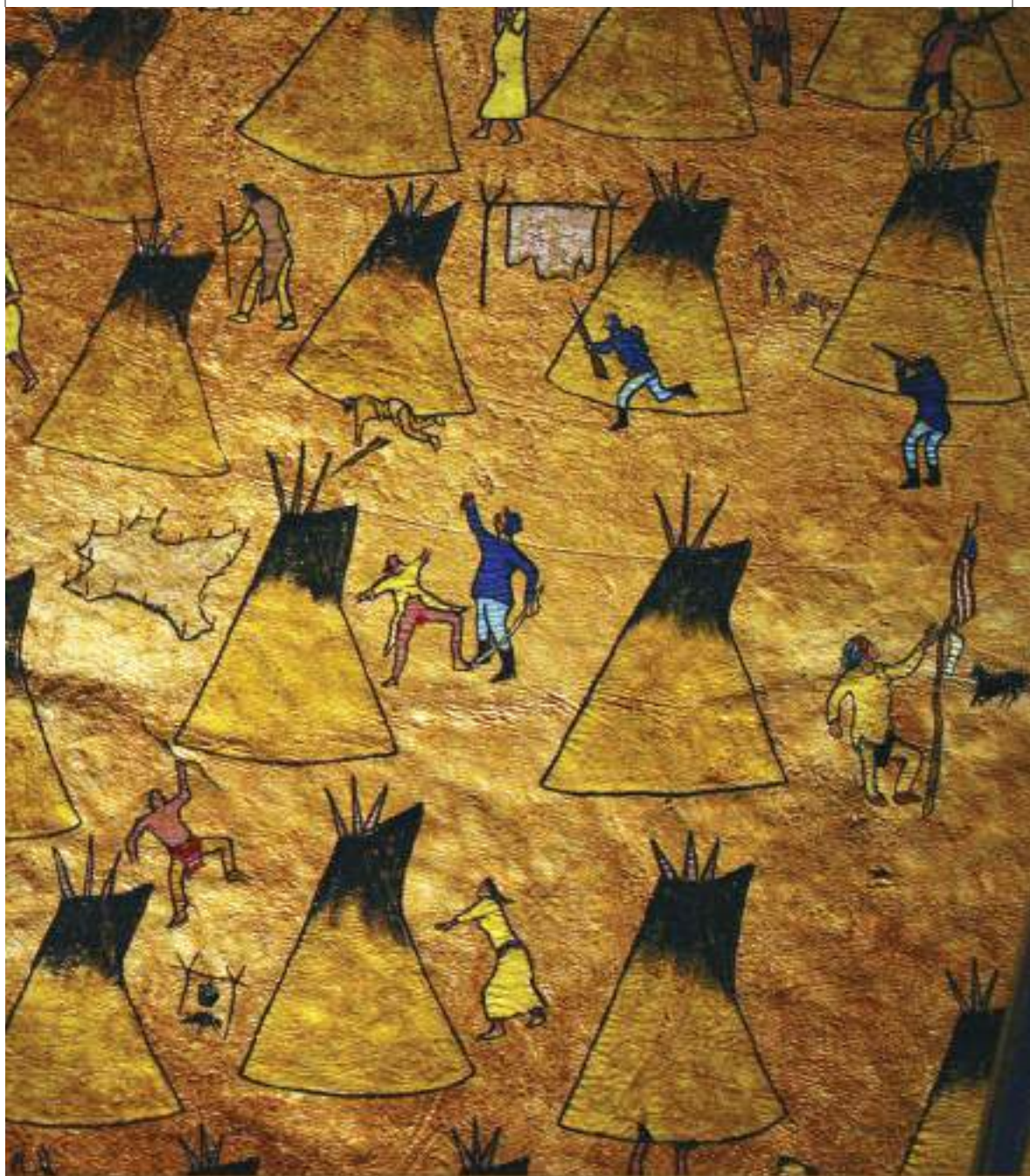


The Sand Creek Massacre

Gary L. Roberts, Professor Emeritus of History
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

On the morning of November 29, 1864, Col. John M. Chivington led nearly 700 US soldiers in an attack against a village of about 500 Cheyenne and Arapaho people camped along the banks of Sand Creek in southeastern Colorado. Although the Cheyennes and Arapahoes under Chiefs Black Kettle and Left Hand believed they were under the protection of the US Army, Colonel Chivington's troops killed about 200 people, mainly women, children, and the elderly. Condemned by three federal investigations, this attack was one of the most brutal atrocities against American Indians in American history.

On November 29, 1864, Gen. William T. Sherman's Union troops were pushing through central Georgia toward the sea. Gen. John Bell Hood's Confederate forces were closing in on Franklin, Tennessee, in a desperate attempt to divide John A. Schofield's army, and Union forces held the army of Northern Virginia at bay in the months-long siege of Petersburg. The tide had turned for the Union and their victory in the war seemed inevitable in spite of the costs yet to be paid. On that same morning, half a continent away, Union troops swarmed over the low bluffs which marked the course of Sand Creek in southeastern Colorado and slaughtered nearly 200 Cheyennes and Arapahoes. Though hardly more than a skirmish, when compared to the casualties on eastern battlefields, the Sand Creek Massacre would seize the attention of a nation locked in civil war and raise issues as ancient as humanity itself.



This depiction of the Sand Creek massacre was painted on buffalo hide by Northern Arapaho artist Eugene Ridgely, Sr. (Eagle Robe) whose great-grandfather survived the attack.

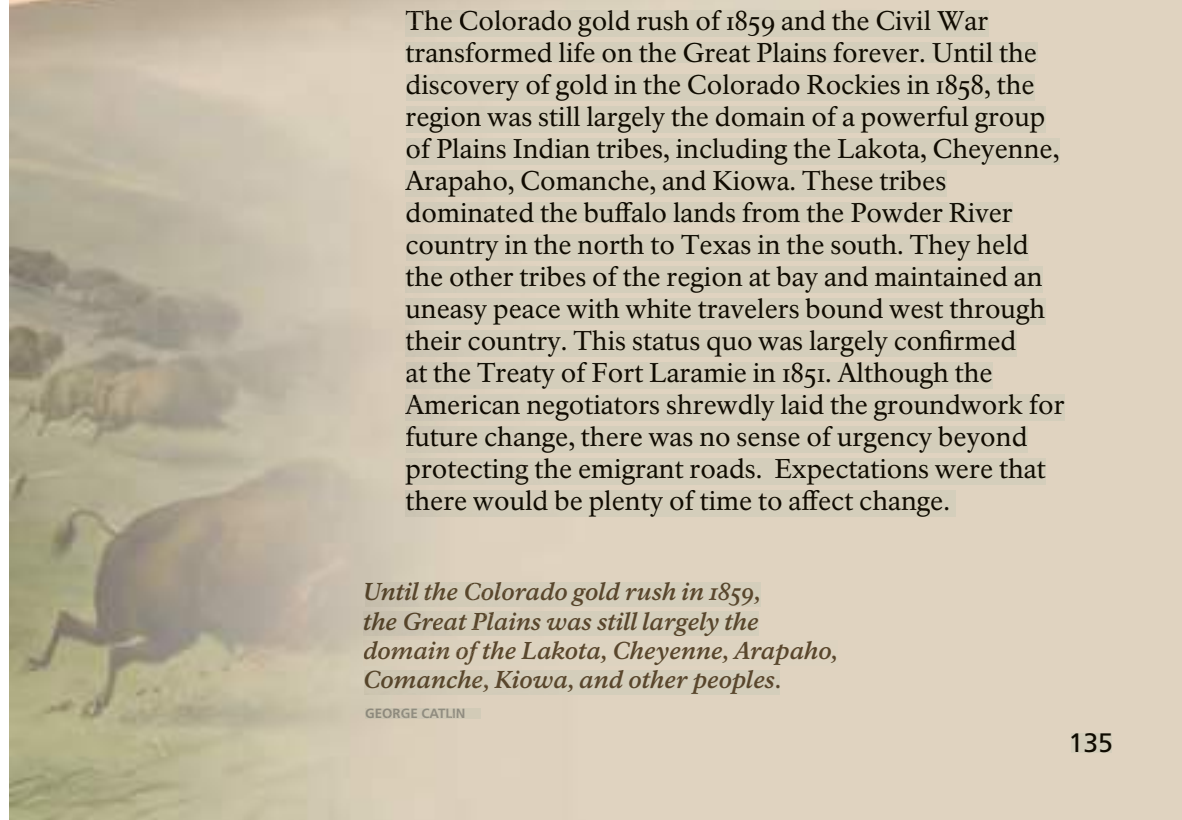
MICHAEL STRIZICK

Pages from History

This photograph of Arapaho and Cheyenne delegates from the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie, taken in St. Louis, Missouri, is from the album Jesuit Father Peter De Smet kept to chronicle his missionary work among American Indians in the West from 1821-1871. He gave the album as a gift to his friend, Moses Linton. The image is likely the earliest known photograph of chiefs from these tribes. Two of them, Tempest, Southern Arapaho (third from left), and White Antelope, Southern Cheyenne (fourth from left), would also sign the Treaty of Fort Wise ten years later in 1861.

MIDWEST JESUIT ARCHIVES, MISSOURI PROVINCE COLLECTION,
DE SMETIANA, MOSES LINTON ALBUM, PG 44





The Colorado gold rush of 1859 and the Civil War transformed life on the Great Plains forever. Until the discovery of gold in the Colorado Rockies in 1858, the region was still largely the domain of a powerful group of Plains Indian tribes, including the Lakota, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, and Kiowa. These tribes dominated the buffalo lands from the Powder River country in the north to Texas in the south. They held the other tribes of the region at bay and maintained an uneasy peace with white travelers bound west through their country. This status quo was largely confirmed at the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1851. Although the American negotiators shrewdly laid the groundwork for future change, there was no sense of urgency beyond protecting the emigrant roads. Expectations were that there would be plenty of time to affect change.

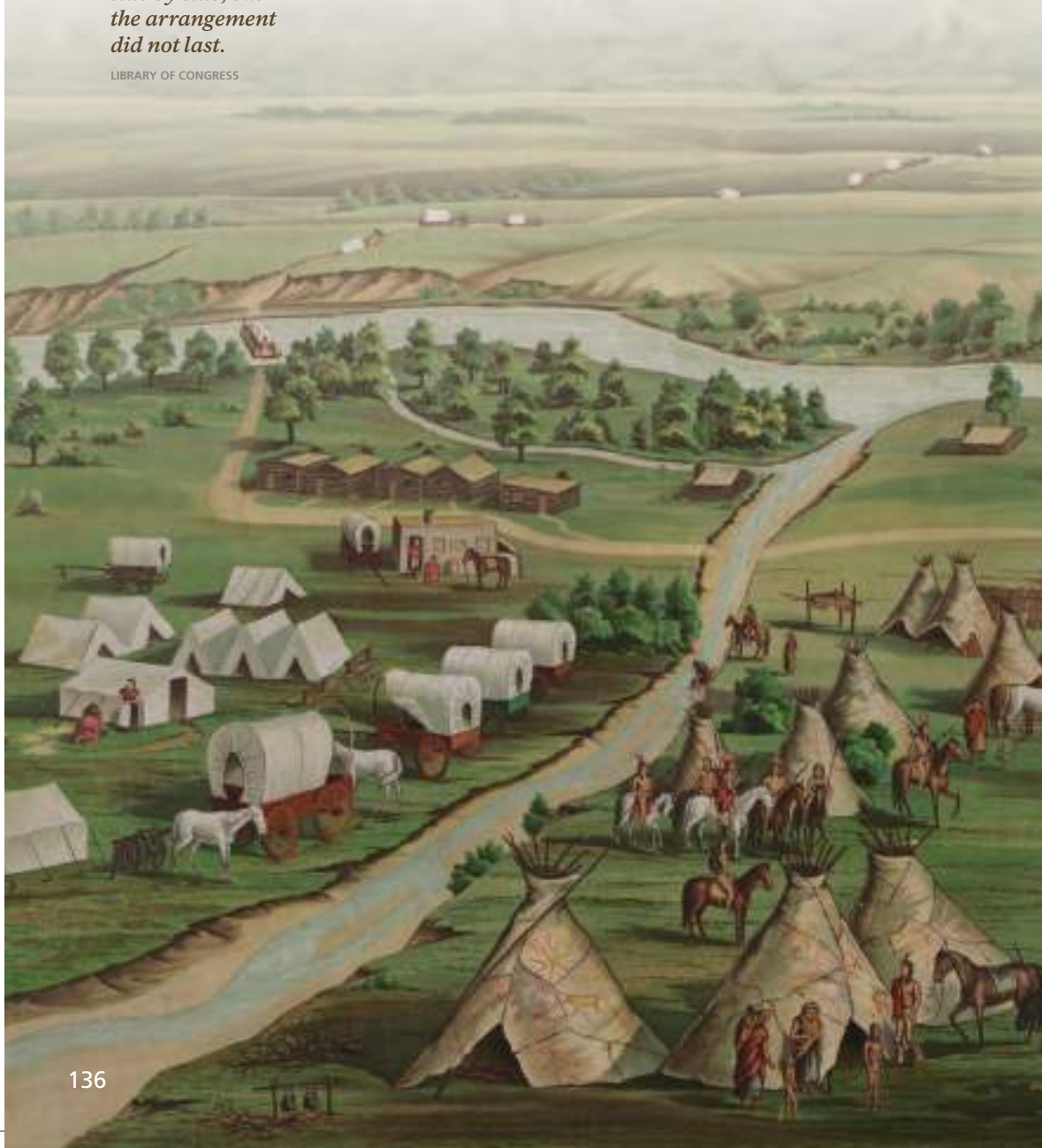
Until the Colorado gold rush in 1859, the Great Plains was still largely the domain of the Lakota, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, Kiowa, and other peoples.

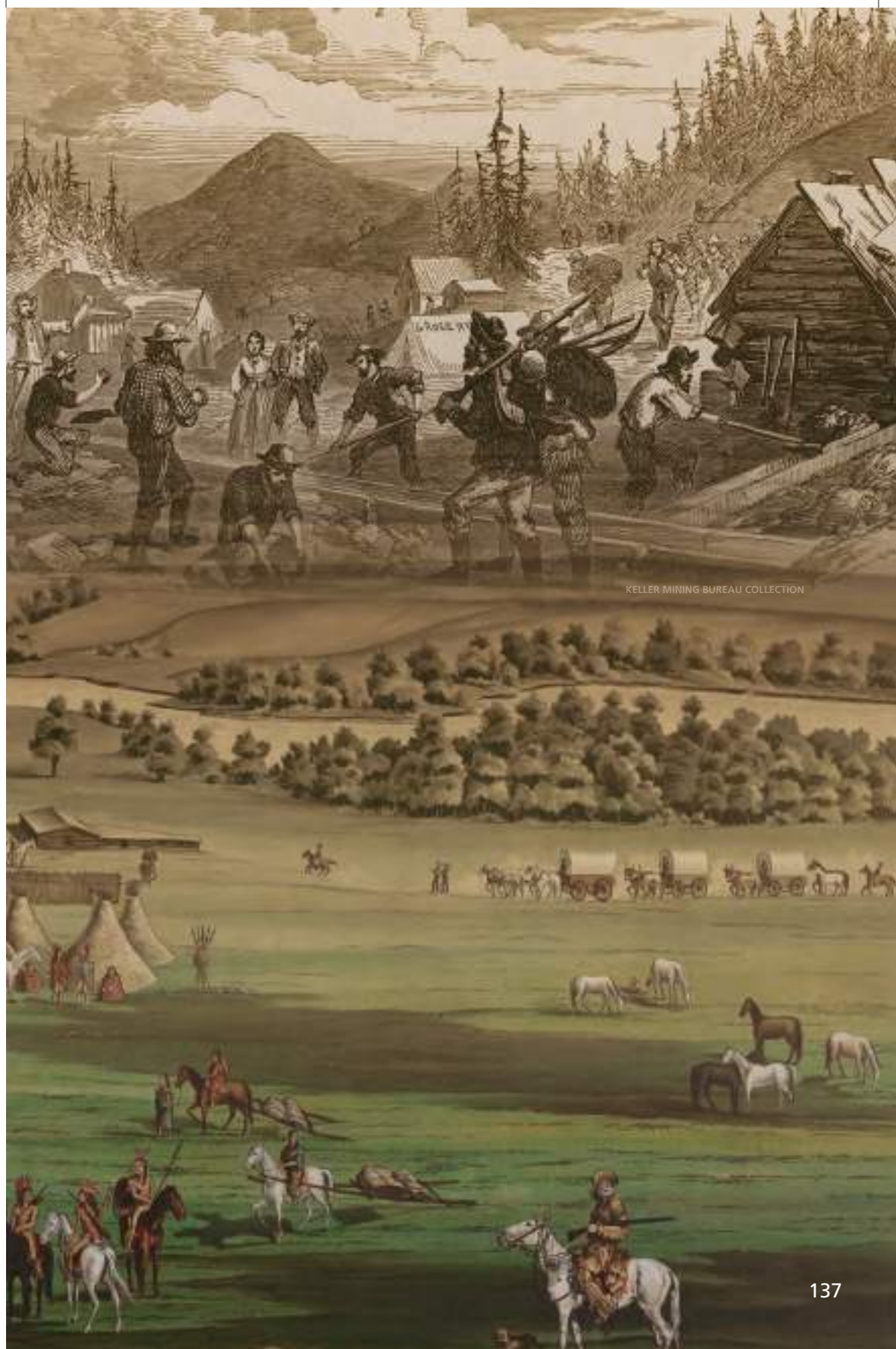
GEORGE CATLIN

For a time during the gold rush, the white settlers and the Arapahoes lived side by side, but the arrangement did not last.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Everything changed with the Colorado gold rush. Suddenly, the overland routes were filled with gold seekers and entrepreneurs rushing to cash in on the new El Dorado. As settlers flooded West, collision with the tribes was assured. More than 100,000 gold seekers scrambled up the front range of the Rocky Mountains, ignoring native rights while demanding federal protection for their trespass. Government officials, too, looked for advantage, rushing to officially organize the territory of Colorado and pushing for new treaties with the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and Utes.





KELLER MINING BUREAU COLLECTION

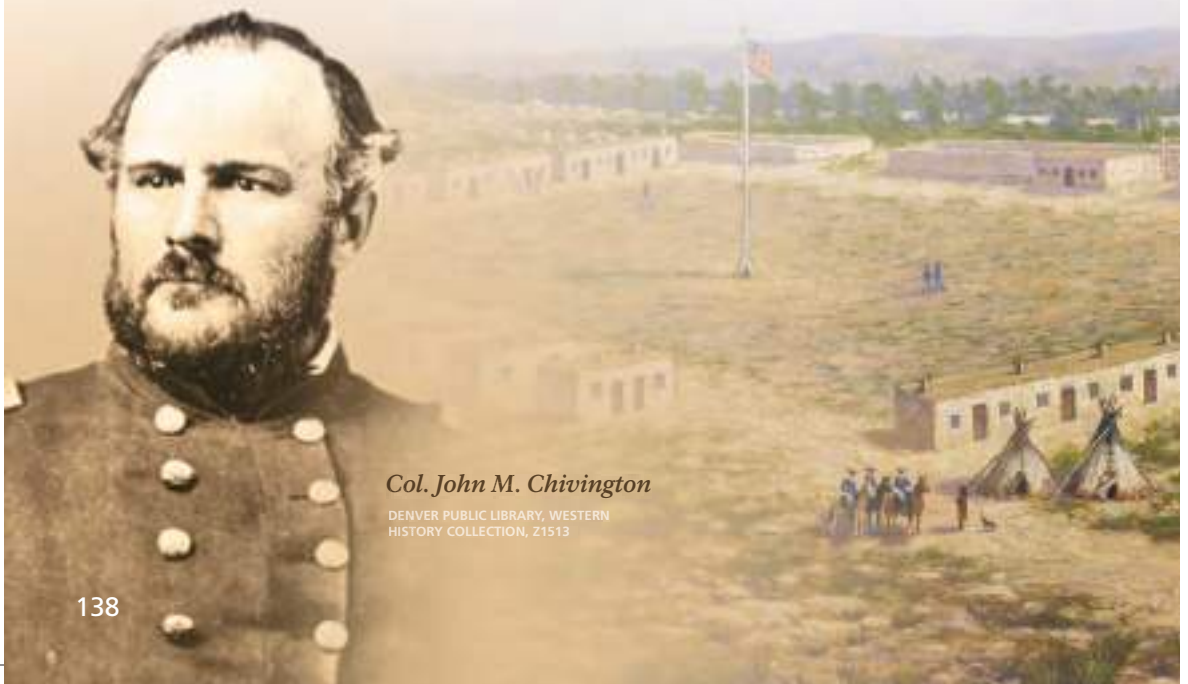
By the time the first shells fell on Fort Sumter, the scattered units of the regular army were moving east to form the core of the Union and Confederate armies. Little thought was given to the effect of these moves on the western territories like Colorado; but the impact was profound.

The old regular army had served a peacekeeping role, standing between the settlers and the native tribes as a kind of buffer. Now, however, military protection fell to the western states and territories. The “new” army was made up of citizen volunteers commanded by officers who often had little military experience. The new order was more than a change in competency; it also meant that the military shared the settlers’ interests. Many volunteers wanted Indian land and had little or no concern for the native peoples. Initially, though, territorial leadership gave little thought to a native threat. The men who joined the 1st Colorado Volunteer Infantry expected to fight the “secesh” (the contemporary slang for Confederates), not Indians.

Commanded by Col. John P. Slough, the 1st Colorado (the First) responded eagerly when ordered to Fort Union to face the Confederate invasion of New Mexico. Even though the regiment was seriously divided by quarrels between Slough and his senior officers, particularly John M. Chivington, Colorado troops fought well when the time came at Apache Canyon and Glorieta Pass near Santa Fe. In the wake of the victory, Colonel Slough headed east where he was rewarded with a brigadier’s star.

In February 1861, a handful of Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs signed the Treaty of Fort Wise, accepting a small reservation. For the chiefs and their tribes, it was a serious miscalculation.

HISTORY COLORADO



Col. John M. Chivington

DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY, WESTERN
HISTORY COLLECTION, Z1513

The command of the First passed to Col. John M. Chivington. The appointment was fateful—and fatal.

Colonel Chivington, formerly a Methodist minister and a giant storm center of a man, expected to move east to face Confederate threats in Kansas and Missouri. He was disappointed when the 2nd Colorado Volunteer Regiment was called east instead, and he, as commander of the Military District of Colorado, was left to patrol home territory and protect settlers against the Indians. For him, the problem was that there was no Indian threat. Chivington's troops were left to grumble and, as Col. Jesse H. Leavenworth put it, "to eat corn at \$4 a bushel." It was not a happy circumstance for a man anxious to win glory fighting for the Union.

Despite some pressures such as new wagon roads through the heart of Cheyenne and Arapaho lands between the Platte and the Arkansas rivers in western Kansas and eastern Colorado, the tribes were generally tractable. Most Cheyennes had not yet had significant contact with the invaders, and the Arkansas bands sought accommodation. In February 1861, a handful of Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs signed the Treaty of Fort Wise (Colorado), accepting a small, arid reservation. For the chiefs and their tribes, it was a serious miscalculation. They did not consider it binding on all of their people, nor did the government—at least for a time. That soon changed.

Yellow Wolf Seeks Peace

Yellow Wolf was among the first to see the advantages of trade with whites. In 1846, he urged Lt. James W. Abert, who produced this portrait, to convince the Americans to teach the Cheyenne to farm and raise livestock. Desiring peace, Yellow Wolf signed the Treaty of Fort Wise. He was later killed at Sand Creek.

J. W. ALBERT

Fort Wise, Colorado



Governor John Evans

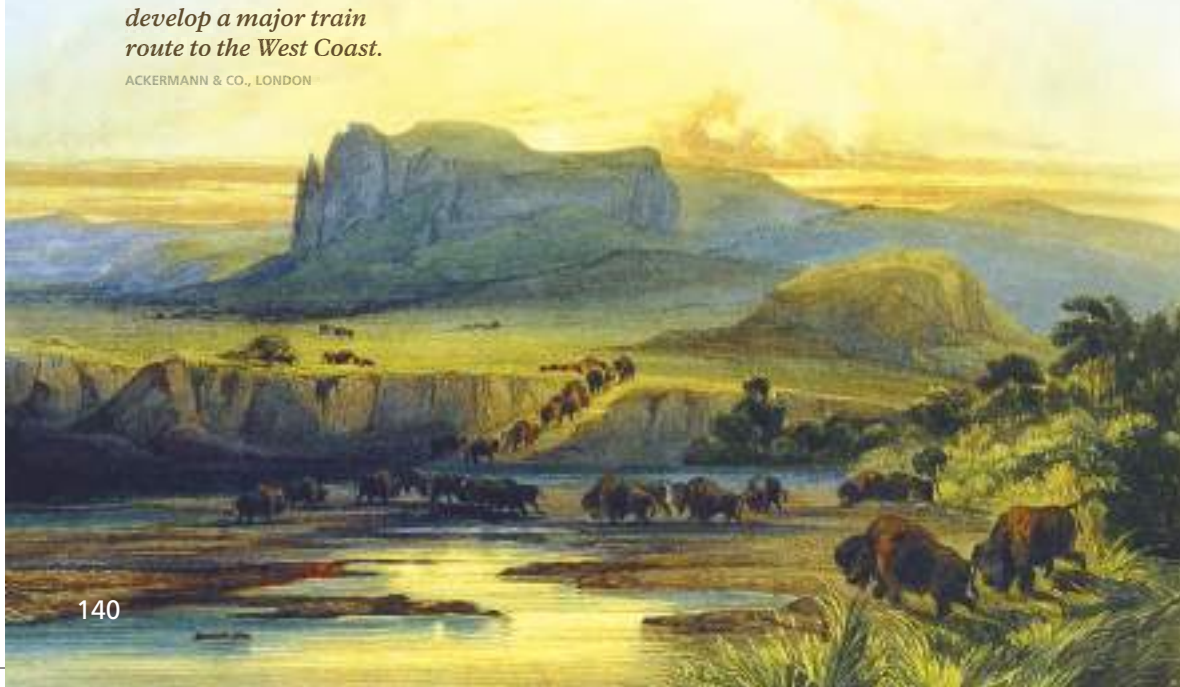
DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY, WESTERN
HISTORY COLLECTION, Z-2873

*Colorado Territory
Governor John Evans
imposed interpretations
of the existing treaties
that would serve his
charges to make
Colorado a state and
develop a major train
route to the West Coast.*

ACKERMANN & CO., LONDON

The governor of Colorado Territory was also Superintendent of Indian Affairs, responsible both for governing the territory and for protecting Indian rights. Conflicts left little doubt which responsibility had the higher priority. That would have been true under any circumstances, but the war in the East, already settling into a bloody stalemate unlike anything Americans had ever experienced, added new tensions. John Evans arrived to assume the role of governor in 1862. His instructions were to look to the possibility of making Colorado a state before the 1864 election and to find possible routes for a transcontinental railroad. With these orders, issues like white trespasses on American Indian land and the restriction of tribal movements became urgent matters.

Evans determined to impose interpretations on the existing laws and treaties that would serve his charges to transform Colorado into a state and develop a major route to the West Coast. He hoped that he could accomplish this goal peacefully, but he cared little about native concerns and assumed that the Indian tribes would yield to the “higher interests of civilization.” The Cheyenne and Arapaho refused to sign amendments to the Treaty of Fort Wise or even to accept it as legitimate. The plain fact was that lands north of the South Platte River, the lands where most of the Colorado settlements were located, had never been ceded at all. This territory still belonged to the Indians.





This French lithograph may be the only contemporary image of Abraham Lincoln with American Indians.

LINCOLN LIBRARY MUSEUM, FORT WAYNE,
INDIANA IMP. CH. CHARDON AINE—
PARIS. FERD DELANNOY SC.

Evans decided, however, to force all of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes onto the reservation created by the Treaty of Fort Wise. One problem was that these tribes gave him few excuses to press the matter. There were a few clashes, but the chiefs made a strong effort to keep the peace. In March 1863, a delegation of chiefs—Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, and one Caddo—traveled to Washington, D.C., where they met with President Abraham Lincoln before returning to Colorado, duly impressed by the wonder and power of all they had seen.

In March 1863, a delegation of chiefs traveled to Washington, D.C., where they met with President Lincoln. Pictured (left to right) are US Indian Agent Samuel Colley and Chiefs Lean Bear, War Bonnet, and Standing-in-the-Water.

BLACKMORE COLLECTION,
THE BRITISH MUSEUM



After a series of skirmishes between the army and the Indians, Cheyenne Chief Lean Bear rode out from the Smoky River encampment to seek peace with approaching soldiers. Colorado troops opened fire, killing him.

DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY, WESTERN
HISTORY COLLECTION, X-33742

On July 9, 1863, a Cheyenne named Little Heart was killed by a guard at Fort Larned, in western Kansas. Col. Jesse Leavenworth quickly dispatched runners to recall troops in the field and called a council of the principal chiefs in the area. His quick action prevented the matter from escalating, but it was increasingly clear that the unstable situation on the plains required close management by both civilian and military authorities. Unfortunately, Colonel Chivington seemed little disposed to do anything, and Governor Evans's interest was in finding a legal way to resolve the "land question" without actively engaging in negotiations with the tribes. After a half-hearted effort to meet with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes in September 1863, Evans became convinced that he had to find another way to resolve the situation.

Two factors would affect developments in Colorado in 1864. The first was that Cheyenne and Arapaho movements were closely watched. The other was that Governor Evans was determined to clear land titles in order to achieve his larger political objectives. It was a deadly combination. It predisposed government authorities to look for the worst possible explanation of Indian movements. Another quiet year would also thwart Colonel Chivington's ambitions. As a result, when the Cheyenne and Arapaho left their



winter camps on the Republican and Smoky Hill rivers along the Kansas-Colorado line, Coloradans saw the movements as provocative.

In April, Colorado troops, investigating reports of cattle theft, clashed with Cheyennes in a series of skirmishes from the South Platte River north of Denver to the Republican River in eastern Colorado. In May, near the Smoky Hill River in Kansas, northwest of Fort Larned, Colorado, troops located a village of Cheyenne. The Indians sent out a small group to parley, led by Lean Bear who had visited Washington the previous year. The Colorado troops opened fire, killing Lean Bear. With the death of Lean Bear, Cheyenne Dog Soldiers and other young men retaliated along the Arkansas and the Platte rivers.

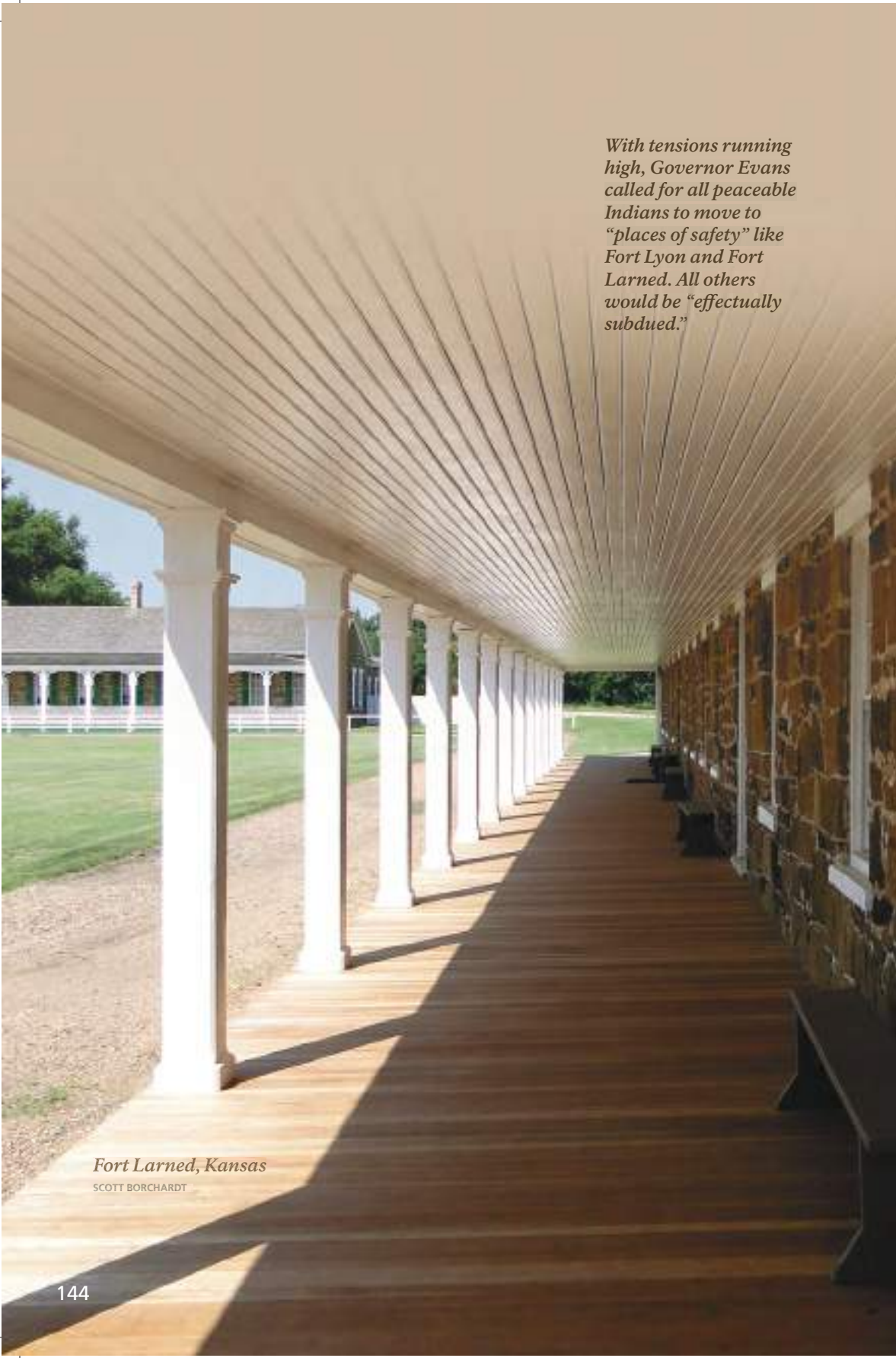
Cheyenne Chief Lean Bear

MESERVE-KUNHARDT FOUNDATION

*Cheyenne
Dog Soldiers
avenged the death
of Lean Bear.*

HISTORY COLORADO





With tensions running high, Governor Evans called for all peaceable Indians to move to “places of safety” like Fort Lyon and Fort Larned. All others would be “effectually subdued.”

Fort Larned, Kansas

SCOTT BORCHARDT

Evans saw this as proof of hostile intent. Chivington, curiously, played down the significance of the raids, insisting instead that he needed to concentrate his troops along Colorado's southeastern line in anticipation of a Confederate strike. Chivington was so preoccupied with his hopes to join the larger war and with his political ambitions, that Gen. Samuel Ryan Curtis, commander of the Department of Kansas, created the District of the Upper Arkansas and took a substantial portion of Chivington's troops and territory away from him. Chivington had lost his commander's confidence.

Then something tragic happened. On June 11, raiders—believed to be Northern Arapahoes—struck the ranch of Isaac Van Wormer south of Denver. They killed a rancher named Nathan Ward Hungate, his wife and two small children, one an infant. The incident provoked public hysteria, and Colonel Chivington declared martial law. Colorado citizens felt isolated and vulnerable. Many called for a war of extermination, “men, women, and children together.” Missionary Rev. William Crawford reported the state of affairs in Colorado in a letter to the American Home Missionary Society, “There is but one sentiment in regard to the final disposition which shall be made of the Indians. ‘Let them be exterminated, men, women, and children together.’” Governor Evans was convinced that the plains tribes were allied for a major war against the white settlers of Colorado.

On June 27, 1864, Governor Evans issued a “Proclamation to the Friendly Indians of the Plains,” calling upon all who were peaceable to move to “places of safety,” including Fort Larned and Fort Lyon on the Arkansas River (Fort Wise was renamed Fort Lyon in 1862) and Camp Collins on the Cache la Poudre River. Any Indians found elsewhere would be pursued until “effectually subdued.” Aside from the fact that Governor Evans ignored military policy that prohibited Indians from gathering at military posts, the proclamation had little promise of success. Evans also called for 10,000 troops to put down a major Indian uprising.

A summer war continued through July and into August, but the brunt of the attacks fell on Nebraska and Kansas. The primary effect on Colorado was the interruption of commerce on the Platte route. This pressure convinced white Coloradans that Evans was right: conflict with the Indians was inevitable. They just didn't know when or where it would happen. Then, abruptly, a dead calm descended on the plains from central Nebraska to the Rockies.

On August 11, 1864, Evans received authorization from the War Department to organize a regiment specifically to fight Indians with a tour of duty of 100 days. Recruitment began immediately for the 3rd Colorado Volunteer Cavalry (the Third). Then the Cheyenne and Arapaho Nations did the unexpected again. Black Kettle and other chiefs made an overture for peace, and Maj. Edward W. Wynkoop, commander at Fort Lyon on the Arkansas River, escorted a party of Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs to Denver to meet with Governor Evans and Colonel Chivington. At Camp Weld outside Denver, on September 28, 1864, the authorities met with the chiefs. The white officials were not enthusiastic, but they told the chiefs that if they were serious about peace, they could bring their people into Fort Lyon as a place of safety. Within ten days of the chiefs' return, 652 Arapahoes were encamped below Fort Lyon.

The Indian Delegation to Denver: seated, left to right, are White Antelope, Bull Bear, Black Kettle (all Cheyennes), Neva, Heaps-of-Buffalo (Arapahoes). Standing, left to right are, Notanee and Bosse (Arapahoes).

DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY,
WESTERN HISTORY
COLLECTION, X-22195

Black Kettle



Black Kettle
released white captives
of the Cheyenne to
Major Wynkoop in
September 1864.

NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Chief Black
Kettle's letter
to the US Army
calling for peace.

THE COLORADO COLLEGE
LIBRARY

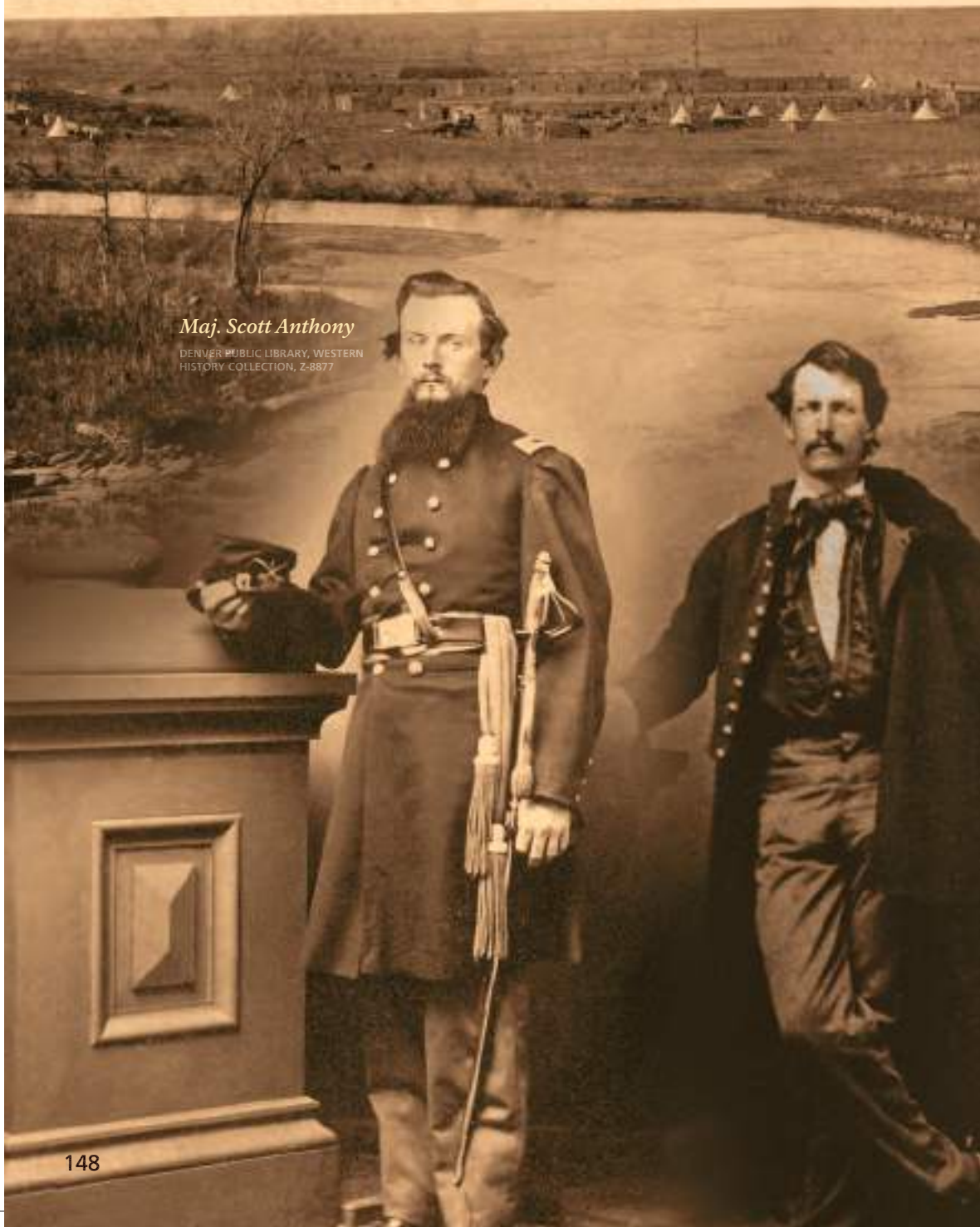
Cheyenne Village Aug 29th /64
Maj. Cady.
Sir We received a letter
from Bent wishing us to make peace
We held a council in regard to it all
and came to the conclusion to make
peace with you providing you make peace
with the Sioux, Comanches, Arapahoes,
Apsachos and Kiowas.
We are going to send a messenger to the
Kiowas, Arapahoes and to the other nations
about us going to make peace with you
We heard that you were prisoners
in Denver. We have seven prisoners
of you which we are willing to give
up providing you give up yours.
These are three war horses but yet and
two of Arapahoes, the others are some
time and respect now soon.
When we held this council there were
were few Arapahoes and Kiowas
present, we want true news from
you in return, that is a letter
Black Kettle
other Chiefs

Fort Lyon, Colorado

DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY, WESTERN
HISTORY COLLECTION, X-19367

Maj. Scott Anthony

DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY, WESTERN
HISTORY COLLECTION, Z-8877



*Maj. Edward
W. Wynkoop*

DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY,
WESTERN HISTORY
COLLECTION, X-22195

On November 2, 1864, Major Wynkoop was replaced as commander at Fort Lyon by Maj. Scott J. Anthony. The next day, Anthony learned that close to 600 Cheyennes were moving toward Fort Lyon. He told them to remain on Sand Creek, close to 40 miles northeast of the fort. He also told the Arapahoes to join the Cheyennes at Sand Creek. Chief Left Hand and eight lodges of Arapahoes joined the Cheyennes at Sand Creek. The rest of the Arapahoes, now suspicious, moved down the Arkansas River. Like the majority of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes in the Republican and Smoky Hill camps, they would wait to see what happened. The stage was now set for tragedy.

Col. John Chivington now became the primary actor in Colorado Indian affairs. Statehood had been defeated at the polls on September 13. His commission as an officer in the Union Army expired on September 23, although he had not been relieved of command. The Third Regiment was increasingly the subject of public derision as more citizens came to believe that the regiment's 100 days would pass without action. In late October, Gen. Patrick Edward Connor, who had won acclaim for a winter strike against the Northwestern Shoshone at Bear River in Idaho in 1863 (described elsewhere in this book), proposed a joint campaign to protect the Platte route. He wanted Colonel Chivington to join him in a strike against the Republican River strongholds of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes as the surest means of protecting commerce and travel.

*Replacing Major Wynkoop,
Maj. Scott Anthony told the
Cheyennes to stay in their
camps on Sand Creek and the
Arapahoes to move away from
Fort Lyon and join the
Cheyennes there.*

Colonel Chivington reacted at once. He had no intention of participating in a joint campaign with Connor. Any glory that might come from such a combined operation was certain to go to the hero (or villain) of Bear River, and it surely could not be mounted before the enlistment of the Third Colorado expired. Instead Chivington began to concentrate the scattered units of the Third in preparation for his own initiative. By the time Connor arrived in Denver on November 14, to discuss his plans (accompanied by Ben Holladay, the president of the Overland Stage Company), Chivington had ordered the Third to rendezvous at Boone's Ranch on the Upper Arkansas River.

Two days later, unaware that Chivington had no intention of joining Connor for a winter campaign, Governor Evans left Colorado on a trip to Washington. On November 20, Chivington left Denver with his staff, and three days later, took command of the forces at Boone's Ranch. With his commander General Curtis preoccupied with Confederate forces elsewhere, Chivington had a free hand. It was time for the gambler to roll the dice.



*Officers
of the
Third
Regiment*

When Chivington announced that he and the Third Regiment planned to attack the Indians at Sand Creek, many of the officers of the veteran First Regiment objected. Chivington replied, "Damn any man in sympathy with Indians!"

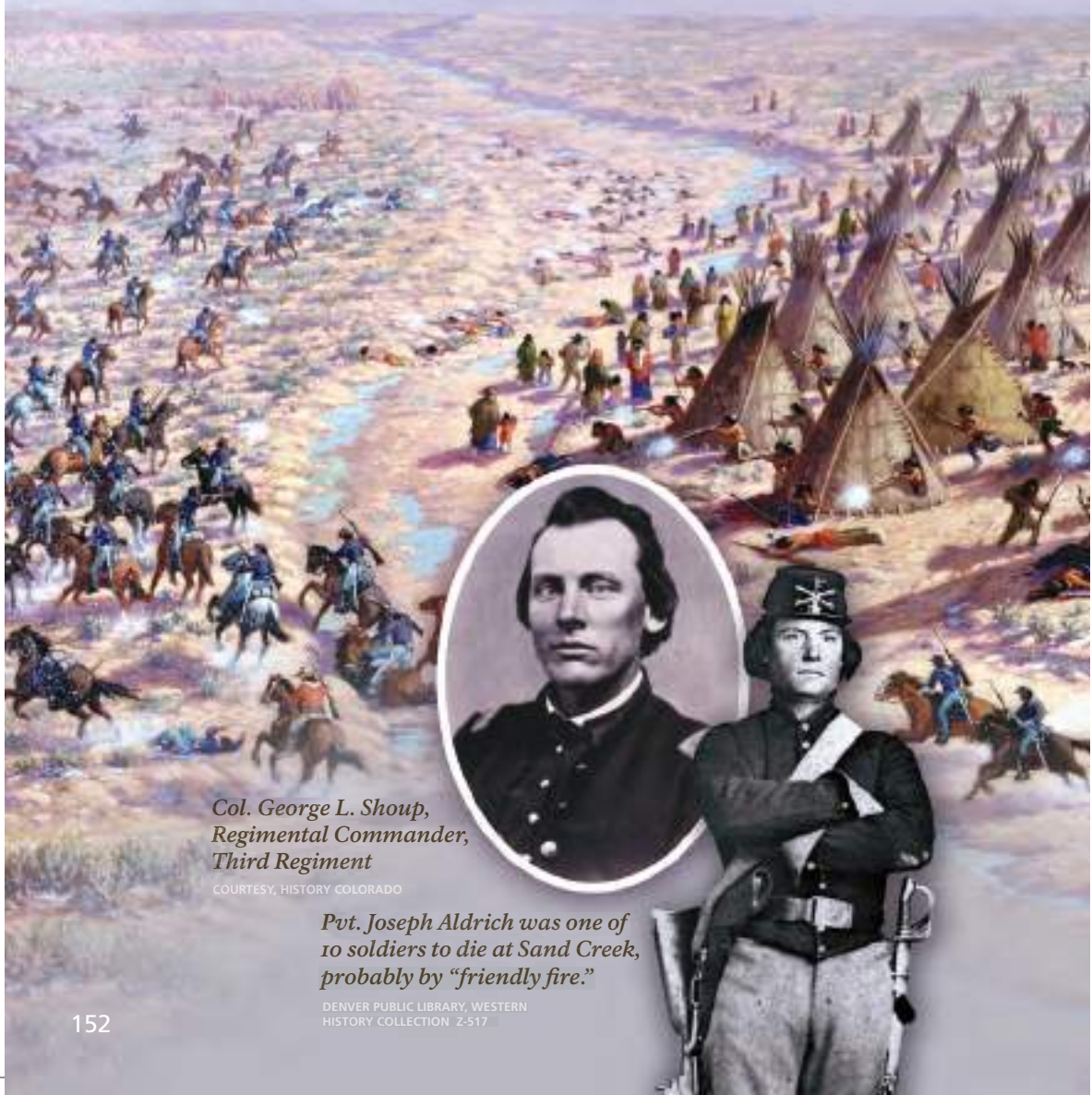
On November 28, 1864, a column of troops, composed of three battalions of the “Bloodless Third” supported by a battalion of the veteran 1st Colorado Cavalry, approached Fort Lyon, completely surprising the garrison. Chivington announced to Major Anthony that he planned to move at once against the Cheyennes and Arapahoes camped at Sand Creek. When the news spread among the junior officers, many of them were outraged by the thought. Chivington tried to placate them by saying that the move against Sand Creek would be the opening of a major campaign against the villages on the Smoky Hill River. Several of the officers reminded him that the people at Sand Creek were there under assurances of protection. “Damn any man in sympathy with Indians!” Chivington thundered in reply.

Indian campsite on Sand Creek

ZENO WALL



Nevertheless, when the troops moved out that evening on a forced night march toward Sand Creek, a battalion from Fort Lyon rode with the expedition. As the soldiers approached, the chiefs camped at Sand Creek responded by raising an American flag and a white flag, hoping that these were troops from Fort Lyon with news regarding peace. By then, the first units had been deployed to cut off the horse herds north and south of the village. Then, the main force attacked. Only the veteran units of the First maintained good order; the ill-trained Third, in the words of one of them, “burst on the camp like so many wild fellows.” White traders in the camp tried to wave off the attack until they were forced to take cover from incoming fire.



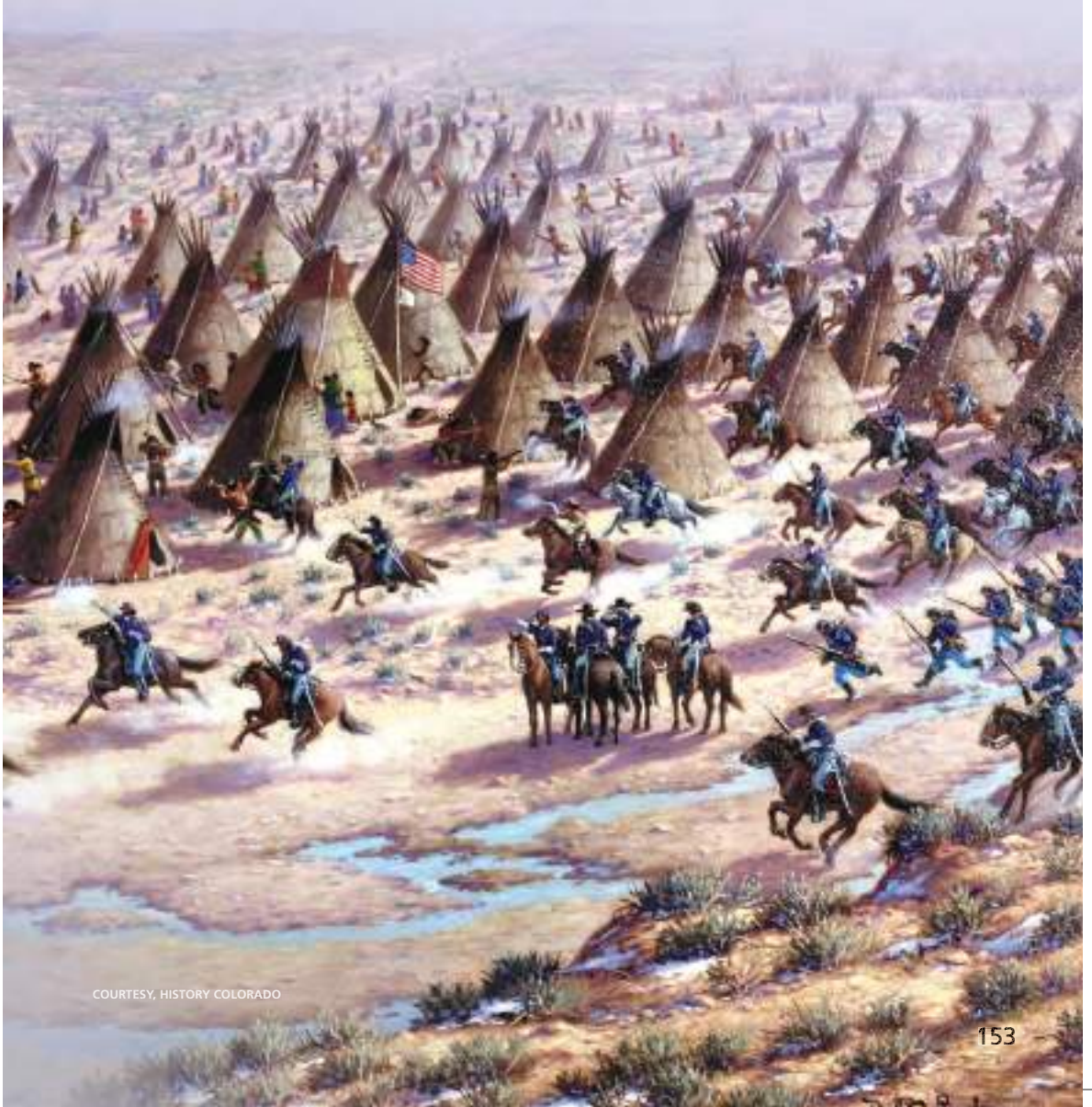
*Col. George L. Shoup,
Regimental Commander,
Third Regiment*

COURTESY, HISTORY COLORADO

*Pvt. Joseph Aldrich was one of
10 soldiers to die at Sand Creek,
probably by “friendly fire.”*

DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY, WESTERN
HISTORY COLLECTION Z-517

Two officers of the battalion from Fort Lyon, Capt. Silas S. Soule and Lt. Joseph A. Cramer, refused to order their companies to fire, and most of their men did not participate in the bloodbath. The Cheyennes and Arapahoes had little chance. White Antelope was killed in the creek bed. Chief Black Kettle, realizing the futility of the situation, joined the flight from the village. Left Hand, the Arapaho chief, was seriously wounded and later died of his wounds. Their people fled up the creek bed with the troops in pursuit. One party of Cheyennes under Big Head attempted to make a stand; it was the nearest thing to a real fight all day. The fleeing Indians scattered. Most dug into the creek bed in a futile attempt to protect themselves. Men, women, and children were slaughtered indiscriminately. Had the troops been better organized the carnage might have been worse.



COURTESY, HISTORY COLORADO

Mochi: Warrior Woman

When a soldier broke into her tent at Sand Creek, shot her mother, and then attacked her, a young Cheyenne woman named Mochi grabbed her father's rifle and shot the soldier. After the vicious attack on her village and people, Mochi became a fierce warrior herself, accompanying the men into many battles.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

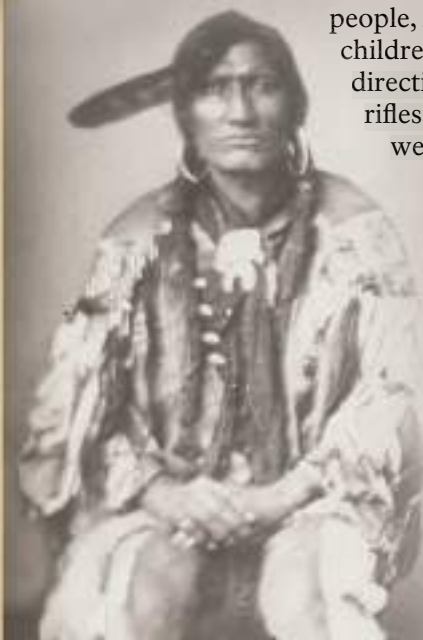


The Massacre through Indian Eyes

On his way to Sand Creek, Chivington stopped at William Bent's home. Bent had built a trading establishment on the Arkansas River years earlier and had married a Cheyenne, Owl Woman, with whom he had four children. Chivington placed Bent under house arrest so he couldn't warn the Cheyenne of his coming. Then he forced Bent's son Robert to guide him and his soldiers to Sand Creek. Bent's other three children were with the Cheyennes at Sand Creek. One son, George Bent, described the massacre:

"All was confusion and noise," he said. "Men, women, and children [were] rushing out of the lodges partly dressed; women and children screaming at the sight of the troops; men running back into the lodges for their arms. . . . Black Kettle had a large American flag tied to the end of a long lodgepole and . . . kept calling out not to be frightened; that the camp was under protection and there was no danger. . . . White Antelope, who had visited Washington, DC a year earlier, made up his mind not to live any longer. . . . He stood in front of his lodge with his arms folded across his breast, singing the death-song: 'Nothing lives long,' he sang, 'only the earth and the mountains.'"

Confused and terrified, the people, mostly women and children, ran in every direction trying to escape the rifles and howitzers. They were shot down, and the soldiers shot them over and over as they lay dead or dying. Some were able to reach the banks of Sand Creek and



White Antelope

NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL
ARCHIVES, SMITHSONIAN
INSTITUTION



Indian ledger art depicts the massacre at Sand Creek.

ALLEN MEMORIAL ART MUSEUM, OBERLIN COLLEGE, OHIO.
GIFT OF MRS. JACOB D. COX.

dug out shallow pits with their hands, desperately trying to hide themselves.

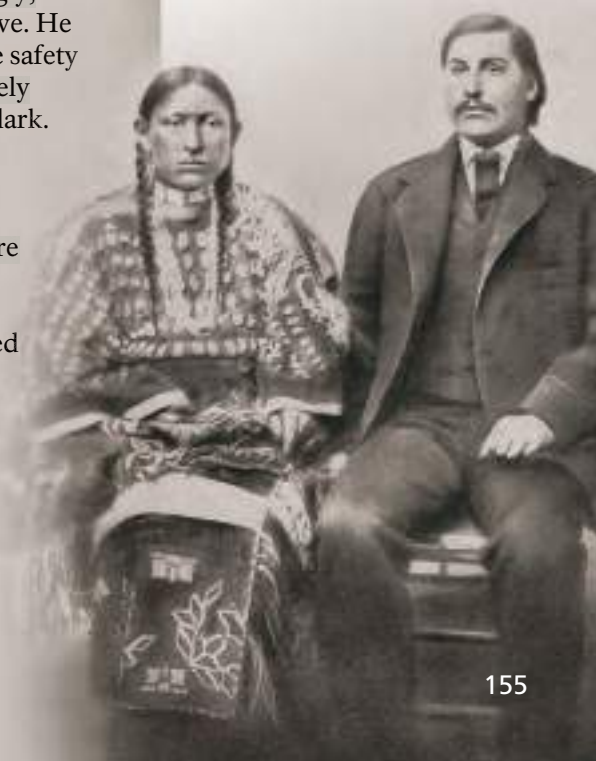
Black Kettle finally recognized that Chivington and his men did mean to harm him and his people. He and his wife, Medicine Woman Later, joined the escaping people running for the pits. The soldiers shot Medicine Woman Later nine times. After dark, Black Kettle crept back down the creek to find his wife's body. Amazingly, though filled with bullets, she was still alive. He put her on his back and carried her to the safety of the pits. The survivors, many desperately wounded, stayed hidden until long past dark. Those who survived—many severely injured—dragged themselves away from Sand Creek, across 50 miles of frozen prairie toward the Smoky Hill River where their relatives were camped. Once there, some of the injured, including Medicine Woman Later and George Bent, recovered from their wounds. Having fled their lodges without time to dress properly, they were half naked, bleeding, and freezing. And they were the lucky ones. At least 150 others were dead, two-thirds of them women and children.

—from Indian survivor accounts

Fighting the Union under Two Flags

George Bent's mother was Cheyenne and his father was William Bent, a prominent white trader. George went to school in St. Louis and fought for the Confederacy. After being captured in battle and later released, he returned to Colorado and rejoined his mother's people. He was in the village when Chivington's forces attacked. George Bent fought the Union as both a Confederate soldier and an Indian warrior. He is pictured here with his wife, Magpie.

DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY,
WESTERN HISTORY
COLLECTION





Capt. Silas S. Soule refused to order his soldiers of the First Regiment to take part in the attack. He was furious about it and saw it as a betrayal of promises made to the Indians by Major Wynkoop.

DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY, WESTERN HISTORY COLLECTION, X-22202

After the fighting stopped, the soldiers wandered over the field, taking scalps and body parts as trophies, killing the wounded, mutilating the bodies, and shooting babies and small children. Few prisoners were taken, and some soldiers were told to kill the ones they had seized. The son of trader John Smith was murdered by soldiers. When the troops finally moved out on December 1, the Indian wives of a few white traders and several children accompanied them. Other Indian prisoners were shot by the rear guard.

Then, instead of heading northeast toward the Smoky Hill villages where great numbers of Cheyennes and Arapahoes were camped as the officers expected, Chivington's soldiers now moved south toward the Arkansas River, to pursue Little Raven's Arapaho band. The troops moved down the Arkansas River for a few days, but on December 7, 1864, the campaign ended. Chivington left the column and hurried back to Denver by stagecoach. The officers of the battalion from Fort Lyon were furious. It now seemed obvious to them that he had never intended an extended campaign, choosing to focus instead on the massacre at Sand Creek. They felt used and betrayed.

On December 22, 1864, Chivington's troops reached Denver to a hero's welcome. They marched through the streets with their saddles festooned with gruesome trophies of the attack. At a Denver theater, more than 100 scalps were strung across the stage, and three young children, two girls and a boy, were exhibited as trophies. The *Rocky Mountain News* gloated that the Sand Creek attack was "the most effective expedition against the Indians ever planned and carried out." Colonel Chivington was hailed as a hero.

THE WEEKLY ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

DENVER, COLORADO WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1884.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Published by
NORTH & BARRY,
Successors to
Barnes and Proprietors.

Office at 1015 Broadway, Denver, Colo.

Subscription price, \$1.00 per annum in advance.

Single copies, 5 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, June 15, 1884.

Postpaid.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1879.

Postpaid.

Published by North & Barry, Successors to Barnes and Proprietors.

Office at 1015 Broadway, Denver, Colo.

Subscription price, \$1.00 per annum in advance.

Single copies, 5 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, June 15, 1884.

Postpaid.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1879.

Postpaid.

Published by North & Barry, Successors to Barnes and Proprietors.

Office at 1015 Broadway, Denver, Colo.

Subscription price, \$1.00 per annum in advance.

Single copies, 5 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, June 15, 1884.

Postpaid.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1879.

Postpaid.

Published by North & Barry, Successors to Barnes and Proprietors.

Office at 1015 Broadway, Denver, Colo.

Subscription price, \$1.00 per annum in advance.

Single copies, 5 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, June 15, 1884.

Postpaid.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1879.

Postpaid.

Published by North & Barry, Successors to Barnes and Proprietors.

Office at 1015 Broadway, Denver, Colo.

Subscription price, \$1.00 per annum in advance.

Single copies, 5 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, June 15, 1884.

Postpaid.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1879.

Postpaid.

Published by North & Barry, Successors to Barnes and Proprietors.

Office at 1015 Broadway, Denver, Colo.

Subscription price, \$1.00 per annum in advance.

Single copies, 5 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, June 15, 1884.

Postpaid.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1879.

Postpaid.

Published by North & Barry, Successors to Barnes and Proprietors.

Office at 1015 Broadway, Denver, Colo.

Subscription price, \$1.00 per annum in advance.

Single copies, 5 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, June 15, 1884.

Postpaid.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1879.

Postpaid.

Published by North & Barry, Successors to Barnes and Proprietors.

Office at 1015 Broadway, Denver, Colo.

Subscription price, \$1.00 per annum in advance.

Single copies, 5 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, June 15, 1884.

Postpaid.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1879.

Postpaid.

Published by North & Barry, Successors to Barnes and Proprietors.

Office at 1015 Broadway, Denver, Colo.

Subscription price, \$1.00 per annum in advance.

Single copies, 5 cents.

Entered as second-class matter, June 15, 1884.

Postpaid.

Accepted for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Act of October 3, 1879.

Postpaid.

Published by North & Barry, Successors to Barnes and Proprietors.

Office at 1015 Broadway, Denver, Colo.

INDIAN NEWS

From the Indian Bureau, Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C., Dec. 14, 1884.

Dear Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

U.S. TALKER IN CHIEF

Washington, D.C., Dec. 14, 1884.

Dear Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

Great Battle with Indians!

The Savages Dispersed!

500 INDIANS KILLED

Our Loss 9 Killed, 38 Wounded.

Full Particulars.

General Sherman, Chief of Cavalry,

Denver, Dec. 14, 1884.

Dear Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

BY TELEGRAPH

PART OF THE INDIAN NEWS

Washington, D.C., Dec. 14, 1884.

Dear Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. M. Smith,
Indian Commissioner.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

relative to the matter of the Indian Bureau.

I am sorry to hear that you are having trouble with the Indians.

I am sure that you will be able to handle them properly.

Great Battle with Indians! The Savages Dispersed! 500 INDIANS KILLED Our Loss 9 Killed, 38 Wounded.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS



Chivington and the Third Regiment paraded through Denver and displayed gruesome trophies of the attack, including 100 scalps, in a local theater. Three captive Indian children were also put on exhibit there.

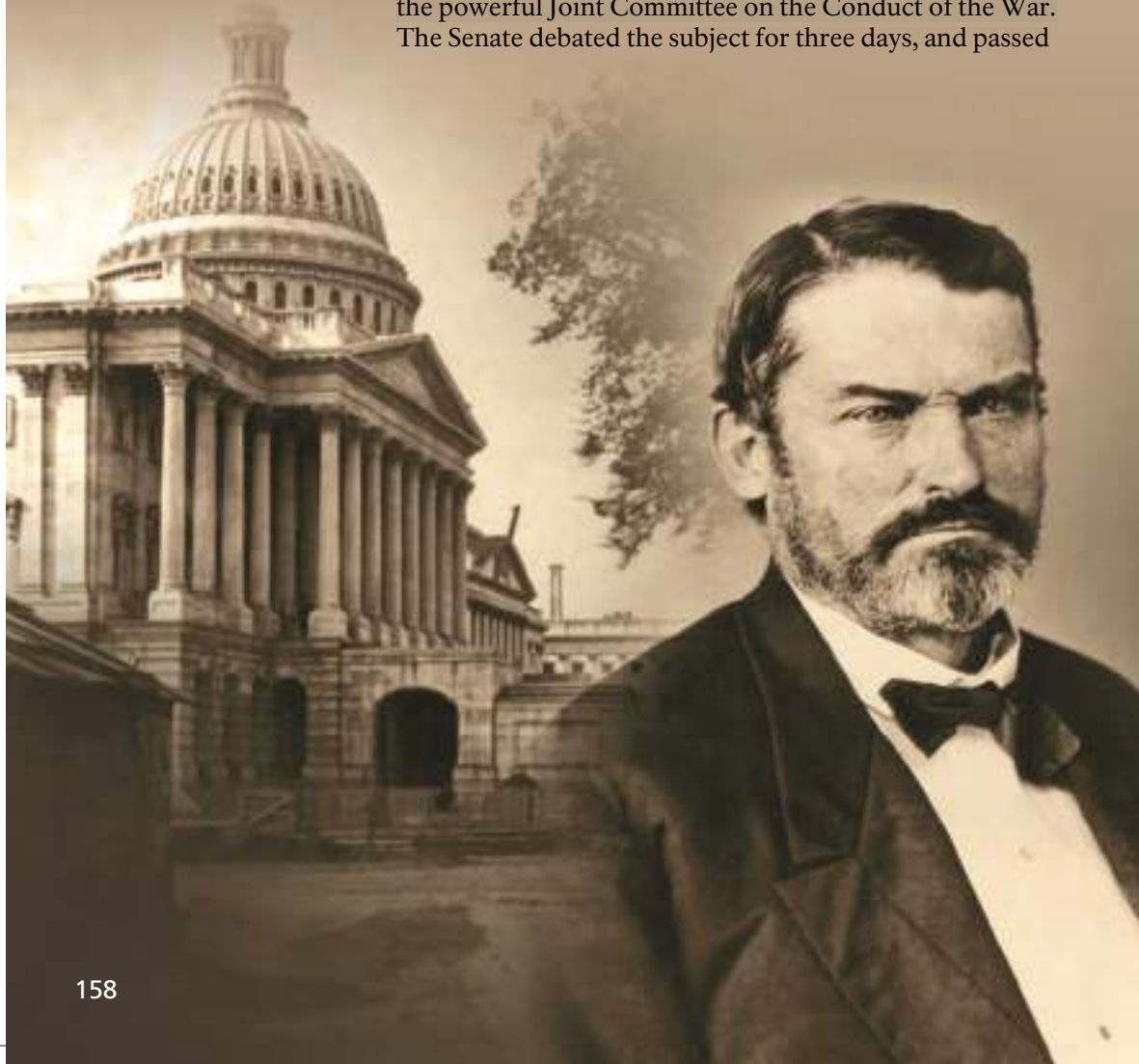
DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY,
WESTERN HISTORY COLLECTION

Sen. James R. Doolittle, Chairman of the Joint Special Committee on the Condition of the Indian Tribes, took testimony about Sand Creek and visited the massacre site where he picked up the skulls of infants. His committee's report helped to reshape Indian policy.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The glory soon faded. Even before Chivington reached Denver, reports came that Sand Creek was a massacre and that the most revolting outrages had been committed against an encampment promised safety by the very man who commanded the expedition. Officers from the First Regiment, civilian officials, private citizens, and even soldiers of the Third Regiment were sending reports to government officials in Washington, D.C., and to eastern newspapers. In short order, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of War, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, and high ranking members of Congress were informed. The reports were detailed and credible.

On January 9, 1865, the subject of Sand Creek was referred to the Senate Indian Affairs Committee. On January 10, the House of Representatives ordered an investigation by the powerful Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. The Senate debated the subject for three days, and passed



a resolution withholding the pay of the Third Regiment until the facts could be verified. On February 1, a military commission was established to investigate. In March, the Committee on the Conduct of the War began its investigation. Within days, a Special Joint Committee on the Condition of the Indian Tribes was created. In time, both committees would condemn Sand Creek as a massacre. Based on the two months of the testimony before the military commissions, the Judge Advocate General condemned the “cowardly and coldblooded slaughter” and lamented the fact that Chivington couldn’t stand for court martial proceedings because he was no longer in service. No other Civil War engagement was investigated as thoroughly or condemned so strongly.

But that was not the end of it. John Evans was removed as governor of Colorado. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs was replaced. The Sand Creek affair poisoned political debate in Colorado for a decade and helped delay statehood until 1876. Many Coloradans defended their territory and the honor of their soldiers, but the burden of Sand Creek remained. Because of the peculiarities of the military code of justice, John Chivington was beyond the reach of the law since he was no longer in military service. His ambitions thwarted and his reputation ruined, Chivington’s life spiraled from one controversy to another for nearly two decades before he returned to Colorado and found a measure of peace. Even there, he remained controversial. Chivington died at age 73, believing that he was justified for his attack at Sand Creek.

Sen. James R. Doolittle

NATIONAL ARCHIVES,
US SIGNAL CORPS
(BRADY COLLECTION)



The most immediate effect of Sand Creek, however, fell on the settlers of Colorado, Nebraska, and Kansas. Most of the peace faction of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes was camped at Sand Creek. The massacre eliminated virtually every voice for peace among the leaders of the tribes. To make matters worse, between two-thirds and three-quarters of those killed at Sand Creek were women and children.

Immediately after the massacre, the survivors made their way north to the Smoky Hill camps where many of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes were still waiting to hear the outcome of what they believed was to have been a peace overture by the Indians at Sand Creek. The outraged tribes launched a winter war—something that white authorities were certain could not happen. Along the Platte River route, the warriors took their vengeance. The Indian War of 1865 was bloody payback. When the chiefs gathered in October 1865, to negotiate the Treaty of the Little Arkansas, the government did something it had never before done. It admitted its culpability for the Sand Creek Massacre and promised to pay indemnities, not to the tribes, but directly to the families of the victims at Sand Creek.

The Sand Creek Massacre had long-term results as well. It polarized the debate on American Indian affairs. Although it had been carried out by Civil War volunteers, the regular army's efforts to deal with American Indian resistance in the decade that followed were always haunted by the specter of Sand Creek. Future military engagements were compared to it. Sand Creek became a *cause celebre* for the American Indian reform movement and helped to defeat efforts to transfer Indian affairs from civilian to military control. Neither Colorado nor the Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples have fully escaped its shadow to this day.

In 2007, Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site was established as a unit of the National Park Service.



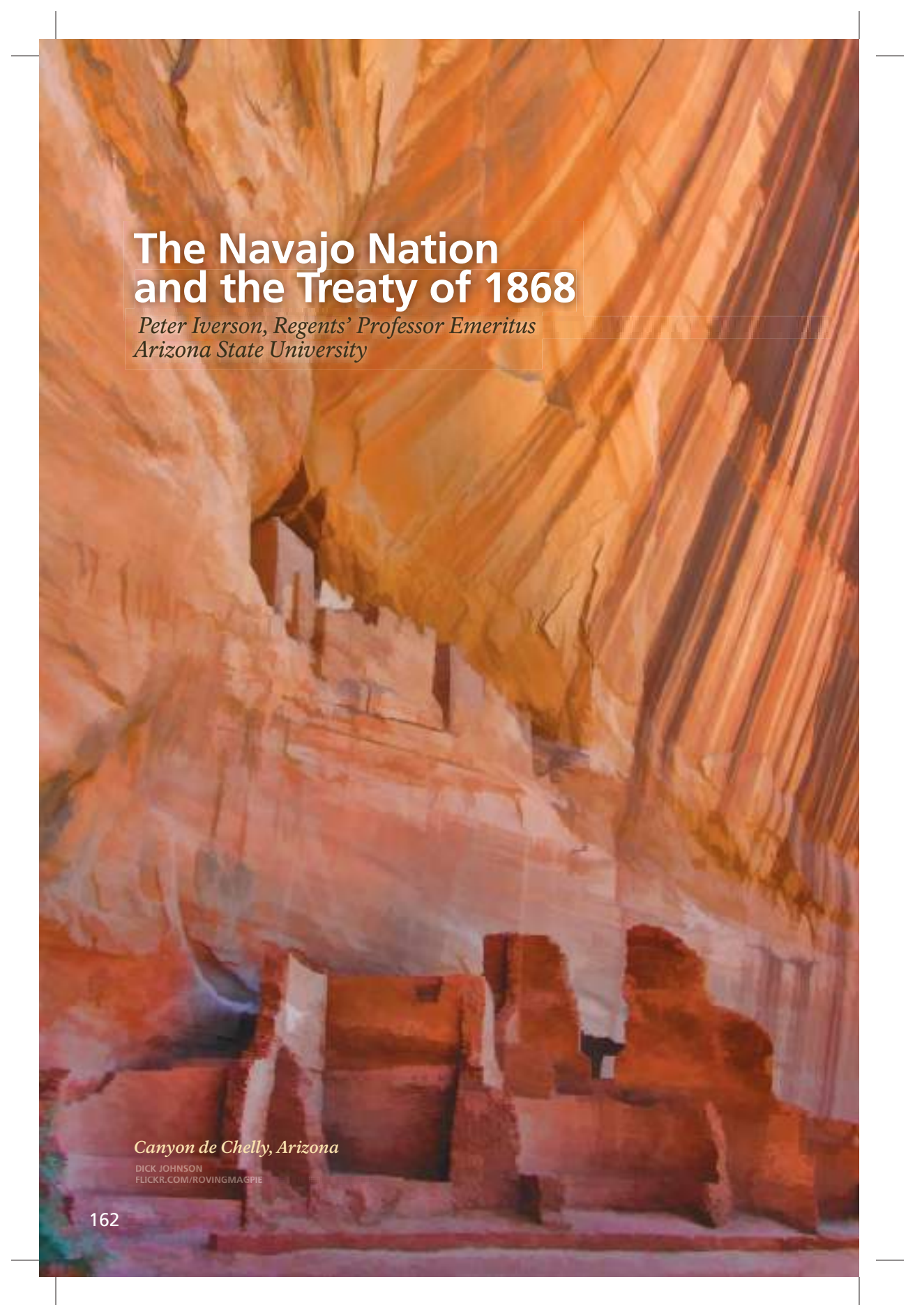
In light of the nation's turmoil in late 1864, the attention given to the Sand Creek Massacre was not only remarkable, it was also a reminder that conscience and a sense of justice had not yet been bled dry. The Civil War changed the West, too, and Sand Creek framed a moral imperative that acted like a burr under the saddle in the troubled years that followed as a reminder that might also demands right in the affairs of men.

*After the Sand Creek
Massacre, the US
government did something
it had never before done.
It admitted its culpability
and promised to pay
indemnities to the
families of the victims.*

*"We pray for
the spirits of
our Cheyenne
and Arapaho
ancestors and
the Colorado
soldiers who
died here."*

LAUREN SMALL, AUTHOR,
CHOKE CREEK

KIRK SPEER, COLORADO SPRING GAZETTE



The Navajo Nation and the Treaty of 1868

*Peter Iverson, Regents' Professor Emeritus
Arizona State University*

Canyon de Chelly, Arizona

DICK JOHNSON
[FLICKR.COM/ROVINGMAGPIE](https://www.flickr.com/photos/rovingmagpie/)



With the withdrawal of US troops at the beginning of the Civil War, raids by and against the Navajo people escalated. When Gen. James Carleton assumed command of the military forces in New Mexico in 1861, he formulated a policy to subdue the Navajos. Early in 1864, Carleton sent Kit Carson to attack the Navajos in their stronghold at Canyon de Chelly. With their resistance broken, the Navajo people—nearly 9,000 total—were sent on the “Long Walk” to Bosque Redondo near Fort Sumner, New Mexico Territory. Three years later, the Navajos were allowed to return to a portion of their former reservation in the Four Corners area, where, as the Navajo Nation website states, “they have since lived in peace and prosperity.”

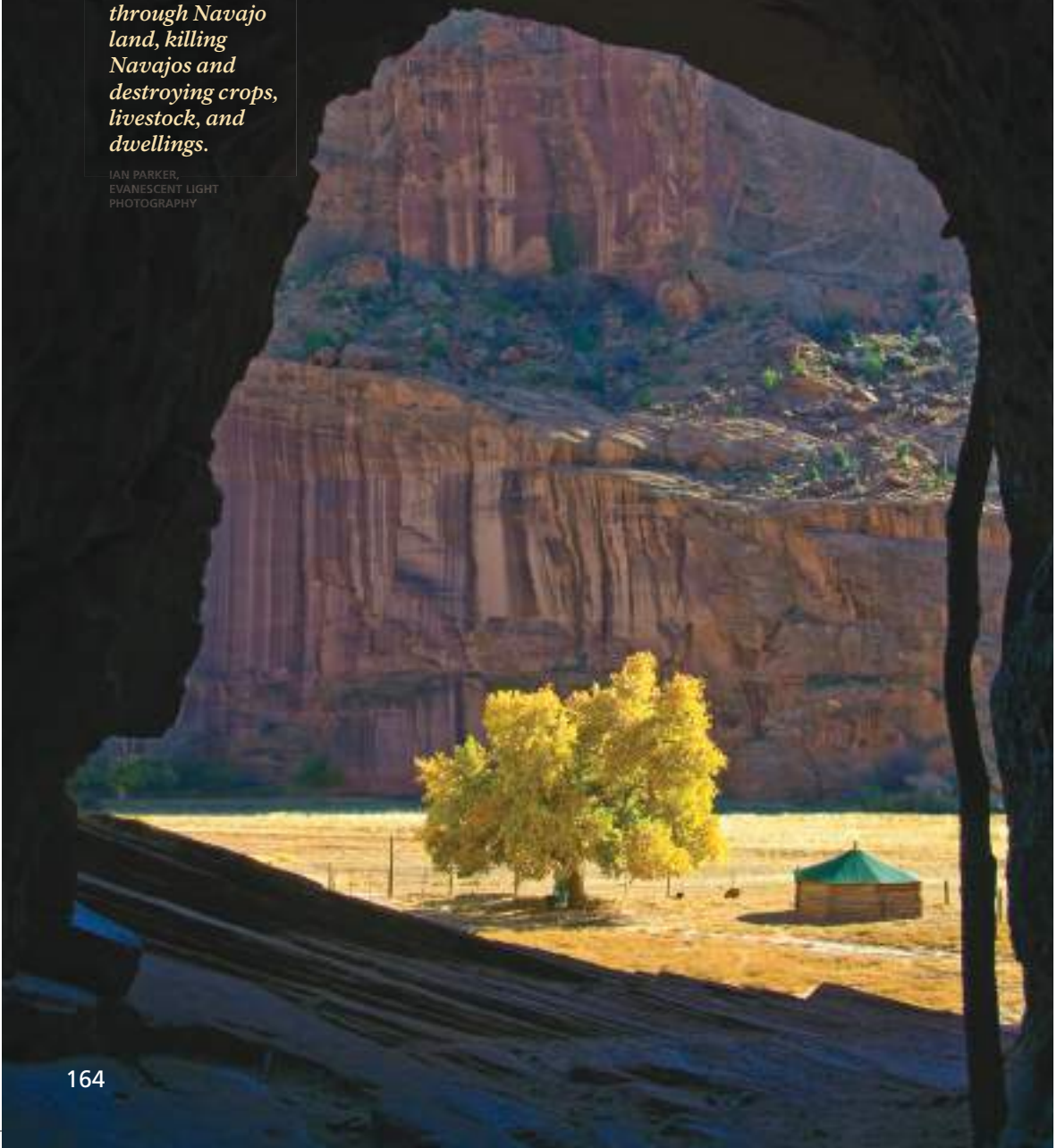
The Navajos called the 1860s the Fearing Time. As the war between the United States and Mexico concluded, the Americans began to push deeper into the Southwest. The Navajos had already demonstrated their willingness and their capacity to take particular components of other economies or cultures and in time make them their own. The Diné (Navajo people refer to themselves as Diné, which means “the people.”) realized the arrival of another people did not automatically mean disaster. In fact, it could signify opportunity. In the years after the Spanish came to the region, the Navajos acquired livestock and learned to weave and work as silversmiths. In addition, they became increasingly rooted in a particular place. As Navajo poet Luci Tapahonso has written, “These mountains and the land keep us strong. From them and because of them we prosper. This is where our prayers begin.”

*“These mountains and the land
keep us strong. From them and
because of them we prosper.
This is where our prayers begin.”
Navajo poet Luci Tapahonso*

By the 1840s the Navajos transformed themselves from a minor to a major player on the Southwestern stage. Through contact with others rather than in isolation from them, the Navajo people became a progressively more powerful presence in the region. That power came at a cost. Neighboring communities, both indigenous and Hispanic, sought to limit the Navajo place in the region. When the Americans arrived they soon discovered Mexicans, Utes, Comanches, and other Indian groups eager to limit where the Navajos could be and who they could become.

Col. Kit Carson led his troops through Navajo land, killing Navajos and destroying crops, livestock, and dwellings.

IAN PARKER,
EVANESCENT LIGHT
PHOTOGRAPHY



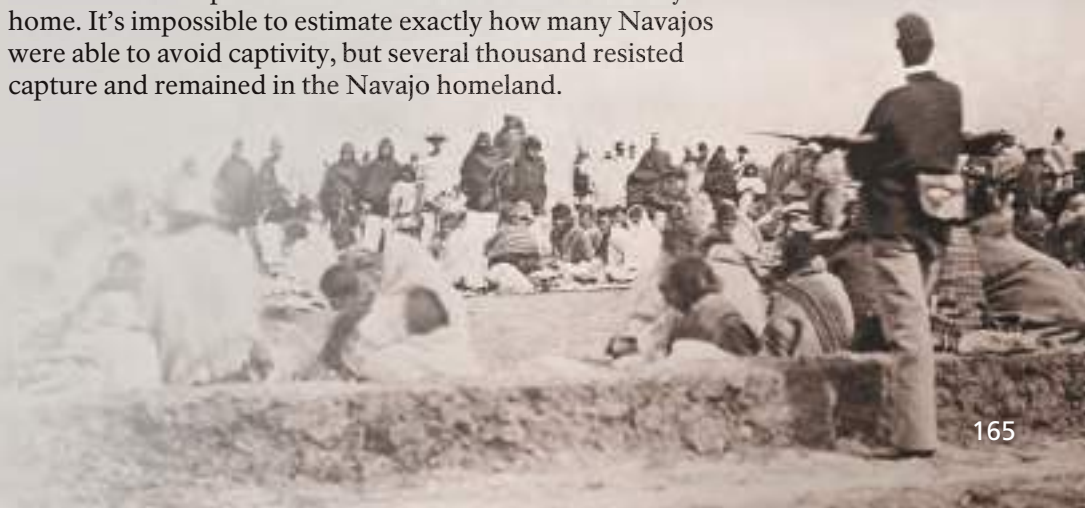
This animosity fueled the Fearing Time. The effort to impose American authority proved brief but lasting in its consequences. In 1861 Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton, commander of the Federal District of New Mexico, initiated a series of military actions against the Navajos. Col. Christopher “Kit” Carson was ordered to conduct an expedition into Navajo land, demanding their surrender by July 1863. Few Navajos complied, so Carson led his troops through Navajo land, killing Navajos and destroying crops, livestock, and dwellings. The Navajos told stories of this campaign that would be passed down in the years that followed. These narratives reveal the terror and trauma of this time. Carson’s men chopped down thousands of Navajo peach trees and poisoned countless wells. They threatened pregnant women and the elderly. Many Navajos surrendered because of the suffering caused by bad weather, the need to take care of children or other family members, or the desire to keep families together. Other Navajos, including leaders such as Manuelito and Barboncito did not surrender until 1866.

Thousands of Navajos were forced to surrender and were marched to Fort Sumner in south central New Mexico, hundreds of miles from their homeland. In English, this journey became known as the Long Walk, a misleading name that masked brutality and suffering. The Long Walk constituted a forced march into unknown terrain.

Historians generally have underestimated the number of Navajos who did not go to Fort Sumner. Some were killed as they resisted the soldiers under Carson’s command. Others fled to remote areas to the northwest, where in such places as Navajo Mountain or Black Mesa, they often avoided captivity. Their presence extended Navajo claims to new terrain and accelerated the pace of rebuilding once those who had been imprisoned at Fort Sumner made their way home. It’s impossible to estimate exactly how many Navajos were able to avoid captivity, but several thousand resisted capture and remained in the Navajo homeland.

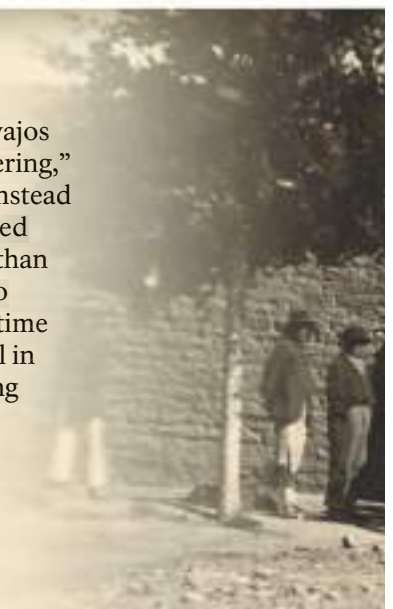
Thousands of Navajos were forced to surrender and march to Fort Sumner in south central New Mexico, hundreds of miles from their homeland, where they would live imprisoned on the Bosque Redondo reservation.

COURTESY PALACE OF THE GOVERNORS PHOTO ARCHIVES (NMHM/DCA) 028534





The Long Walk should not be considered one solitary event that began in 1864 and kept the Navajos at Hweeldi until 1868. Hweeldi, “the place of suffering,” was the name the Navajos gave to Fort Sumner. Instead the “Long Walk” must be understood as one forced march after another into exile. There were more than 50 of these marches from the Navajo homeland to Fort Sumner between August 1863 and 1866. The time of the year, the inclinations of the army personnel in charge, and the general well-being of those making this journey inevitably affected the experience.





*Kit Carson oversees the
Navajo "Long Walk"*

WILLIAM AHRENDT

The Navajos who survived the Long Walk did not know how long they would remain imprisoned. Hweeldi (Fort Sumner) surpassed their fears. No mountains graced their immediate horizon. The people ate rancid bacon and drank the miserable alkaline water of the Pecos River. Like all prisoners, they vowed if they ever escaped or were somehow liberated, they would never take for granted the land and the sky of their home country. They would celebrate each day of freedom.

COURTESY PALACE OF THE
GOVERNORS PHOTO ARCHIVES
(NMHM/DCA) 038192

*The Navajo called
Bosque Redondo,
"Hweeldi," the place
of suffering.*

COURTESY PALACE OF THE
GOVERNORS PHOTO ARCHIVES
(NMHM/DCA) 001817



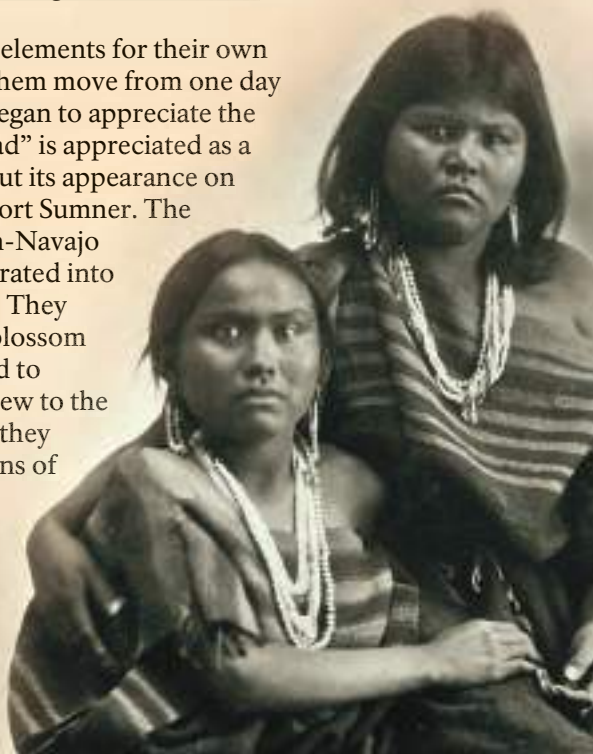
That fateful time came sooner than most Navajos anticipated. General Carleton had been the driving force behind the construction of Fort Sumner, named after his former commanding officer. Carleton believed that the Navajos could be transformed, arguing that this process would demand time and patience, two elements in short supply in the Southwest. Although he acknowledged he had little hope older Navajos could be changed, he saw reservations as environments in which the young could be directed toward a brighter future. Carleton believed the best hope for these children could be found in removing them from what he termed the haunts, the hills and the hiding places of Navajo country. Contact with others who “were kind to them and taught them the truths of Christianity,” would encourage them to become “a happy and contented people.”

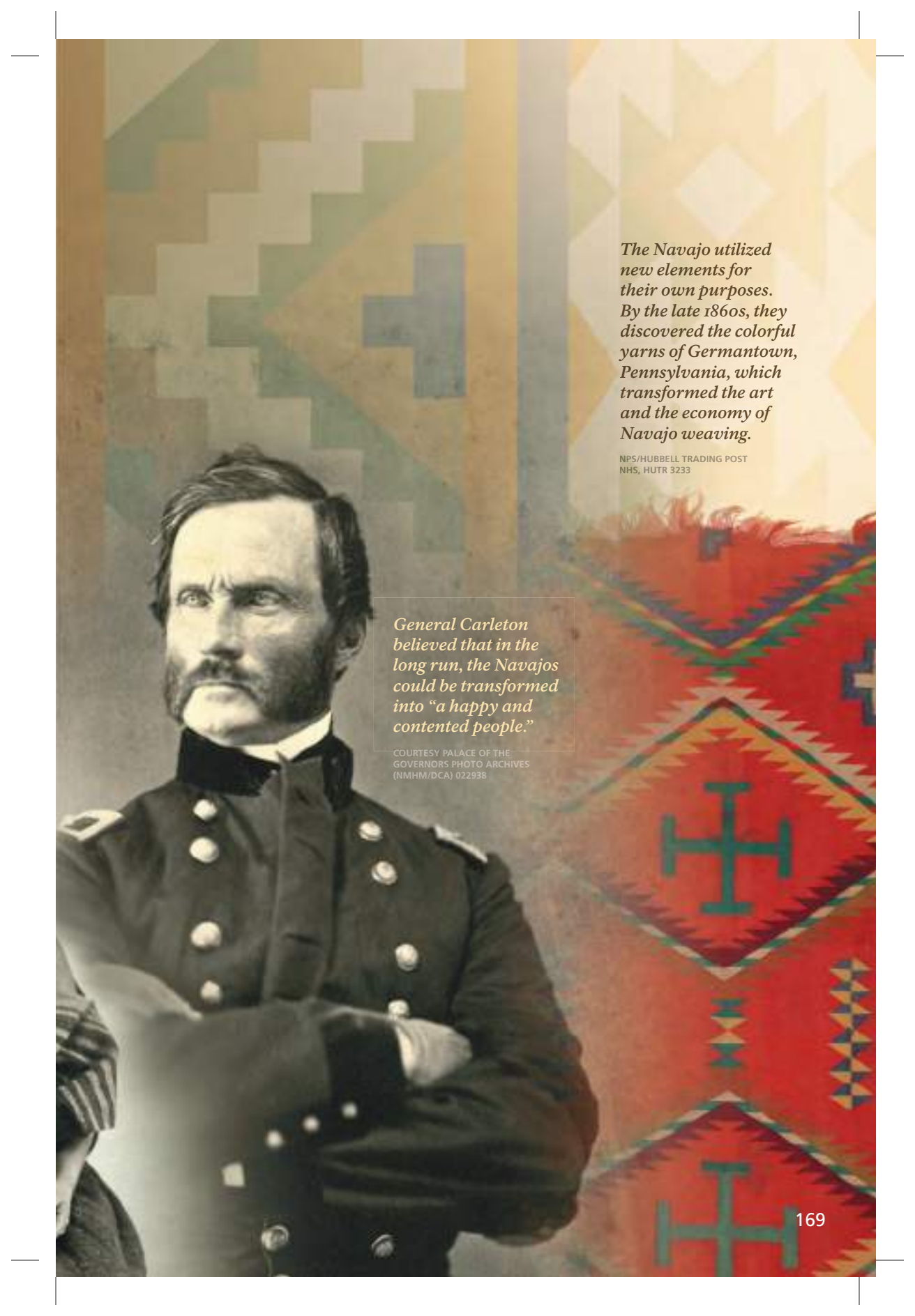
Of course the Navajos incarcerated at Fort Sumner found it difficult to find any redeeming qualities in this environment. They found corruption combined with inefficiency and insensitivity on a daily basis at Hweeldi. Western medical care provided little solace or assistance. The hardships were nearly unbearable. To survive, some Navajo women prostituted themselves to the white soldiers; many contracted syphilis and passed it to Navajo men. This and other diseases like smallpox swept through the encampment. The number of Navajo healers (hatathli) steadily dwindled. The hatathli who remained helped many to realize a kind of harmony and balance through ceremonies and to believe better days might still lie ahead.

The Navajo capacity to employ new elements for their own purposes in some instances helped them move from one day to the next. For example, the Diné began to appreciate the possibilities of flour. Today “fry bread” is appreciated as a traditional item in the Navajo diet, but its appearance on the Navajo menu may be traced to Fort Sumner. The blouses and the dresses worn by non-Navajo women were borrowed and incorporated into “traditional” Navajo women’s attire. They adorned these blouses with squash blossom necklaces, a design that can be traced to Islamic Spain. Weaving was hardly new to the Navajos, but by the end of the 1860s they had become acquainted with the yarns of Germantown, Pennsylvania. Germantown rugs, as they began to be called, transformed the art and the economy of Navajo weaving.

The hardships at Bosque Redondo were nearly unbearable, including the enslavement of Navajo women and children by local settlers.

COURTESY PALACE
OF THE GOVERNORS
PHOTO ARCHIVES
(NMHM/DCA) 038208



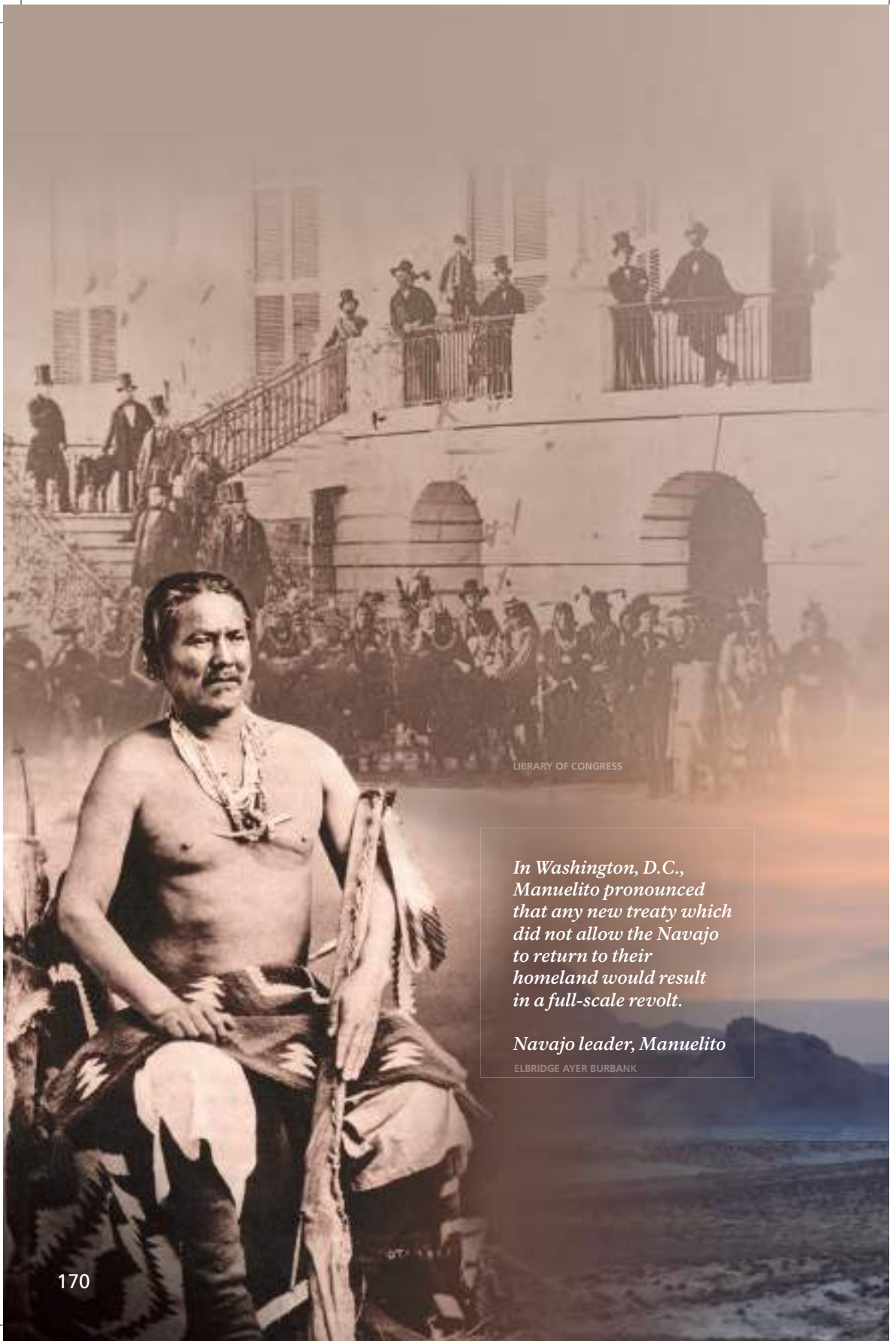


The Navajo utilized new elements for their own purposes. By the late 1860s, they discovered the colorful yarns of Germantown, Pennsylvania, which transformed the art and the economy of Navajo weaving.

NPS/HUBBELL TRADING POST
NHS, HUTR 3233

General Carleton believed that in the long run, the Navajos could be transformed into “a happy and contented people.”

COURTESY PALACE OF THE
GOVERNORS PHOTO ARCHIVES
(NMHM/DCA) 022938



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

*In Washington, D.C.,
Manuelito pronounced
that any new treaty which
did not allow the Navajo
to return to their
homeland would result
in a full-scale revolt.*

Navajo leader, Manuelito

ELBRIDGE AYER BURBANK

The Navajos also understood that the Americans, the Hispanics, and the members of neighboring American Indian communities were not going to disappear. One of the great concerns of this era involved the ongoing practice of enslavement of Navajo women and children by Hispanics, a practice that began during the Spanish colonial period. If the Navajos were to heed the American call for peace, this ongoing scourge would have to be eradicated. If the Navajos were to survive as a nation, its people would have to acknowledge that changing times demanded new leadership and new approaches.

Navajo stories from the time commemorate the courage and determination of the elders. These accounts attest to the power of Navajo memory. That memory encouraged the creation of tradition, the significance of place, the richness of language, and the use of imagination. The stories said that the Navajo homeland is where we began and where we were meant to be. This is where we fought and struggled to remain.

Whether or not the US government recognized the importance of Navajo elders, it did understand that Manuelito and Barboncito were Navajo leaders. So, in the spring of 1868, they and other Navajo elders traveled to Washington, D.C. This journey achieved what the federal government hoped it would: a Navajo realization of the size and the power of the United States. But, Manuelito made a forceful pitch of his own, that if any new treaty did not include a provision for the Navajos to return to their homeland, the federal government would have a full-scale revolt on its hands.

*Navajo
Mountain,
Arizona*

CLIFF LAPLANT





Coyotes are part of the Ma'ii Bizee'nast'aan ceremony.

BRIAN TANG/HARDRAIN1.COM

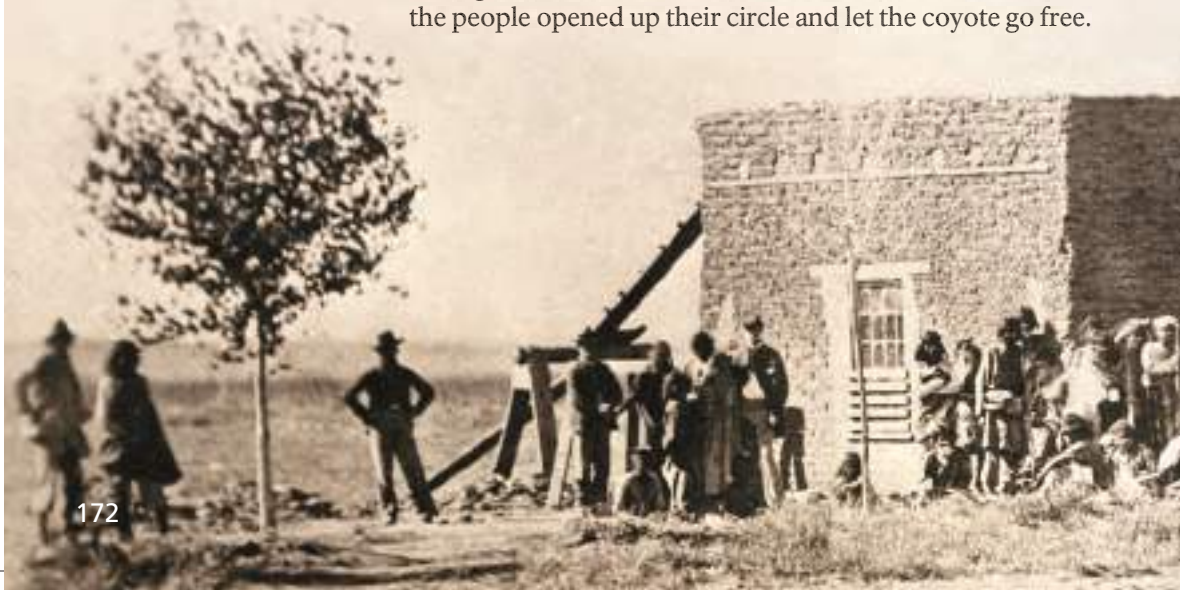
American policy toward American Indian nations began to change after the Civil War. Congressional leaders concluded that the United States no longer needed to enter into negotiations with Indian nations as separate, sovereign powers. They anticipated the end of the battles with the Apaches and the Lakotas and others who had resisted the intrusion of outsiders into their territory. Geronimo, Crazy Horse, and other warrior/leaders surely did not agree, but most Americans at least wanted to believe that the “Indian Wars” would soon conclude.

Yet if the Navajos were going to continue to exist as a people, they realized they would have to find a way to go back to their home country. Given the social, cultural, and economic importance of their land, they knew they would have to find a way to have at least a portion of that territory included in any treaty they signed. They knew this inclusion would not be automatically endorsed by government negotiators, so Navajo leaders conducted special ceremonies they hoped would help bring about a favorable outcome.

Though skilled at agriculture, the Navajo found farming difficult at Bosque Redondo. Barboncito noted, “We know this land does not like us.”

COURTESY PALACE OF THE GOVERNORS PHOTO ARCHIVES (NMHM/DCA) 044520

According to one Navajo oral legend, the people surrounded a coyote and Barboncito did “what is called the ‘Ma’ii Bizee’nast’aan’ (put bead in coyote’s mouth) ceremony.” The story says that the coyote faced east and Barboncito “caught the animal and put a piece of white shell, tapered at both ends, with a hole in the center into its mouth. As he let the coyote go free, she turned clockwise and walked off timidly, with her tail between her legs—toward the West.” At Barboncito’s command, the people opened up their circle and let the coyote go free.



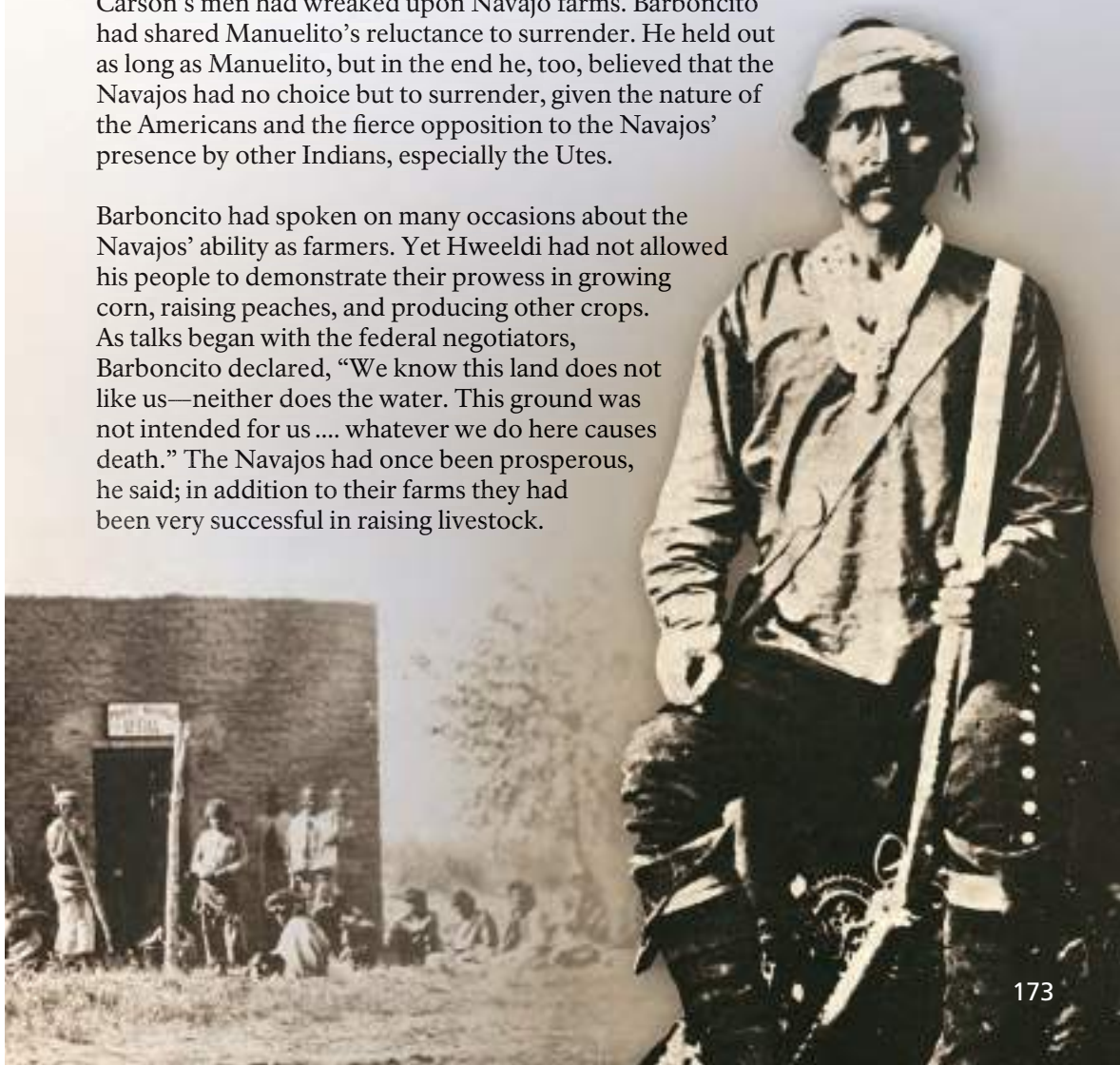
Barboncito then concluded, “There it is; we’ll be set free.” Four days later the Navajos learned they would be able to return to a portion of Diné Bikeyah (homeland).

Both Barboncito and Manuelito signed the treaty in 1868, but Barboncito served as the primary negotiator for the Navajos. Barboncito is less well-known than Manuelito today because he does not fit the usual mold of an 1800s American Indian leader or warrior. Barboncito was a member of several clans, including the Coyote Pass clan, a group of people from the Jemez Pueblo who had fled their home country after the Spanish returned to New Mexico in the wake of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Barboncito was born near the mouth of Canyon de Chelly, an area that had become increasingly important to the Navajo people during the first half of the 1800s. He had witnessed firsthand the senseless destruction Carson’s men had wreaked upon Navajo farms. Barboncito had shared Manuelito’s reluctance to surrender. He held out as long as Manuelito, but in the end he, too, believed that the Navajos had no choice but to surrender, given the nature of the Americans and the fierce opposition to the Navajos’ presence by other Indians, especially the Utes.

Barboncito had spoken on many occasions about the Navajos’ ability as farmers. Yet Hweeldi had not allowed his people to demonstrate their prowess in growing corn, raising peaches, and producing other crops. As talks began with the federal negotiators, Barboncito declared, “We know this land does not like us—neither does the water. This ground was not intended for us whatever we do here causes death.” The Navajos had once been prosperous, he said; in addition to their farms they had been very successful in raising livestock.

Barboncito served as the primary negotiator for the Navajo. He depended on insights gained from traditional ceremonies to determine direction for the people.

NATIONAL
ANTHROPOLOGICAL
ARCHIVES



General Sherman found Barboncito to be a tough and persuasive negotiator. He agreed that the enslavement of Navajo women and children must end, noting that the nation had just fought a war to end slavery.

Barboncito added that now “all nations around here are against us.” Mexicans and members of other Indian nations were determined to drive the Navajos out of their own country, yet the key to their future clearly could be found in that return. “I hope you will not ask me to go to any other country than my own,” Barboncito concluded. “It might turn out to be another Bosque Redondo. They told us this was a good place when we came, but it is not.”

Although Manuelito is well-known because of his role as a resistance leader, his importance in the workings of Navajo history is more multifaceted. His efforts to fight the Americans and his desire to avoid imprisonment at Hweeldi are easily understood. But Manuelito’s subsequent support for the education of Navajo children is often ignored or deemphasized. Manuelito earned high praise from Peterson Zah, former President of the Navajo Nation (1991-1995), for his appreciation of the importance of schooling for the Navajo future. Zah noted that Manuelito supported formal education during an era in which such support among the Navajos was rare. Zah concluded, “He said we had to learn to speak English. We have to learn the white man’s ways.” Then, Zah emphasized, “we can use the education to fight them in their own way.” If the Navajos were to add to their land base, they needed education if they were going to fight and win “their own battles.”

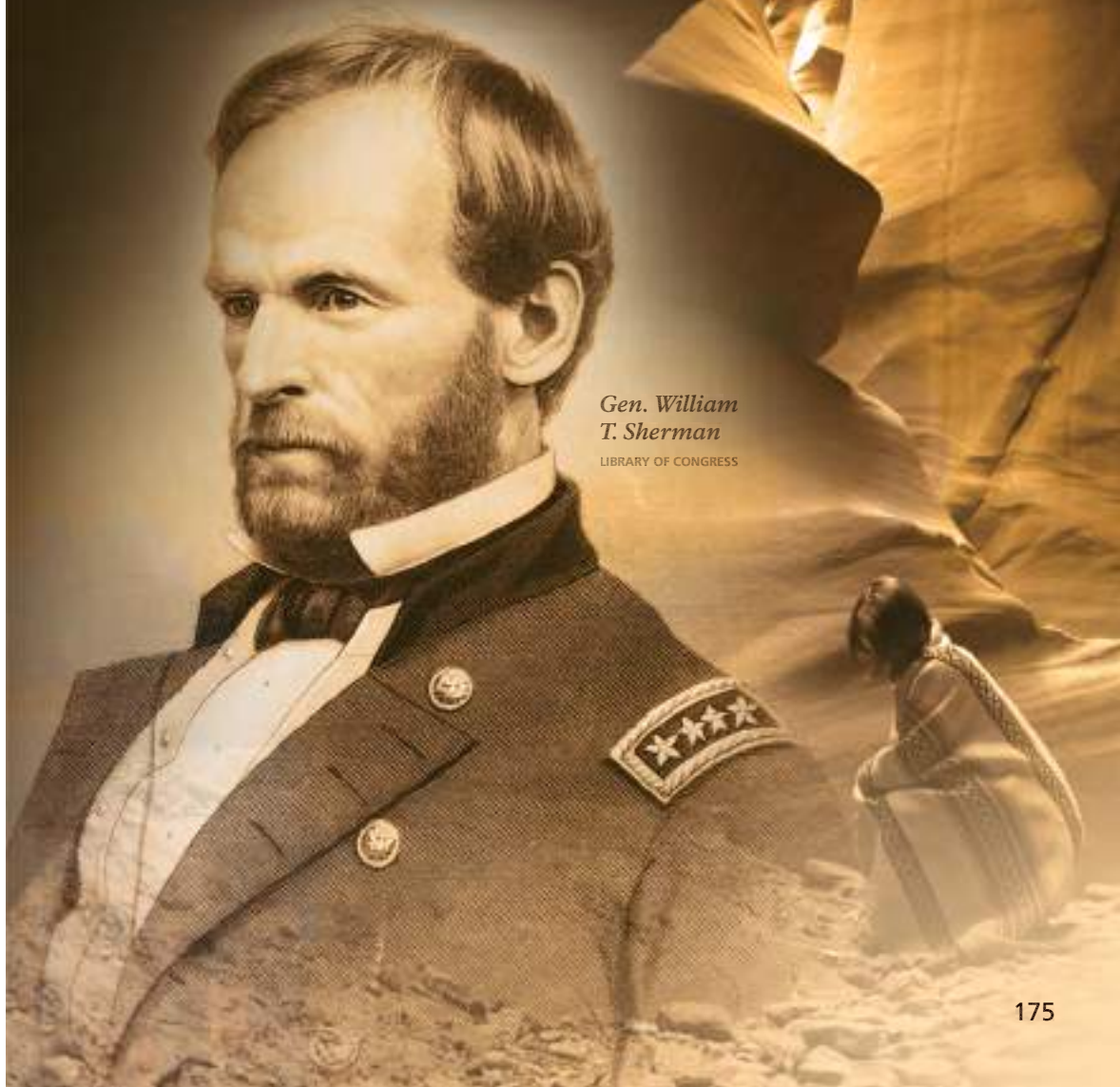
Barboncito and his compatriots had little reason to be optimistic about forthcoming negotiations. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman and Samuel Tappan came to New Mexico with this priority: to expedite American industrial expansion through the confinement of the Navajos and other Indian nations. They knew little about the Navajo people.

When Sherman proposed initially that the Navajos move to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) to join other Indian nations assembled there, Barboncito realized that he must not only resist that alternative but explain to the commissioners why his people must be permitted to return home. And if they were permitted to return home, then the government must do its part to end the capture and enslavement of Navajo women and children. Sherman acknowledged he knew little about this subject, but reminded the Navajos, in turn, that the end of slavery had been at the heart of the Civil War and that the federal government would not allow it to continue in the Southwest.

When it became clear on the following day that Sherman and Tappan would permit the Navajos to return to a portion of their homeland, Barboncito almost could not believe it. In his memoirs, Sherman acknowledged that the Navajos were tough and persuasive negotiators. He wrote: "Mr. Tappan and I found it impossible to prevail on the Navajos to remove to the Indian Territory, and had to consent to their return to their former home." Sherman also appeared to be pleased with his decision, noting that the Navajos "have remained at peace ever since." The Navajo future had been transformed. "After we get back to our country," Barboncito declared, "it will brighten up again and the Navajos will be as happy as the land. Black clouds will rise and there will be plenty of rain. Corn will grow in abundance."

*Gen. William
T. Sherman*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



The Long Walk had taken place over several years; the return home would happen all at once. Less than three weeks after the treaty had been signed, the more than 7,000 Navajos remaining at Fort Sumner began their journey home. Their population had declined by 2,000 from when they arrived there three years before. They formed a line a full ten miles long. On the return journey, the elderly and ill traveled in army wagons. Navajo stories say that when the old people first saw one of the Navajos' sacred mountains, Mount Taylor, they began to weep for joy. They knew the Fearing Time had at last come to an end.

When the people first saw one of the Navajos' sacred mountains, Mount Taylor, they began to cry. The Fearing Time had come to an end.

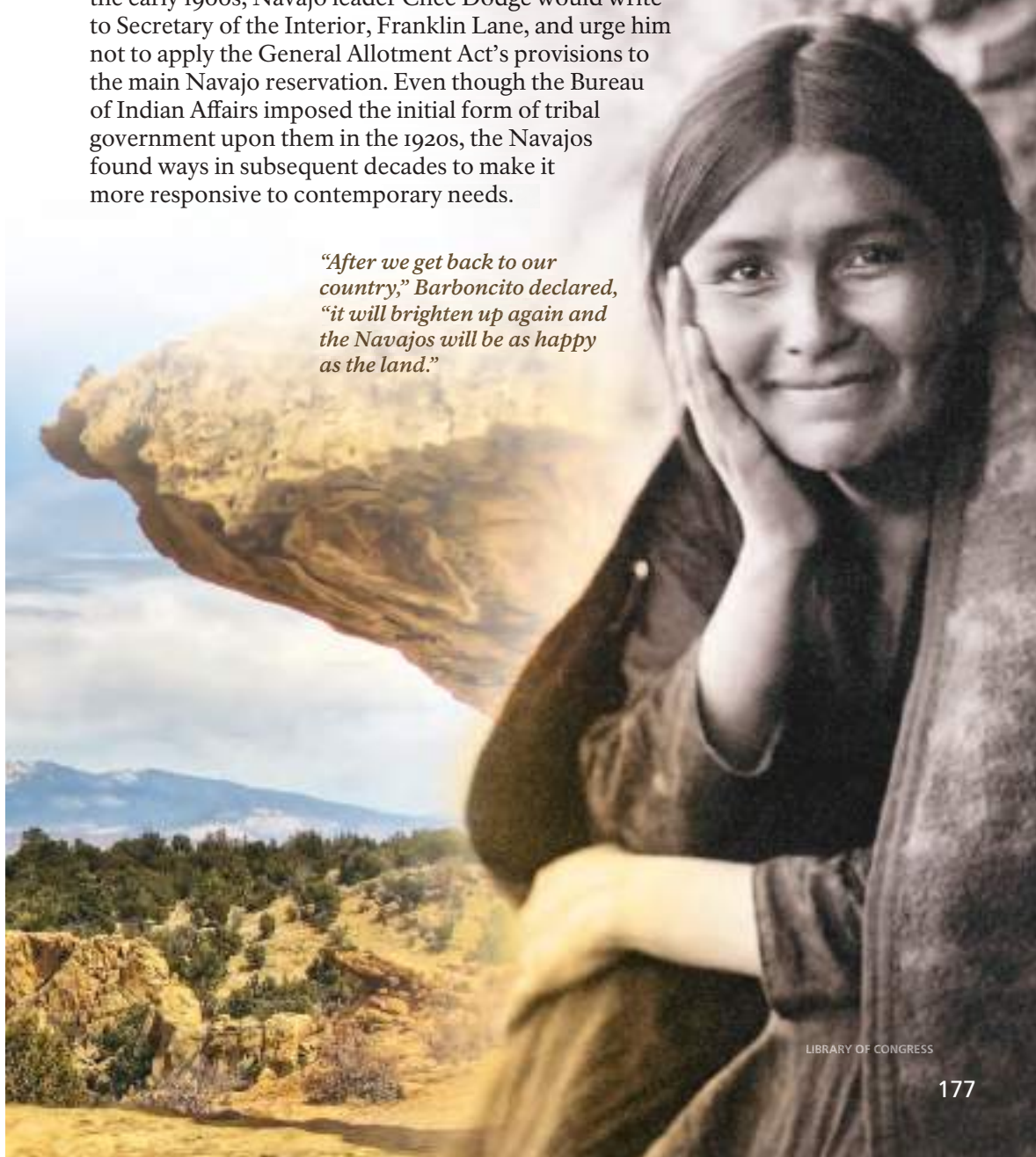
DICK JOHNSON
FLICKR.COM/ROVINGMAGPIE

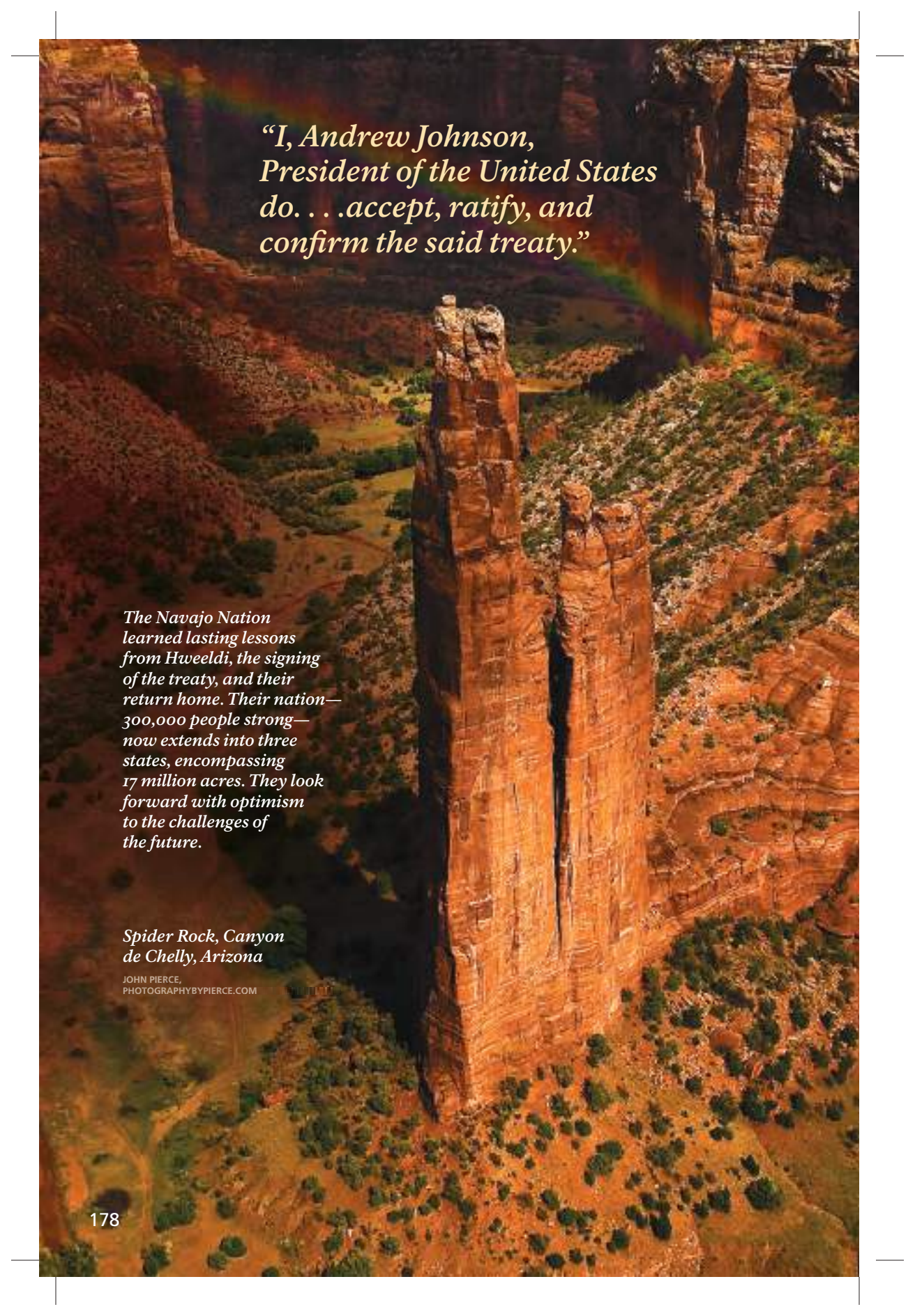
In time, the date on which the Navajos signed the treaty in 1868 became a Navajo national holiday. The treaty included generic language about education and other matters. But its importance would primarily lie not so much in its specific language as in its symbolic power. The treaty attested to the people's commitment never again to be separated from their land. The Navajos who avoided capture during Kit Carson's sweeps through Navajo land, solidified claims to the areas where they remained, such as Navajo Mountain and Black Mesa. Their presence in these locations strengthened future Navajo land claims. The story of Navajo expansion was vital to their overall empowerment in the years to come.

In 1999 Navajo faculty members at Northern Arizona University arranged for a copy of the treaty to be placed on display at the university's Cline Library. Throughout that year thousands of Navajos made their own journeys to see this document. The treaty had taken on not only a power but a life of its own. NAU faculty member Evangeline Parsons Yazzie, a Navajo, suggested the treaty had not seen the Navajos for a long time and had "probably missed us."

During the final years of the 1800s and in the decades that followed the people of the Navajo Nation confronted many issues that threatened its well-being. However, they had learned lasting lessons from Hweeldi, the signing of the treaty, and their return home. They had come to appreciate the importance of strong leadership from within their own nation even more. They knew that in the final analysis no one else could speak for them. They understood the significance of adding to their land base and not allowing others to divide it. For example, in the early 1900s, Navajo leader Chee Dodge would write to Secretary of the Interior, Franklin Lane, and urge him not to apply the General Allotment Act's provisions to the main Navajo reservation. Even though the Bureau of Indian Affairs imposed the initial form of tribal government upon them in the 1920s, the Navajos found ways in subsequent decades to make it more responsive to contemporary needs.

"After we get back to our country," Barboncito declared, "it will brighten up again and the Navajos will be as happy as the land."





*“I, Andrew Johnson,
President of the United States
do. . . accept, ratify, and
confirm the said treaty.”*

*The Navajo Nation
learned lasting lessons
from Hweeldi, the signing
of the treaty, and their
return home. Their nation—
300,000 people strong—
now extends into three
states, encompassing
17 million acres. They look
forward with optimism
to the challenges of
the future.*

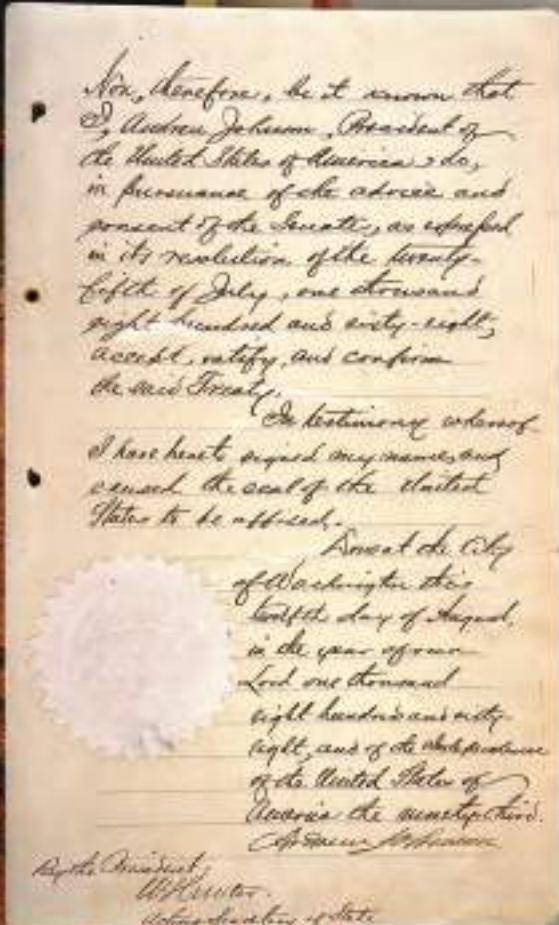
*Spider Rock, Canyon
de Chelly, Arizona*

JOHN PIERCE,
PHOTOGRAPHYBYPIERCE.COM

Today the Navajo Nation extends into three states: Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. It encompasses more than 17 million acres. The increasingly urbanized Navajo population exceeds more than 300,000. As do all Indian nations, the Navajo Nation faces difficult, complex questions. Yet if one asks former president Peterson Zah about the Navajo

future, he presents an optimistic view of their tomorrows. He asserts, "don't call it a problem, call it a challenge." But Zah also speaks reverently about the Navajo past, with particular praise for Manuelito and Barboncito. "Every generation has its leaders. They do whatever it is that they think should be done. And while doing that throughout history, they did a wonderful thing for the Navajo people. These qualities or attributes of leaders really come with time, because we have our leadership qualities, abilities and what we have to offer." He adds, "individual leaders have to have a dream or vision...."

In 1968, 100 years after the Treaty of 1868, the Navajos celebrated what they termed a century of progress. They declared they would no longer be called the Navajo Tribe; hereafter they would officially be called the Navajo Nation. They continued to celebrate the day their leaders had signed the treaty, and they looked forward to the challenges the future would bring.



The Navajo Treaty of 1868 allowed the Navajo to leave Bosque Redondo and return home to Canyon de Chelly.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Conclusion

*Elliott West, Alumni Distinguished Professor
University of Arkansas-Fayetteville*

Unlike many of the world's civil wars, the American Civil War eventually ended with a national narrative enabling supporters of both the Confederacy and the Union to focus on the mutual sacrifices and valor shared by those on both sides. Four million enslaved African Americans were freed with the promise and seeming guarantee of equal opportunity that went unfulfilled. For American Indians, even those who staked their hopes and dreams on serving in the conflict, the war often accelerated the tragic history that had begun with European conquest. For American Indians in the Far West, the Civil War sped up their placement on reservations that consisted of small fractions of their traditional homelands.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By the usual historical measurements, the significance of the Far West in the Civil War was minimal, to say the least. Scholars often write it off so thoroughly that the “war in the West” refers to the fighting in Tennessee, Mississippi and, at the farthest, the Red River in Louisiana. In explaining the war’s outcome, the neglect of the Far West is understandable. The only remotely consequential action came with the Confederacy’s botched try at seizing New Mexico and Colorado—a campaign that failed early and was probably doomed from the start. If our concern is to understand the grand military narrative, a natural response to a discussion of the war in the West would be: “Who cares?”

If, however, our concern is the history of American Indian peoples and the relations between Indians and whites, the answer is quite different. What unfolded in the West between 1861 and 1865 was critically important—and for Indians, catastrophic. The story of controlling, dispossessing, and confining American Indians beyond the Mississippi River typically focuses on the years after the war. The defeat of the Sioux, Cheyennes, Comanches, Kiowas, and Apaches are probably the most written-about episodes in the 250 years of conflict between the cultures. Yet those events cannot truly be understood except in light of what happened in the years immediately preceding, as the blue and the gray were slugging it out in the East. By the time Generals Grant and Lee met at that farmhouse in Appomattox Court House, the groundwork for the final military defeat of native peoples had largely been laid.

By the time Lee surrendered to Grant, the groundwork for the final military defeat of American Indian nations had largely been laid.

NPS/KEITH ROCCO

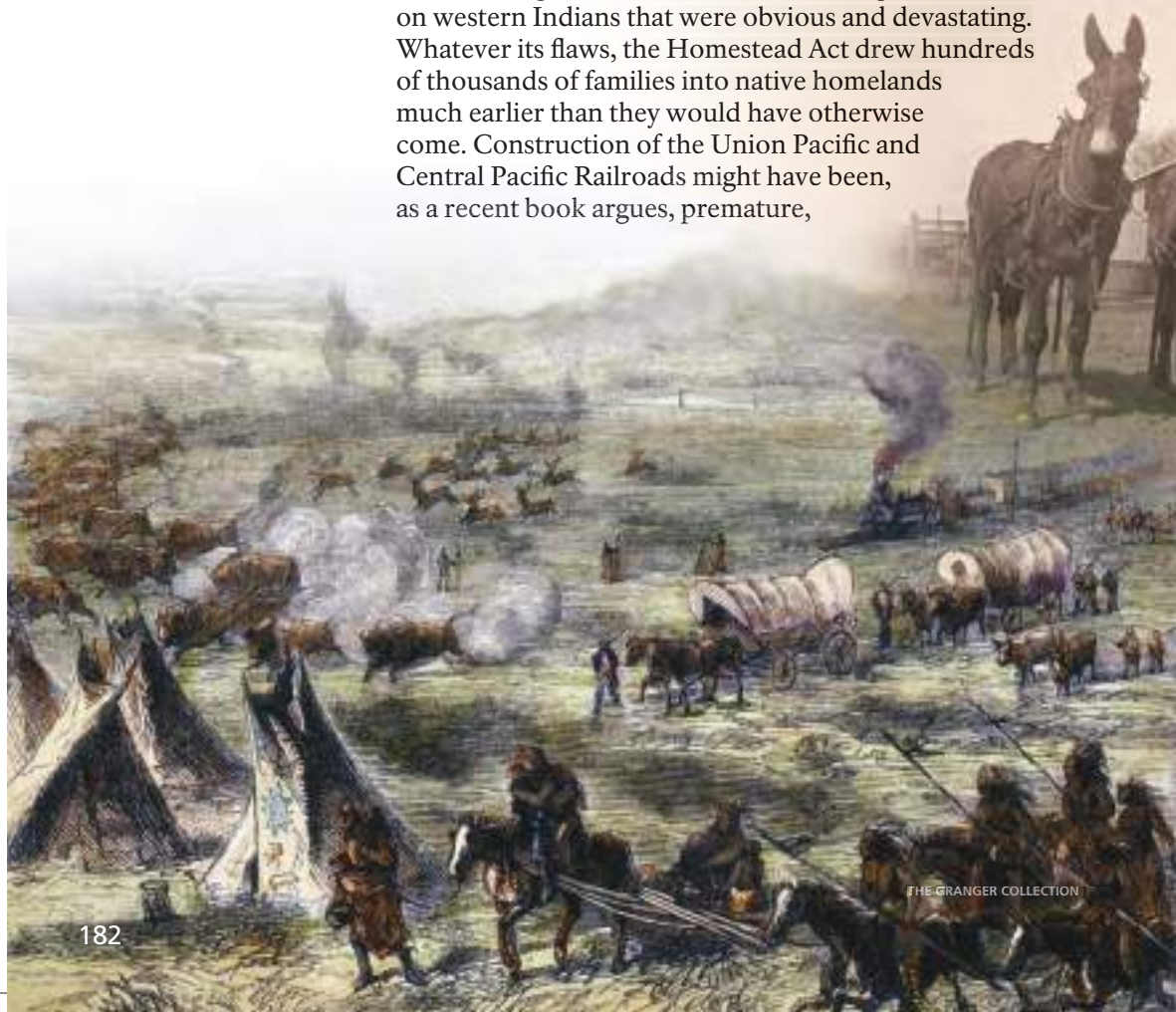


The Homestead Act of 1862 drew hundreds of thousands of white families into native homelands earlier than they would have otherwise come.

NPS/HOMESTEAD

Some of the most consequential events had nothing to do, directly at least, with Indians. American expansion to the Pacific Ocean between 1845 and 1848 left the United States with both glittering opportunities and enormous challenges. High on the list among the latter was the need to connect the new territory physically to the rest of the republic. The expanse was breathtaking—about 1,250,000 square miles—and the terrain posed puzzles much more daunting than anything faced so far. Fully exploring and exploiting the Far West demanded a basic infrastructure of movement and control. Filling that need would also give the US military the reach and grasp it would need to confront the dozens of American Indian nations that suddenly found themselves within the nation's borders.

When the Far West does appear in histories of the Civil War, you can count on one topic coming up, the passage in the early summer of 1862 of the Homestead Act, the Transcontinental Railroad Act, and the Morrill (Land Grant College) Act. The first two had long-term effects on western Indians that were obvious and devastating. Whatever its flaws, the Homestead Act drew hundreds of thousands of families into native homelands much earlier than they would have otherwise come. Construction of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads might have been, as a recent book argues, premature,



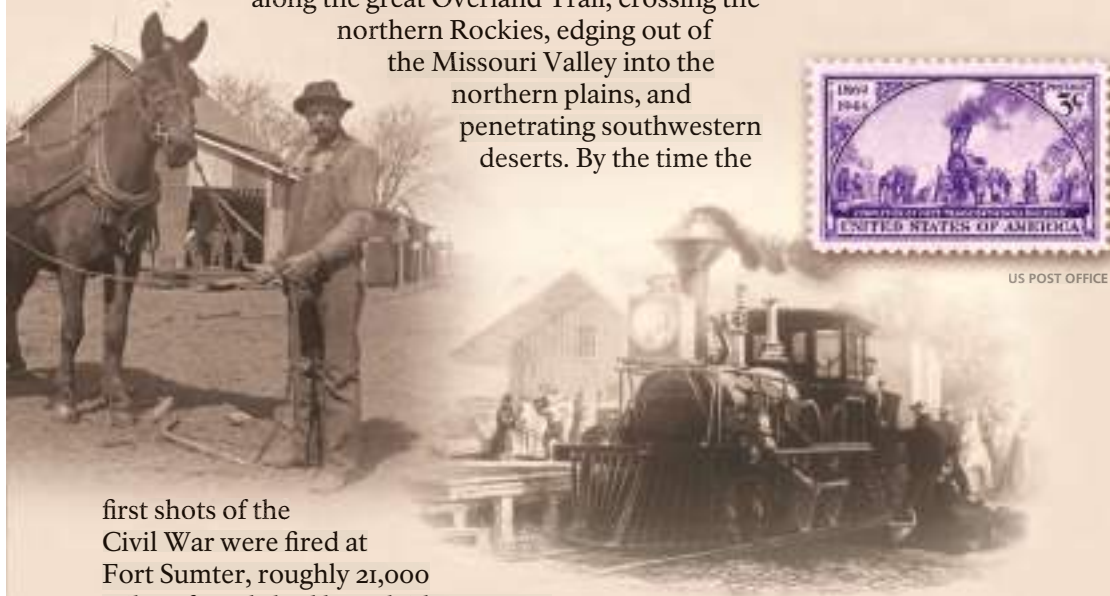
THE GRANGER COLLECTION

financially ruinous and dizzyingly corrupt, but in the short run it triggered a series of treaties that began Indian dispossession in areas like the Pacific Northwest. In the long run it allowed the military to maneuver, if not nimbly, at least far more effectively than it would have otherwise. Looking back on the defeat of Indians, Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman credited army operations and the impact of settlement, and then added that “the railroad has become the greater cause.”

The effect of the Transcontinental Railroad Act was devastating on Indian nations in the West.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Homesteading and the first transcontinental railroad did not really get underway until the war was over, but the federal government had begun connecting the Far West with the rest of the nation well before 1861. During the 1850s both the Department of the Interior, through the Pacific Wagon Roads Office created in 1856, and the Department of War through the Corps of Topographical Engineers, surveyed and improved (although, not entirely successfully) a remarkable weave of wagon roads across the West. The roads ran along the great Overland Trail, crossing the northern Rockies, edging out of the Missouri Valley into the northern plains, and penetrating southwestern deserts. By the time the



US POST OFFICE

first shots of the Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter, roughly 21,000 miles of roads had been laid out, more than 12 times the length of the first transcontinental railroad and nearly enough to circle the Earth at the equator. All were built in part with an eye to establishing and supporting a military presence across the new country—and through that presence, to dealing with Indians when the occasion arose.

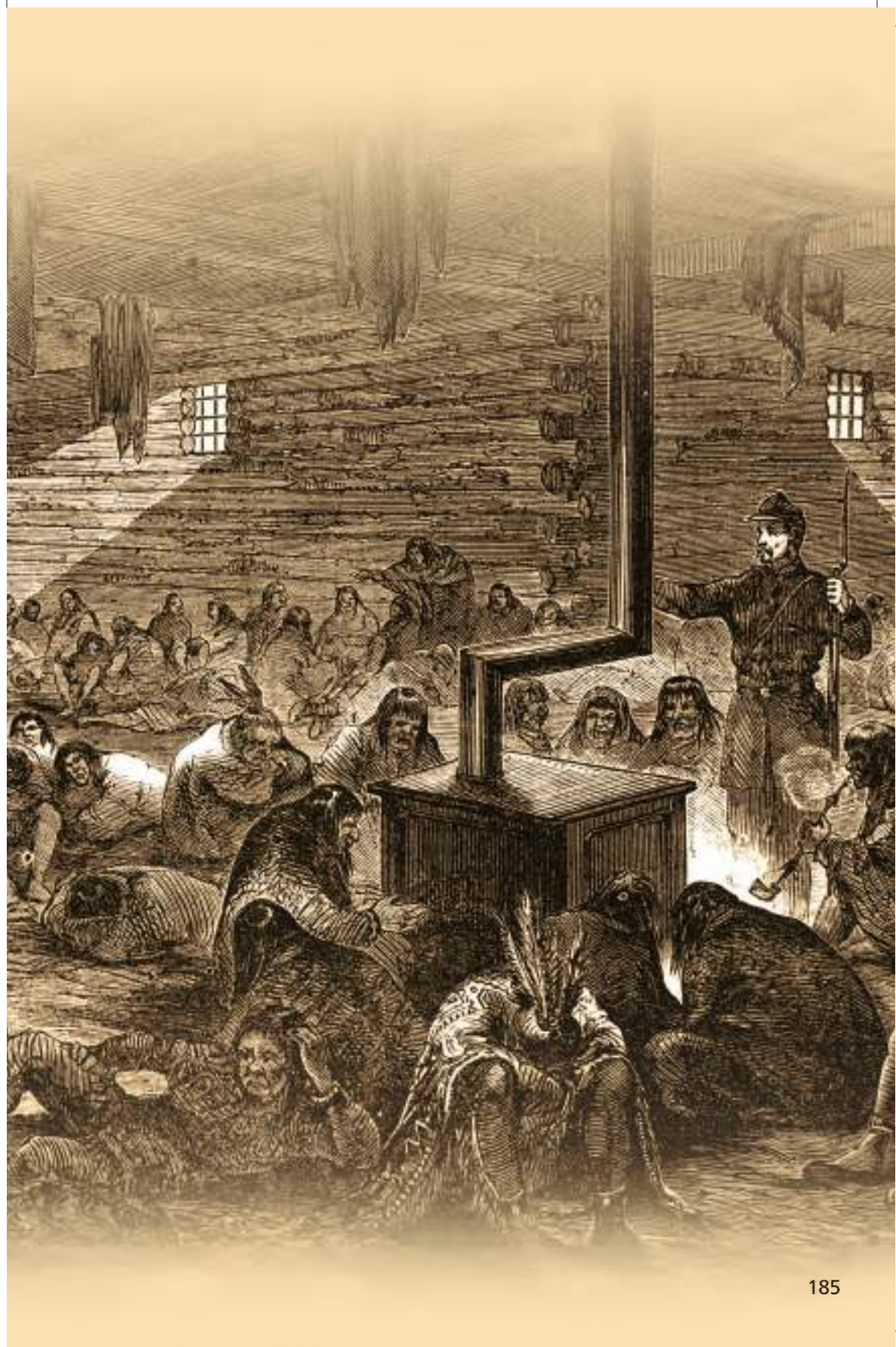
*Captured
Dakota men
await their
fate after the
Dakota War
of 1862.*

MINNESOTA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Another development, at least as important as the others, came during the war. In July 1860, Congress authorized construction of the first transcontinental telegraph line. Begun on July 4, 1861, the day Congress called the first 500,000 Union troops into uniform, it was to be built westward from Omaha and eastward from California and meet at Salt Lake City. It was completed in an astounding 112 days, nine months ahead of the deadline. Relatively cheap and easy to construct, a telegraphic grid spread rapidly over the West. No development was more instrumental in defeating the often elusive Indians beyond the Missouri. The ability to communicate information on the whereabouts of their adversaries and to order distant troops into coordinated action gave the understaffed, undersupplied, and underfunded western military a considerable edge.

While the effects of homesteading and the new infrastructure of roads, rails, and wires on American Indian nations came primarily after the Civil War, other events during the war would impact them directly and disastrously. The Dakota War of 1862, described in detail in this book, ended with the defeat and exile of one of the largest tribal groups east of the Missouri River. More than 1,300 Dakotas (and later several hundred Winnebagos, who had nothing to do with the uprising) were sent to a barren stretch in what would become South Dakota. By one report each person received about eight ounces of rations per day, mostly as a thin soup. Roughly a fourth of them died during the first six months. In another tragedy also related in this book, conflicts with the nations living in Indian Territory drove more than 7,000 pro-Union Indians, mostly Creeks and Cherokees, into southern Kansas, there to suffer horrifically from hunger, cold, and disease during 1861-62. An army surgeon, who amputated more than a hundred frozen limbs, wrote: "It is impossible to describe the wretchedness of their condition." These refugees returned to land devastated by guerilla warfare, looting raids of white Kansans, and the destruction of their property, including more than 250,000 cattle.







*The Indian
School at
Cantonment,
Ohio*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Those two events were the final grotesque twitching of the government policy of removal. The Dakotas and Winnebagos were the last eastern groups to be removed, while the agonies in Indian Territory were an appalling epilogue to the infamous Trail of Tears of the 1830s. Tribes had just begun to rebound from that earlier disaster when this second, equally calamitous blow fell. As with the Trail of Tears, estimates of losses during the Civil War are hard to calculate, but by one census, one out of three Cherokee women was a widow and one in four children was an orphan.

In any case the policy of removal was now untenable. Its strategy was to relocate eastern tribes into what is now eastern Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska, and then to establish a line of military posts, the “permanent Indian frontier.” This would isolate the eastern Indians and allow time for their transformation into acceptable members of white society. The whole structure, however, assumed that the nation’s western boundary would remain along the continental divide and the border with Texas. The expansion of the 1840s demolished that assumption. The United States now reached to the Pacific Ocean, which left the removed Indians essentially where they had been before—in the middle of the nation and

squarely in the path of white Americans moving west. Removal to some spot farther on was not an option. This latest expansion into American Indian homelands also brought white American culture into contact with large populations of Indians whose traditions were far more alien to white life ways and cultural norms than those of tribes in the East. As the nation moved toward the Civil War in the East, what was called the “Indian problem,” how to transform native peoples into proto-citizens ready to merge into the American mainstream, demanded a new answer.

The result was the reservation system. Reservations were essentially a form of internal removal. Rather than all tribes being transported and isolated together on the far western edge of the nation, each group would be set on some “reserved” spot within the West as the region was rapidly settled and developed. The goal was the same as before. On each reservation, guided by the government-appointed agent and with Washington providing support, Indians were to be schooled in national ways and values: converted to Christianity, transformed from hunters and gatherers into farmers, and educated in the culture of white America. Reservations never worked as planned. Plagued by incompetence and corruption, pitifully underfunded and laughably naïve in vision, they would become a national scandal. The system was, nonetheless, the guiding strategy of Indian policy after expansion to the Pacific.

On the reservations, Indians were to be converted to Christianity, transformed from hunters and gatherers into farmers, and educated in the culture of white America.

The government school for Indians in Pine Ridge, South Dakota

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS





The US Army's goal to end the independence of Indians once and for all was complicated by both the setting and the fact that western tribes were far more mobile and elusive than the farming tribes in the East.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The implications of the new policy emerged immediately before and during the Civil War. Among the most obvious was a shift in the role of the military. The army would continue some earlier responsibilities, keeping whites and Indians apart by keeping the former off reservations and the latter on them, but it also assumed a new role and posture. Ideally tribes would agree to the treaties assigning their reservations, but virtually all resisted, many violently, and when they did, the military's job was to subdue them and to enforce the government's demands.

As the nation edged toward sectional war in the East, the army in the West was moving toward its own confrontation. The army took on a role that was inherently more aggressive, with an ultimate goal of not only controlling Indians but ending their independence once and for all. Two factors complicated the army's new role. One was the setting: the army would be operating in country and under conditions vastly different from that of its operations against Indians in the East. The second was the nature of the army's adversaries. Most western Indians, peoples who lived by hunting, gathering, and fishing, were far more mobile and inherently elusive than the village-dwelling, farming tribes of the East. In this sense the Civil War years saw a military crisis in the West as well as in the East.

It was during the Civil War that the military in the West developed the essential strategy it would apply after 1865. Interestingly, the key event in that development was rarely given much attention, or even noted at all, in histories of

far western Indian wars. In September, 1862, word came of nearly two dozen white emigrants killed by Northern Shoshone Indians along the Overland Trail in northern Utah. Later the number of dead was sharply lowered, and serious doubt was cast on whether the Northern Shoshones or others had done the deed, but there had been mounting problems between Indians and settlers on the Utah stretch of the trail. Federal authorities responded to the report with an order to use the occasion to teach the Shoshones a lesson, and by implication make an emphatic point to other native peoples along the route.

The reasons for the tensions were all too familiar. The Overland Route ran along rivers vitally important to native economies. White immigrants cut and burned the trees that tribal bands needed during the winter months, while settlers' horses, mules, and oxen, hundreds of thousands of them, devoured grasses that fed Indian horses and that provided seeds to feed the people. The results in the Great Basin, a naturally stingy environment, were especially dire, and by the 1860s the Shoshones were reeling from the effects. Illnesses, especially dysentery and cholera, had also taken an appalling toll in the 1850s. A gold strike in Montana in 1861-62 brought a new surge of invasion and disruption. The clashes between whites and Shoshones anticipated others with Cheyennes and Arapahoes along the Platte, with Comanches and Kiowas along the Arkansas, and with Lakota Sioux and Northern Cheyennes along the Bozeman Trail from 1864-68.



This US Army Service Medal was given to soldiers participating in the Indian Wars.

US ARMY

Indians resisted the army's attempt to subdue them in clashes such as this near Fort Philip Kearney in Dakota Territory.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Sioux artist Colleen Cutschall created this sculpture to honor the memory and spirit of the Indian men, women, and children who died at the Battle of Little Bighorn.

BOB REECE



*Lakota
Sioux chief
and holy man,
Thathanka
Iyotake
(Sitting Bull)*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

As discussed elsewhere in this volume, the man given the job of forcing the confrontation with the Northern Shoshones was Col. Patrick E. Connor, a veteran of the Seminole and Mexican Wars now commanding California Volunteers in Utah. Timing would prove to be crucial. Although there were clashes during the fall and early winter, Connor did not organize his main thrust until mid-January. He led more than 300 cavalry against the Shoshone Chief Bear Hunter's camp along the Bear River in what is today far southern Idaho. It was bitterly cold. More than 70 frostbitten troops were left along the way, and whiskey rations froze in the horsemen's canteens. When Connor attacked on the morning of January 29, 1863, the Shoshones were entrenched behind sound fortifications, and at first Connor's men paid the greatest toll, but when some of them flanked the Indian defenses, the battle turned into a rout, and the rout into a massacre. Connor lost a couple of dozen men. How many Indians died is unclear, but recent research puts the figure at perhaps more than 400. The Bear River massacre, scarcely noted in most western histories, was the bloodiest loss of Indians in all conflicts west of the Missouri River.

The most telling moment came after the battle. After taking all remaining horses and burning more than 70 lodges and large amounts of food and other possessions, Connor wrote that he set out "a small quantity of wheat" for 160 surviving women and children, "whom I left on the field." The image of these people

Custer and the 7th Cavalry suffered an overwhelming defeat by Lakota, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors inspired by the visions of Thathanka Iyotake (Sitting Bull).

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

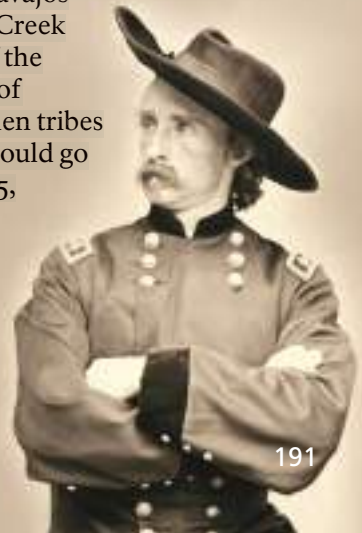


standing homeless and unprotected in deep cold illustrates the lesson the military took from the attack at Bear River. To defeat highly mobile enemies, wait until they are immobile in the depths of winter when cold weather forces them to move their camps to protected areas. Use outside support to supply food for men and horses. Use the new infrastructure of roads to maneuver and to move against the vulnerable Indian camps. Then hit your opponents hard, take their horses, and destroy what they need to survive. After that, further significant resistance will be unlikely.

The seasonal timing of famous native defeats in the following 15 years is revealing in light of this oddly obscure episode on January 29, 1863. As discussed elsewhere in this volume, during the Civil War there was Kit Carson's campaign against the Navajos at Canyon de Chelly on January 12-14, 1864 and the Sand Creek massacre on November 29, 1864. Later came the battle of the Washita on November 27, 1868 and the Marias massacre of Blackfeet on January 23, 1870. During summer battles, when tribes were most mobile and their horses the strongest, things could go differently, as at the battle of the Little Bighorn on June 25, 1876. The military's response to that humiliation was to wait until the turn of the year and then run down the scattered bands on the army's own terms. Dull Knife's Northern Cheyennes were crushed at a winter camp on November 25, 1876, and afterwards their lodges were burned and their horses taken or shot.

*George
Armstrong
Custer*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Help At Nicodemus

Well before the post-Civil War Reconstruction period ended in 1877, oppression had already deeply eroded the few social and economic gains blacks had achieved. Some formerly enslaved African Americans moved west in search of new opportunities.

Oral traditions tell of Osage and Potawatomi Indians assisting black homesteaders in Nicodemus, Kansas, by giving the settlers food and clothing to help them survive their first bitter prairie winter. Even though the native tribes were being relocated from their traditional homelands, they chose to assist the African American homesteaders wanting the freedom to farm their own land.

The freed people eventually built Nicodemus into a small but thriving agricultural community, which is preserved in part today at Nicodemus National Historic Site.



In the history of far western Indian peoples, the Civil War years were highly important, even pivotal. They witnessed the calamity of tribes caught up in the final throes of conquest in the East. Meanwhile, the institutional and physical basis was laid for the rapid dispossession of western tribes after 1865. The federal government grappled with the implications of its new reservation policy, in particular the military's new purposes and the formidable challenges to meeting them. By the end of the Civil War, the army had discovered the key to military victory in the West and had used it in three devastating blows against western tribes. As troops in the East finally confirmed the survival of the Union, the stage was set in the West for the government's rapid completion of the conquest of American Indian peoples. Its war on their cultures would follow.

Considering the magnitude of the forces aligned against western Indians, and given that the Civil War also confirmed and strengthened federal authority, what is most remarkable is that native cultures have survived as well as they have. The four years that saved the Union left Indian peoples facing overwhelming odds. Their persistence, courage, and adaptive brilliance in the years that followed are one of the great American stories.



*Celebrating
the past,
present, and
future at a
powwow in
Denver,
Colorado.*

SANDRA LEIDHOLDT



At a Victory Dance in his honor, Cheyenne soldier Lomar Wandering Medicine is welcomed home from his tour of duty in Iraq, where he liberated a flag from the palace of Saddam Hussein.

LARRY MAYER, BILLINGS GAZETTE

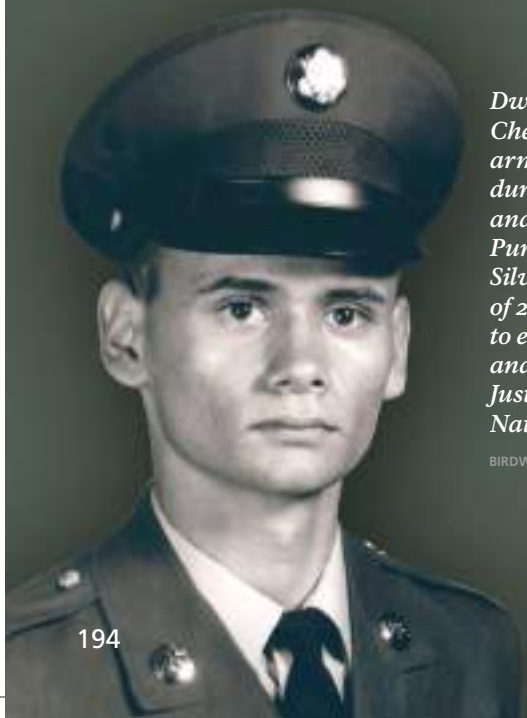
Killed in an attack on her convoy, Lori Piestewa of the Hopi Nation was the first woman in the armed forces to die in the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

NEETA LIND



Dwight W. Birdwell, Cherokee, served as an armored tank crewman during the Vietnam War and was awarded a Purple Heart and two Silver Stars at the age of 20. He returned home to earn a law degree and later served as Chief Justice of the Cherokee Nation Supreme Court.

BIRDWELL FAMILY



Serving Still

“It is well recognized that, historically, Native Americans have the highest record of service per capita when compared to other ethnic groups.”

-US Department of Defense

One of the marines who planted the US flag on the island of Iwo Jima during WWII, now immortalized in this famous monument, was Cpl. Ira Hayes of the Pima Nation.

ROB SVIRSKAS

American Indians served as “code talkers” to transmit secret tactical messages; the Choctaws in both world wars, and the Navajos, Cherokees, Lakotas, and Comanches in WWII.

US NAVY



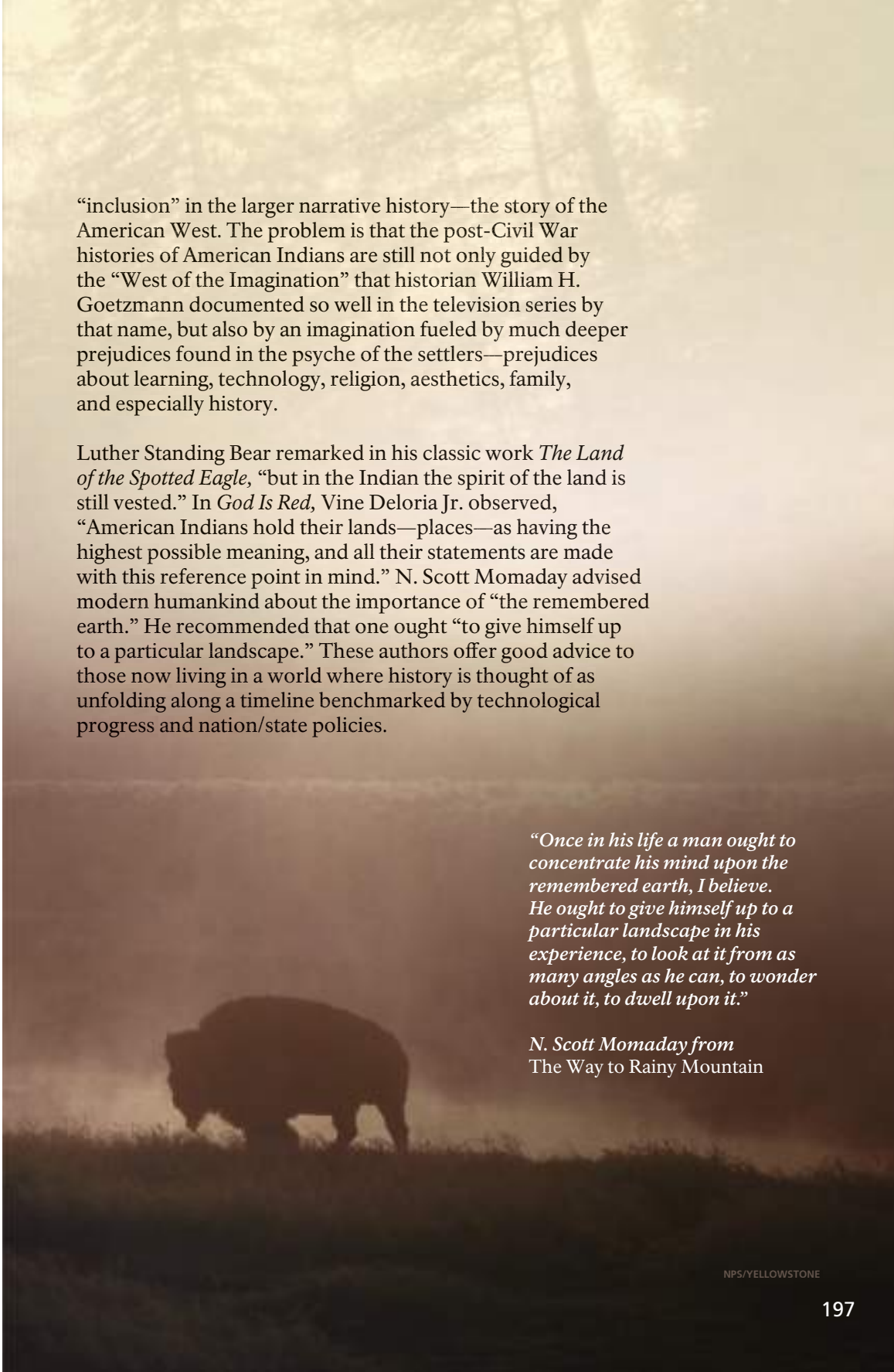
Epilog: You Cannot Remember What You Never Knew

*Daniel Wildcat, Professor, Haskell Indian Nations University
Yuchi member of the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma*

In his memoirs, John Quincy Adams wrote—after he negotiated the treaty to end the War of 1812 with the British—that the United States would “formally undertake, and accomplish their [the American Indians] utter extermination.” He went on to write that attempting to change the course of filling western lands would be like “opposing a feather to a torrent.” Adams was wrong. For even with assaults on land, culture, traditions, and language, American Indian nations have survived. Not only have indigenous cultures survived, but they have a great deal to offer Americans in the modern world, primarily by sharing their reverence for the land around them.

In a fundamental sense, history or “what happened” depends on who you ask. It depends on who is telling the story. After the American Civil War, “what happened” with respect to the American Indians, the indigenous nations, or peoples of the American frontier, is typically recounted through written documents and reports of events and activities and herein is the problem. Settler and soldier-produced written documents and narratives tell their story but the narrative is all about what was done to the indigenous peoples of the post-Civil War frontier.

Technologies such as the telegraph and the railroads and government policies including the Doolittle Committee of 1865, Grant’s “Quaker” Peace Policy, the Indian Appropriation Act of 1871, the Homestead Act of 1862, and other actions of the United States government, figure prominently in narratives of what happened. Most textbook narratives are indicative of the problem many American Indians have with our current



“inclusion” in the larger narrative history—the story of the American West. The problem is that the post-Civil War histories of American Indians are still not only guided by the “West of the Imagination” that historian William H. Goetzmann documented so well in the television series by that name, but also by an imagination fueled by much deeper prejudices found in the psyche of the settlers—prejudices about learning, technology, religion, aesthetics, family, and especially history.

Luther Standing Bear remarked in his classic work *The Land of the Spotted Eagle*, “but in the Indian the spirit of the land is still vested.” In *God Is Red*, Vine Deloria Jr. observed, “American Indians hold their lands—places—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind.” N. Scott Momaday advised modern humankind about the importance of “the remembered earth.” He recommended that one ought “to give himself up to a particular landscape.” These authors offer good advice to those now living in a world where history is thought of as unfolding along a timeline benchmarked by technological progress and nation/state policies.

“Once in his life a man ought to concentrate his mind upon the remembered earth, I believe. He ought to give himself up to a particular landscape in his experience, to look at it from as many angles as he can, to wonder about it, to dwell upon it.”

*N. Scott Momaday from
The Way to Rainy Mountain*

The story I want to share is of indigenous peoples, who in spite of incredible losses and numerous military and political defeats, remain undefeated in the only manner that really counts—in our spirit.



MARIA SPENCER/WWW.RIAFINEART.COM



The story I want to share is different from the “Winning of the West” and “Manifest Destiny” narratives that have dominated American frontier history. The following is a sketch of a much larger and richer set of narratives of diverse peoples and places. What follows is a story of peoples who never imagined their histories as distinct from particular landscapes; of peoples who understood their history, culture, and identity as emergent from the powers of place. This will be a sketch of diverse peoples and individuals who might best be understood in the formulation, “power plus place equals personality” that Vine Deloria Jr. suggested.

What follows is the antithesis of histories of manifest destiny, conquest, and progress. It is a living history of peoples concerned with the powers of our diverse landscapes, never forgetting the American Indians of this land were exactly that: of this land. It is an essay through indigenous eyes. This essay is for those among us who cannot remember what they never knew.

Let us be clear, the indigenous people of the land the Euro-American settlers called a frontier faced military atrocities and depredations of US government policies. However, I believe there is no reason to feel guilty about the past so long as one does not carry the prejudices of the past into the present. Rather one should join the growing number of people on the planet who are beginning to recognize that there is something useful to be learned from tribal peoples on this planet. The history of the American West is a case in point.

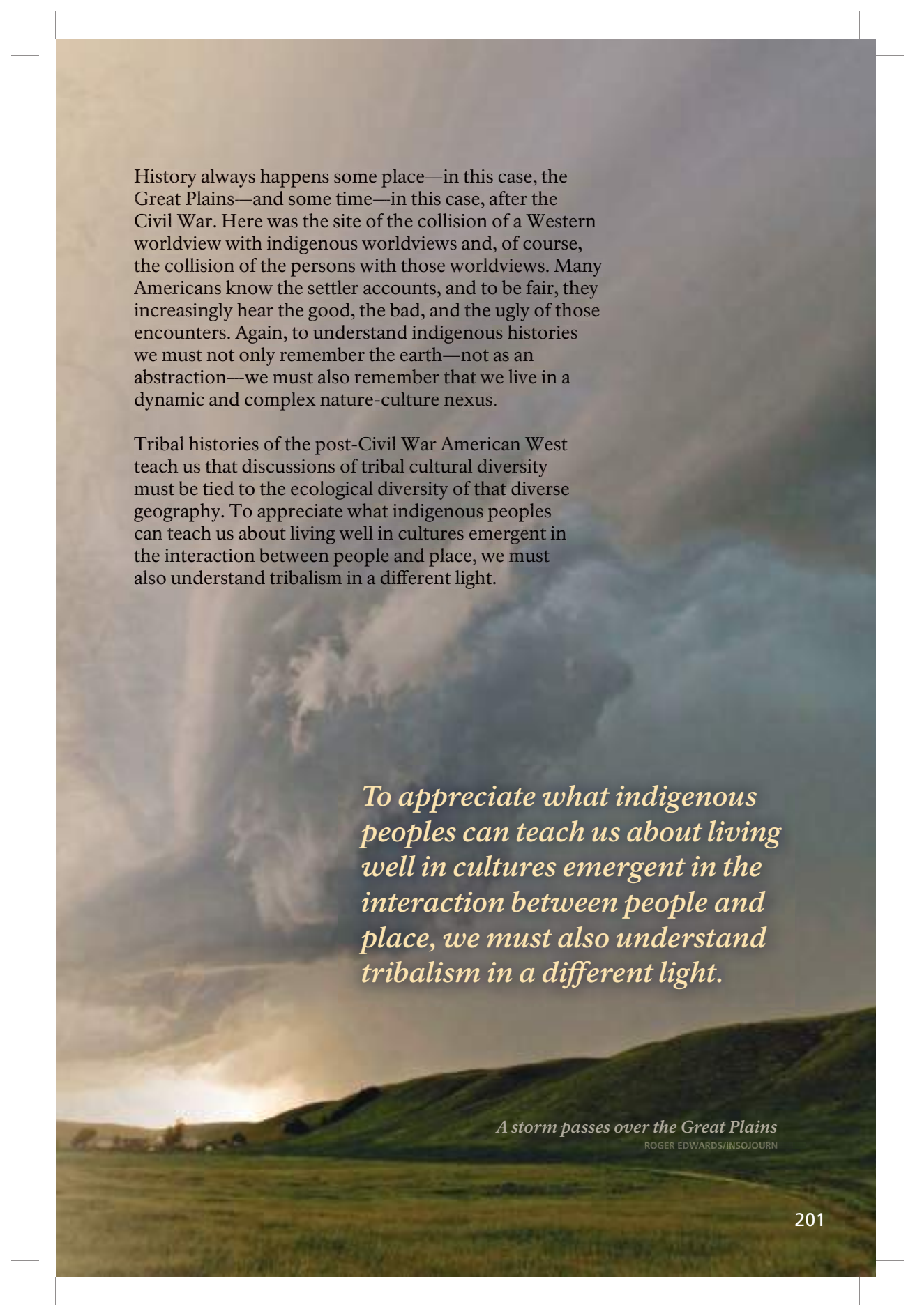
Indigenous histories emphasize the resilience and resistance of the peoples who dwelled and continue to dwell upon the land. The history I want to share is of indigenous peoples, who in spite of incredible losses and numerous military and political defeats, remain undefeated in the only manner that really counts—in our spirit: a resilient spirit that resides in the land or, to speak more precisely, in the landscapes and seascapes from which their unique tribal identities emerged. The stories of the American Indians were formed as a result of what I describe as a symbiotic relationship between a people and a place, in what I call the nature-culture nexus.

The beauty of the indigenous histories of the peoples of the American West is that their histories and cultures remain—as strange as it may seem to those of us living in the midst of increasingly geographically mobile populations—grounded literally and figuratively in symbiotic relationships they established with that part of the natural world they called home. These histories constitute natural histories of peoples and places.

They offer a cure to the technology-induced historical amnesia that makes us forget that life is not all about us. This constitutes the foundation of what I would call indigenous realism. These histories are particularly relevant today because they speak to the dimension of history lost or at least obscured in our recent human stories of industrial development and the civilizing of the frontier. They remind those who have forgotten that we must live attentively in places with the nonhuman designed and created features of the landscape and environment. They remind us it is dangerous to write our human histories by only looking in the mirror at ourselves and our creations.

For the most part even the story of the post-Civil War Indian experience remains a story of the settlers. It is a story of their technology—the telegraph or the railroads—a grand narrative of overcoming the separation of humans by distance. It embodies the emergence of the intoxicating idea that in the space-time dimension we inhabit, physical separation—distance—can be reduced with the help of technology. With the revolutions in communication and transportation technologies, the worldview of modernity fully emerged on the frontier. Everything—the land itself—even when it appeared in the settler worldview as inhospitable, could be overcome: it was only a question of time.

The post-Civil War history of the Great Plains offers an interesting case study of what happens when people who thought of making history in a future-oriented sense of time meet peoples who understood their history as happening in a place. Vine Deloria Jr. who formulated this distinction, understood that this could never be an either/or proposition, but it makes a tremendous difference which figures most prominently in one's worldview.



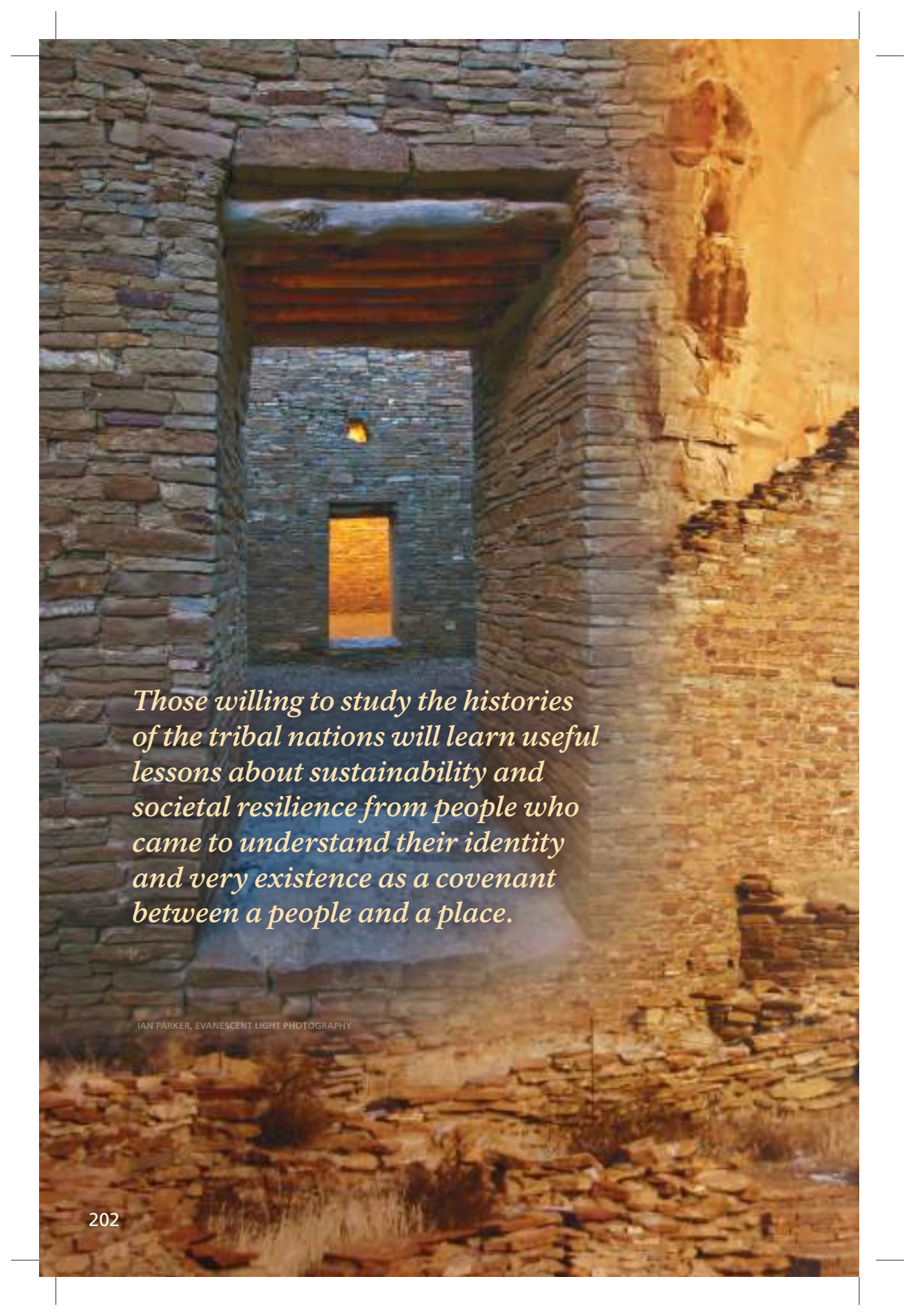
History always happens some place—in this case, the Great Plains—and some time—in this case, after the Civil War. Here was the site of the collision of a Western worldview with indigenous worldviews and, of course, the collision of the persons with those worldviews. Many Americans know the settler accounts, and to be fair, they increasingly hear the good, the bad, and the ugly of those encounters. Again, to understand indigenous histories we must not only remember the earth—not as an abstraction—we must also remember that we live in a dynamic and complex nature-culture nexus.

Tribal histories of the post-Civil War American West teach us that discussions of tribal cultural diversity must be tied to the ecological diversity of that diverse geography. To appreciate what indigenous peoples can teach us about living well in cultures emergent in the interaction between people and place, we must also understand tribalism in a different light.

To appreciate what indigenous peoples can teach us about living well in cultures emergent in the interaction between people and place, we must also understand tribalism in a different light.

A storm passes over the Great Plains

ROGER EDWARDS/INSOJOURN

A photograph of a stone building with a rectangular opening, showing a warm, glowing light from within, set against a backdrop of a rocky, arid landscape. The stone is a mix of grey and brown tones, and the light from the opening is a bright, warm yellow-orange. The landscape is rocky and arid, with some sparse vegetation visible in the foreground.

*Those willing to study the histories
of the tribal nations will learn useful
lessons about sustainability and
societal resilience from people who
came to understand their identity
and very existence as a covenant
between a people and a place.*

IAN PARKER, EVANESCENT LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY



To understand tribalism in a different light we have to disabuse ourselves of one of the most prejudicially invoked concepts in anthropology and social theory. Tribalism is not, as social evolutionary theorists in the 1800s thought, basically little more than peoples marked by savagery, barbarism, and superstition.

This prejudicial ideological misidentification of tribalism is very predictable for people who define themselves by ideologies as opposed to relationships with places. It makes a tremendous difference whether the landscape of the so-called Great Plains is experienced as a homeland by unique peoples who understood their identity and very existence as a function of a covenant between a people and place, as opposed to groups of people who came onto the same landscape and experience it as a frontier. The experiential gulf between the two views is immense. Indigenous peoples who see this incredible landscape as marked by sacred sites where those covenants are constantly renewed, find the reduction of such places to real estate and issues of property ownership problematic.

When I think of tribalism I do not think of disembodied ideologies or societies situated along an artificial timeline of societal evolution, but of how particular peoples in particular places developed unique cultural identities over time. In many cases they figured out how to live sustainably in those places for centuries. This is not to say that they did not have failures, in such places as the Hohokam community in Arizona, or the Cahokia Mounds community in Illinois, or the mysterious Chaco Canyon in New Mexico. All three of these incredible sites were abandoned at least 300 years before Christopher Columbus got lost in the Caribbean islands. It is not merely hyperbole to suggest that some of our native ancestors tried proto-urban experiments only to find them unsustainable.

Chaco Canyon, New Mexico

SEDONA CALLAHAN

A growing number of people on the planet are beginning to recognize that there is something useful to be learned from its tribal peoples.

NPS/YELLOWSTONE



What do tribal histories tell us? Provocative as it may sound, these histories suggest the people who will be successful on the modern Great Plains will likely be adopting tribal life-ways. I am not talking about going “back in time,” so to speak, and living in teepees or traditional earth lodges. I am not talking about going “back” to the way it was; that is impossible and such thinking inevitably leads to situating history along abstract timelines.

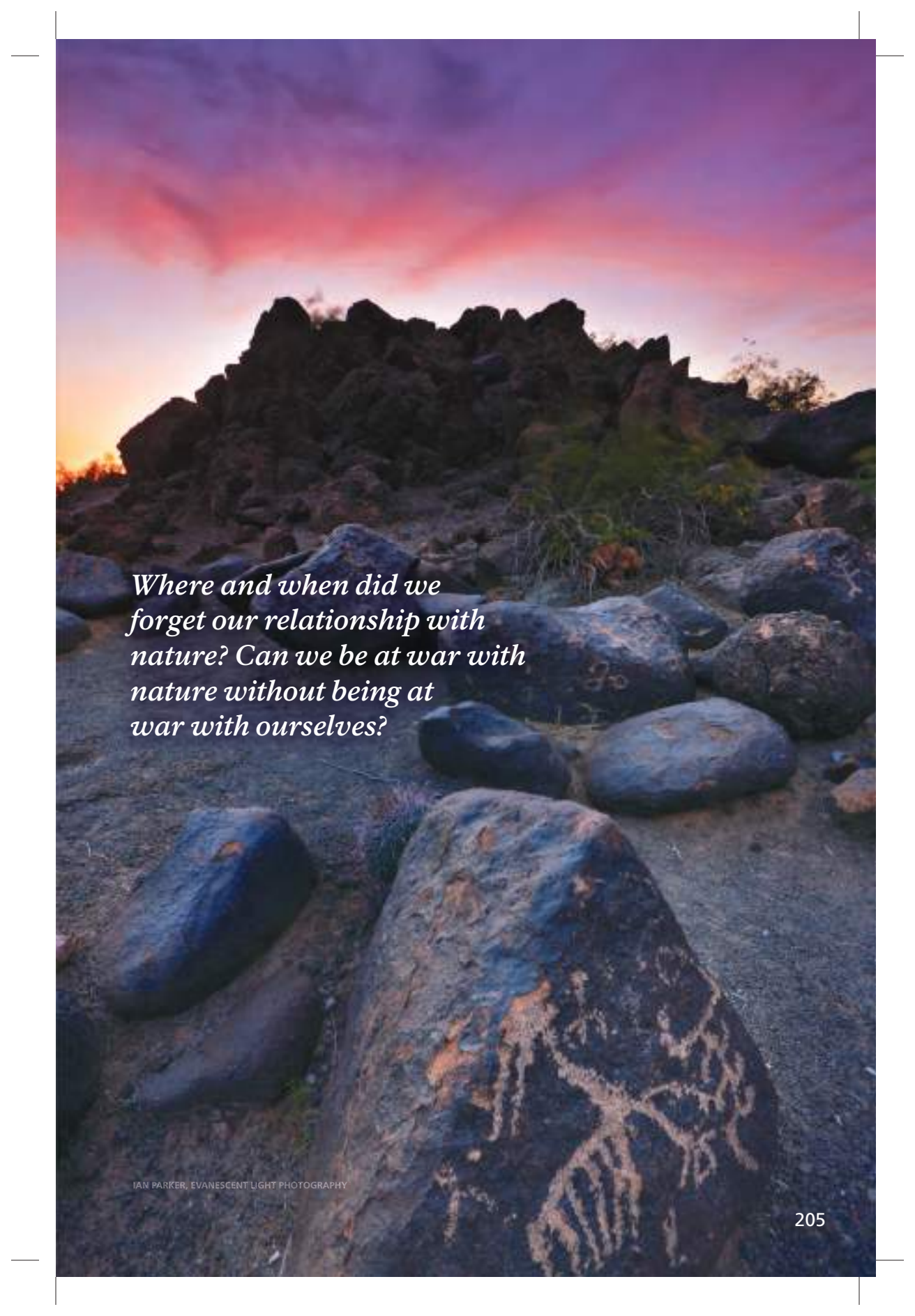
I am suggesting that the people who are going to be successful on the Great Plains, those interested in the regeneration of its towns, will establish tribal-like social relations and institutions that are uniquely connected to the particular landscape they are situated within. Although it may seem a very hostile or austere landscape to those observing from the outside, successful small towns will situate themselves in a comfortable relationship with a place and find resilient sustainability. People willing to

study the histories of the tribal nations of the Great Plains will learn useful lessons about societal resilience.

Ask any seventh or eighth grader after their first North American geography course, “Did the American Indians of this land all dress the same way, live in the same kind of dwellings, and eat the same foods?” They probably will answer, “Of course not.” There is a reason why among the Lakota-, Nakota-, and Dakota-speaking peoples of the North Central Great Plains, their most important ceremonies revolved around the bison. There is also a reason why the ceremonies most central to the

lives of the peoples of the Pacific Northwest revolved around the salmon. Young people get it. Where and when did we—as adults—forget this knowledge? Where and when did we begin to somehow think that the machine and industrial features of human cultures were its defining features? The point is it happened at different times in different places.

The modern view of culture too often allows us to perpetuate the wrong dichotomy between nature and culture. It allows modern humankind to think of their everyday lives as autonomous from nature. In the worst case, it leads to the notion that civilized humankind is at war with nature. However, can we be at war with nature without being at war with ourselves? Indigenous histories suggest how we might resituate our life-ways technology in a life-enhancing nature-culture nexus.



*Where and when did we
forget our relationship with
nature? Can we be at war with
nature without being at
war with ourselves?*

IAN PARKER, EVANESCENT LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

Technology, community, communication, and culture are intimately related. It is impossible to imagine any one of the four existing among human beings without the other three. Tribal people of the so-called frontier were never antitechnology. But they never made technology the de facto gold standard of societal development and progress. They never separated technology from the three Cs of community, communication, and culture. Useful technologies were enhancing of communities, including those other-than-human persons in the larger ecological communities in which we were enrolled.

The cultural diversity of the planet is constantly being threatened by the recent idea of one-size-fits-all technological solutions to the problems we have created. The natural diversity of the planet suggests applications of technology and the material culture it produces should also be diverse.

There are many Americans today advocating this same view of technology, such as appropriate technologies, permacultures, and sustainable technology development. Diverse landscapes offer diverse opportunities for material culture and the expression of the nature-culture nexus. This is one of the practical insights found in the histories of the indigenous peoples of the American West.

Technology needs to play a role but we need to resituate technology and the rest of our cultural features in the nature-culture nexus. We need to exercise indigenous ingenuity—what Curtis Kekahbah called “indigenuity.” We need to undertake some radical indigenuity experiments in technology development, home building, infrastructure design, and how we lay out communities in such a way that we can live enriched lives in a spiritual, material, and social manner.

The position is hardly anti-progress, rather it challenges the current anthropocentric measure of progress based on our comfort, convenience, and consumer wealth. Exercises of



Our histories, even at their darkest moments, were not about what we lost or what was done to us, but what we saved. We drew on the powers of place not as resources, but understood and respected as relatives.

indigenuity advance systems of life-enhancement for prairies, wetlands, mountains, deserts, and the diverse life that resides in these environments.

The eminent environmental historian Donald Worster has suggested that in the face of the incredible environmental crises now upon the planet, humankind needs what he called a “moral economy.” I agree and suggest we need look no further than the Dakota-, Lakota-, and Nakota-speaking peoples of the Great Plains, the tribes now referred to as the United Sioux Nations. They possess a world-view that embodies exactly what Worster called for—a moral economy—or more accurately what should be called a moral ecology. Their cultures

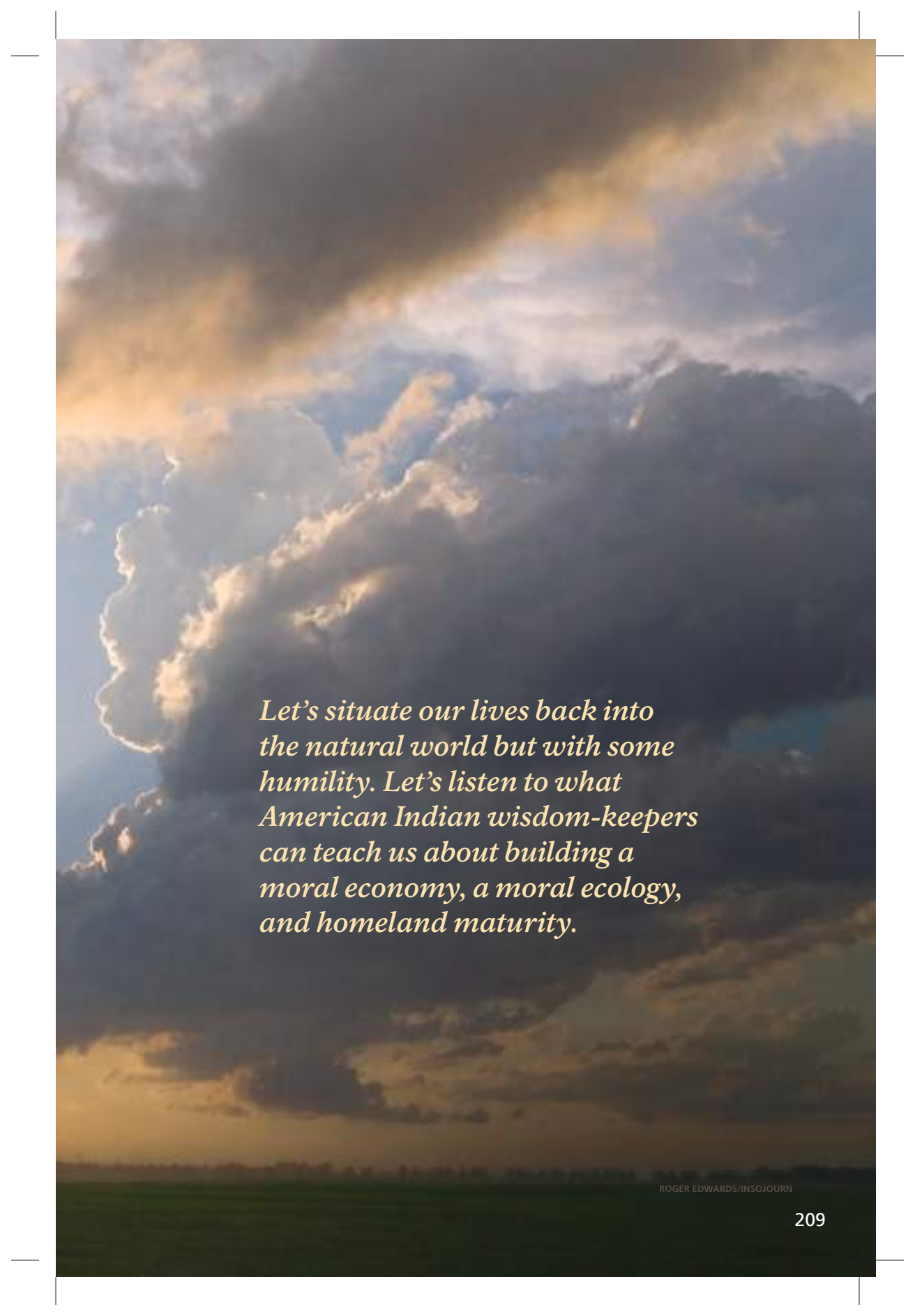
embodied for reasons of sustainability and practical life, an enhancement, or a moral economy, based on a moral ecology clearly embodied in their language, customs, and habits.

I find nothing romantic or unrealistic in what elders from many different traditions have shared from their histories about change and who we are as unique peoples. Of course, we changed. We do not exist as artifacts frozen in time, as “Indians-under-glass” for museum display. Our histories, even at their darkest moments, were not about what we lost or what was done to us, but what we saved. We drew on the powers of place not as resources but understood and respected as relatives. We remain rich in relatives.

3D ARTWORK
BY MIMI MATSUDA
PHOTO BY JENNIFER
BRINKMAN



Let's situate our lives back into the natural world but with some humility. It seems reasonable today to listen—in a world filled with so much pain, hopelessness, and fear—to what living tribal thinkers and wisdom-keepers can tell us about the importance of cultivating a human maturity. Maybe the key to the security so sought out by societies today, such as water, food, social, and even homeland security, is fostering human maturity in ecological and environmental homelands, in the context of a homeland maturity. Our human existence is not all about us. What we need are systems of life-enhancement encouraging homeland maturity: a maturity that fosters appreciation for nature as full of relatives—not resources—and a complimentary system of inalienable responsibilities to go with a legal and political system of inalienable rights. Now that is a history lesson worth thinking about!



*Let's situate our lives back into
the natural world but with some
humility. Let's listen to what
American Indian wisdom-keepers
can teach us about building a
moral economy, a moral ecology,
and homeland maturity.*

About the Authors

Laurence Hauptman is SUNY Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History. Among his publications are: *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War* (1996); *Tribes and Tribulations: Misconceptions about American Indians and Their Histories* (1995); and *A Seneca Indian in the Union Army* (1995). He has served as a historical consultant for the Wisconsin Oneidas, the Cayugas, the Mashantucket Pequots, and the Senecas. In 2011, he was awarded the lifetime achievement award by the New York State Commissioner of Education for his writings on the Iroquois. Among other awards, Hauptman also received the Peter Doctor Indian Memorial Foundation award twice from the Six Nations for his scholarship and work on behalf of American Indians in eastern North America.

Eric Hemenway is an Anishnaabek from Cross Village, Michigan. He is currently the Director of Repatriation, Archives, and Records for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians in northern Michigan. In addition to historical research, Mr. Hemenway has been active in creating museum exhibits and in repatriation work under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). He has been involved in over 30 successful repatriations of ancestral Anishnaabek human remains. Mr. Hemenway is a former member of the National NAGPRA Review Committee and currently sits on several historic boards.

Peter Iverson is Regents' Professor of History Emeritus at Arizona State University. Among his books are: *We Will Secure Our Future: Empowering the Navajo Nation* (with Peterson Zah, 2012); *Diné: A History of the Navajos* (2002); and *We Are Still Here: American Indians in the 20th Century* (1998). Professor Iverson previously taught at Navajo Community College (now Diné College). He has received many teaching awards and research fellowships as well as the Chief Manuelito Appreciation Award from the Navajo Nation for Contributions to Navajo Education and the Navajo Studies Conference Award for Excellence in Diné Studies.

Sammye Meadows is the Public Lands Partnership Coordinator for the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association. Prior to this position, she coordinated the activities for the Circle of Tribal Advisors under the National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial. Ms. Meadows also served as the Executive Director of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. Among her publications are: *Enough Good People—Reflections on Tribal Involvement and Inter-Cultural Collaboration 2003-2006* (2009) and co-author with Jana Sawyer Prewitt of *Lewis & Clark For Dummies* (2003).

Mae Timbimboo Parry (1919-2007) was the great-granddaughter of Sagwitch, one of the principal chiefs of the Northwestern Shoshones. Recognized as a matriarch of the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation, Ms. Parry devoted much of her life to ensuring that the Bear River Massacre was correctly referred to as a massacre, not a battle. She recorded the details of the attack that were passed down from family members over many years. Ms. Parry was also a skillful weaver who also passed along the Northwestern Shoshone bead patterns to the next generation. In 1996 she was recognized as Utah Mother of the Year.

Theda Perdue is Atlanta Distinguished Professor Emerita of Southern Culture and History at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Her research focuses on the native peoples of the southeastern United States. Among her publications are: *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears* (2007); *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835* (1998); and *Race and the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition of 1895* (2010). Professor Perdue received the Julia Cherry Spruill Award for the best book in southern women's history and the James Mooney Prize for the best book in the anthropology of the South, as well as a number of research fellowships and grants.

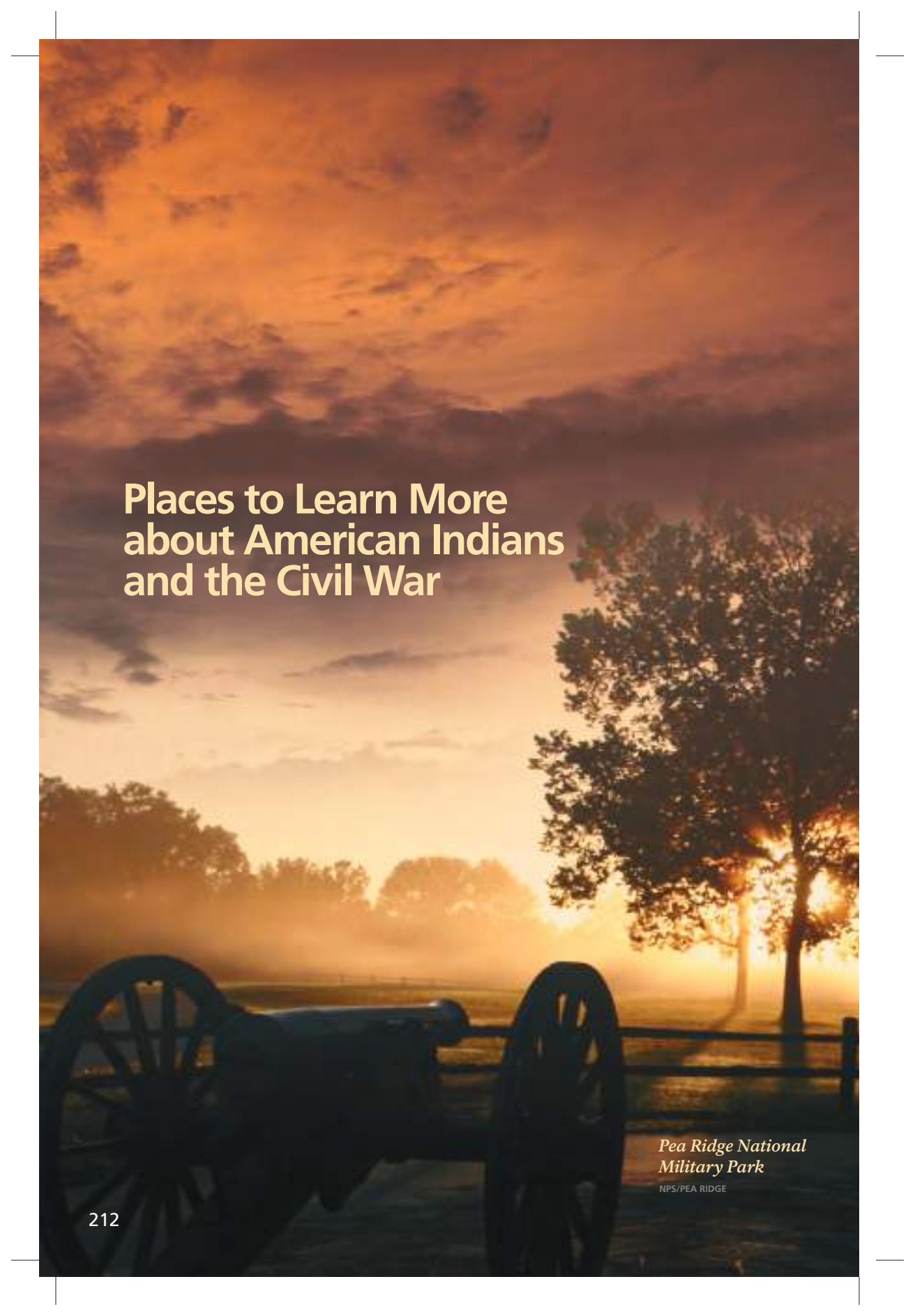
Gary Roberts is Professor Emeritus of History, Abraham Baldwin College. A student of the Sand Creek Massacre and related events for more than 50 years, he summarized his findings in his dissertation, "Sand Creek: Tragedy and Symbol," (1984) and has continued to pursue research on the subject since then. Professor Roberts has served as a consultant in the efforts to locate the Sand Creek site beginning in 1997. A specialist in the history of violence in the American West, he has published widely, including the books, *Death Comes to the Chief Justice: The Slough-Rynerson Quarrel and Political Violence in New Mexico* (1990) and *Doc Holliday: The Life and the Legend* (2006).

Jo Ann (Gardner) Schedler is a member of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans in Wisconsin. She graduated from Marquette University with a BSN, from Cardinal Stritch University with a MSM, and worked as a registered nurse for Milwaukee County. Mrs. Schedler served as the Director of the Tribe's Health and Wellness Center and on the Tribal Council. She was an officer in the US Army Nurse Corps Reserves rising to the rank of major and was called into active duty for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Major Schedler helped found the Mohican Veterans organization and is on a number of tribal committees, including the historical and historic repatriation committees.

Elliott West is Alumni Distinguished Professor at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Among his publications are: *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (2009); *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (1998); and *Growing Up with the Country: Childhood on the Far-Western Frontier* (1989). Professor West has received a number of teaching and writing awards including the Francis Parkman Prize.

Daniel Wildcat is a Yuchi member of the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma. He is currently a professor at Haskell Indian Nations University. Among his publications are: *Red Alert! Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge* (2009); coeditor with Steve Pavlik of *Destroying Dogma: Vine Deloria, Jr. and His Influence on American Society* (2006); and coauthor with Vine Deloria, Jr. of *Power and Place: Indian Education in America* (2001). Professor Wildcat has been honored by The Future Is Now organization and received the Heart Peace Award.

Janet Youngholm received her A.B. in History from Princeton University where James McPherson advised her undergraduate thesis on the American Civil War. She has a master's degree in Nineteenth Century American History from the University of Wyoming where she combined her study of the Civil War with a focus on American Indian history. During the research for her thesis, Ms. Youngholm consulted with individuals from the Dakota people, visiting the Lower Sioux Agency, numerous sites along the Minnesota River, New Ulm, and Mankato. She shared her research at the Missouri Valley History Conference (2012) and at the Making of the Great Plains Symposium 1862-2012 (2012). Her presentation on "Abraham Lincoln's Indian Policy and the Dakota War of 1862" received critical acclaim at both conferences.

A full-page background image showing a sunset over a field. In the foreground, the dark silhouette of a cannon is visible, with its large spoked wheels prominent. To the right, a large, leafy tree stands against the bright orange and yellow sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a strong glow and silhouetting the trees in the distance. The sky is filled with soft, textured clouds.

Places to Learn More about American Indians and the Civil War

*Pea Ridge National
Military Park*

NPS/PEA RIDGE



National Parks

www.nps.gov

Andersonville National Historic Site, [Georgia](#)

Andrew Johnson National Historic Site, [Tennessee](#)

Antietam National Battlefield, [Maryland](#)

Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, [Virginia](#)

Canyon de Chelly National Monument, [Arizona](#)

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park,
[Georgia](#) and [Tennessee](#)

Chickasaw National Recreation Area, [Oklahoma](#)

Fort Scott National Historic Site, [Kansas](#)

Fort Smith National Historic Site, [Arkansas](#) and [Oklahoma](#)

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, [Virginia](#)

Great Smoky Mountains National Park,
[North Carolina](#) and [Tennessee](#)

Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, [Montana](#)

Manassas National Battlefield Park, [Virginia](#)

Nicomodemus National Historic Site, [Kansas](#)

Pea Ridge National Military Park, [Arkansas](#)

Petersburg National Battlefield, [Virginia](#)

Pipestone National Monument, [Minnesota](#)

Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, [Colorado](#)

Vicksburg National Military Park, [Mississippi](#)

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, [Oklahoma](#)

Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, [Missouri](#)

National Historic Landmarks

www.nps.gov/history/nhl/

Bear River Massacre Site, [Idaho](#)

American Indians and the Civil War

(Nations/Tribes discussed in this book)



Prior to white contact, American Indians inhabited much of the continent. By the Civil War, many Eastern Indians had been forcibly removed from their homelands to reservations further west or had ceded most of their lands to the US government.



Many Indians in the East and Midwest fought in the war hoping to retain the lands they still had. After the war, the US Army intensified its war on Indians and Indian lands in the West.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our nation's natural and cultural heritage and to honor our trust responsibilities to the tribes. The National Park Service preserves this heritage unimpaired in the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

Design by Graphic Works, Inc., Atlanta, GA

Copyright 2013 by Eastern National

Eastern National provides quality educational products and services to the visitors to America's national parks and other public trusts.

Visit us at www.eParks.com

ISBN 978-1-59091-151-8

Acknowledgements

Project Committee: Diane Chalfant, Bob Sutton, John Latschar, Sammye Meadows, Carol Shively, Kirby-Lynn Shedlowski, Carol McBryant, Kristy Wallisch

Additional Content and Review:
Tribal Historians and NPS Historians, Interpreters,
Museum Staff, Harpers Ferry Interpretive Design Center

Design: Graphic Works, Inc.: David Urda, Jim Schuknecht

Outreach: American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association,
the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Education,
Eastern National

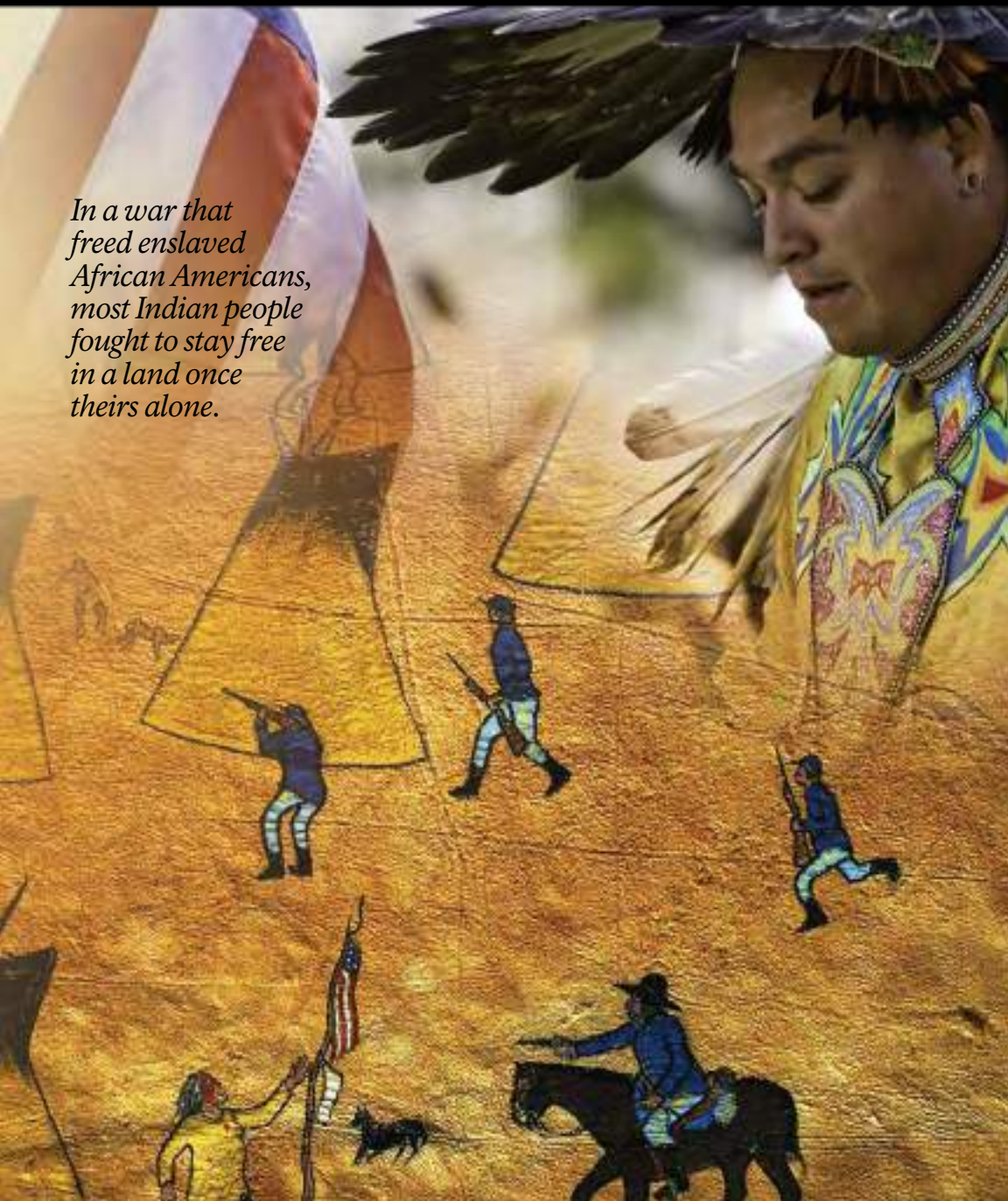
www.nps.gov/civilwar

Back Cover: This depiction of the Sand Creek massacre was painted on buffalo hide by Northern Arapaho artist Eugene Ridgely, Sr. (Eagle Robe) whose great-grandfather survived the attack. The photograph is COURTESY OF MICHAEL STRIZICH.

Raising the flag to honor American Indian veterans at a powwow in Long Beach, California.
COURTESY OF JOSE GIL/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



*In a war that
freed enslaved
African Americans,
most Indian people
fought to stay free
in a land once
theirs alone.*



\$12.95

