



Deadly Currents

John Ross's Decision of 1861

By Ari Kelman

On August 21, 1861, John Ross, the principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, stood before a gathering of approximately 4,000 Cherokees; the tribe faced a situation so grave that almost all of the eligible tribal electorate attended the meeting.¹ The secession of the southern states left the Cherokees with Confederate neighbors to the east and south, and Union neighbors to the north, all of whom demanded to know which side the nations of Indian Territory would choose as allies in the coming war.

JOHN ROSS'S DECISION

In the spring and early summer of 1861 Ross counseled neutrality, not just for the Cherokees, but for all the tribes of Indian Territory. As the summer drew to a close, Ross, subjected to tremendous pressures from inside and outside the Cherokee Nation, realized the impossibility of that stance. Facing his assembled people, he expounded on the validity of both the Union and Confederate causes. He acknowledged the importance of the Cherokees' treaty with the federal government in whose hands lay the tribe's trust funds. The tribe's policy of neutrality seemed successful to that point, but Ross addressed his greatest concern, the unity of the Cherokee Nation, with the following words:

The great object with me has been to have the Cherokee people harmonious and united in the full and free exercise and enjoyment of all of their rights of person and property. Union is strength, dissension is weakness, misery ruin! In time of peace together! in time of war, if war must come, fight together.²

His speech contained no surprises and nothing indicated what was to follow. Ross concluded:

The permanent disruption of the United States into two governments is now probable. The State [Arkansas] on our border and the Indian nations about us have severed their connection from the United States and joined the Confederate States. Our general interest is inseparable from theirs and it is not desirable that we should stand alone. The preservation of our rights and of our existence are above every other consideration.

And in view of all the circumstances of our situation I say to you frankly, that, in my opinion, the time has now arrived when you should signify your consent for the authorization of the Nation to adopt preliminary steps for an alliance with the Confederate States upon terms honorable and advantageous to the Cherokee Nation.³

Three days later Ross wrote to Confederate general Benjamin McCulloch asking for protection from possible "movements against the Cherokee people upon their Northern border."⁴ He enclosed a copy of his address and noted his willingness to negotiate a treaty between the Cherokees and the Confederate government. Less than one year later Ross changed his position again, assuring President Abraham Lincoln that the Cherokee Nation had always been faithful to the Union. What caused Ross to alter his stance on neutrality? Why did he recommend a Confederate alliance and later rejoin the Union?

Despite some sympathy for elements of both the northern and southern positions, Ross was neither a Union nor a Confederate

man; rather he sought a path leading to tribal unity and sovereignty. Maintenance of his personal power, he believed, was integral to achieving those ends. Ross did not make his decisions in a political or historical vacuum. As leader of the Cherokee Nation, he lived and ruled amid deadly currents.

The factors that influenced Ross's decision in 1861 included internal tribal conflict whose roots lay in four intertwined situations—the thirty-year-old conflict over removal; the often strained relationship between mixed- and full blood members of the tribe; the debate between Cherokee slaveholders and non-slaveholders; and the conflict between traditionalists and non-traditionalists over language and custom. Ross dealt with each of those conflicts by seeking solutions that would preserve the unity of his tribe. He faced a difficult situation as whites consistently exacerbated and exploited those conflicts by employing divide and conquer tactics in their relations with the Cherokees. In his dealings with whites, particularly the federal government, Ross demanded that his people be treated as a sovereign nation. Thus an exploration of Cherokee-white relationships, particularly between the tribe and the federal government, yields a more complete understanding of Ross's decision-making process in 1861.

During the Indian removal debate that took place in the 1830s, powerful factions within the Cherokee Nation became disenchanted with Ross's hardline stance opposing removal and began actively criticizing his sometimes autocratic leadership. The events surrounding removal forever recast the Cherokee Nation, undermining tribal peace and replacing it with factionalism that threatened Ross's vision of unity for his people. In 1861 as the Civil War enveloped the Cherokees, old factional wounds, dating back to removal, reopened in Indian Territory and Ross sought an effective remedy in neutrality. When neutrality failed to cool the fever of factionalism, Ross was forced to choose sides in a conflict he believed would yield only sorrow for the Cherokee Nation. Surrounded by tribal conflict, Ross grappled with his choices.

The roots of Cherokee factionalism lie in Washington and Georgia in 1832. In that year, Stand Watie, one of the key members of a growing anti-Ross faction in the Cherokee Nation, acted as editor of the bilingual Cherokee newspaper, *The Cherokee Phoenix*, in lieu of his brother, Elias Boudinot. Boudinot and John Ridge comprised part of a Cherokee delegation to the federal government negotiating the issue of removal. In a letter to Watie, Ridge sug-

gested that *The Cherokee Phoenix* be used as a forum for expressing views undercutting Ross's authority, that is, urging the Cherokees to accept removal.⁵ Ridge, along with his father Major Ridge, Boudinot, and Watie became the leading figures in what would be called the "Treaty Party" after they went against Ross's wishes by signing the Treaty of New Echota. According to that treaty the Cherokees agreed to cede land east of the Mississippi River for land in Indian Territory. The Cherokee Council never ratified the treaty, thus under Cherokee law it was an illegal document. Despite the existence of a petition of protest signed by more than 13,000 Cherokees, the United States Senate ratified the treaty in May, 1836, leading to decades of strife within the Cherokee Nation, and profoundly influencing John Ross's decision of 1861.⁶

The events surrounding removal nourished Ross's nascent political consciousness and eroded his faith in the federal government. Ross looked on as the government supported Georgia's land grab and ignored past treaties with the Cherokees. President Andrew Jackson's failure to honor the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Worcester v. Georgia* illustrated a profound disrespect for the law of the land when it fell on the side of Cherokee sovereignty. In the years leading up to removal, the growth of pro-treaty sentiment among the Ridge-Watie-Boudinot faction provided the federal government with a powerful tool in the Cherokee Nation. Ross suspected that collusion between the tribal factions and the federal government led to the Treaty of New Echota. In a protest to the Senate, Ross screamed of Georgia's insidious actions and the role of the federal government in fostering the growth of Cherokee factionalism:

A system was devised and prosecuted to force them to emigrate, by rendering them unhappy where they were. This was the original design, but it was soon found profit was to be had, by keeping up a division among the Cherokees, and protracting their difficulties, and with this view the party of which the Delegation have before spoken, soon threw itself under the wing of the government agents.⁷

In the removal period, the Supreme Court was the only one of the three branches of the federal government in which Ross had confidence. However, the government failed to enforce Chief Justice John Marshall's decisions. While Ross's interaction with the Jackson administration particularly disheartened him, his relationship with the legislative branch suffered as well. His ap-

peal to Congress in the spring of 1835 centered on the removal issue, but an unfavorable response led Ross to contemplate moving the Cherokees from the United States.⁸ Ross's faith in Congress reached its nadir with the Senate's acceptance of the Treaty of New Echota. Because it was negotiated by an unauthorized minority faction within the tribe, Ross believed the treaty utterly spurious.

From 1832 to 1838 the federal government undercut Ross's tribal authority and ignored his authority as principal chief. From Andrew Jackson's threats to hold Ross responsible for the murder of a pro-removal Cherokee, to the government's decision to negotiate a final removal treaty with Ross's rivals, the federal government treated Ross as an obstacle rather than an ally.

Factionalism followed the Cherokees to Indian Territory, and the Treaty Party's antipathy for Ross and his followers did not abate. The contentious issue of tribal government and the brutal murder of three leaders of the Treaty Party divided the Cherokees anew. In his old opponents from the Treaty Party as well as their new allies from the Old Settlers (Cherokees who had voluntarily moved west prior to 1836), Ross faced a substantial threat that plagued him until the eve of the Civil War. Prominent leaders of the Treaty Party had arrived in Indian Territory as early as the spring of 1837. Once there they reunited with 3,000 members of the Old Settlers. The 2,000 new immigrants from the Treaty Party accepted the Old Settlers' loosely organized system of government and Ross found himself facing two factions united in a challenge to his authority.⁹

When the body of 13,000 Cherokees arrived in 1839, tribal government became a hotly contested issue. John Ross wanted to continue in his role as chief of a reunited Cherokee Nation, while the leaders of the Old Settlers suggested separate governments. On June 10, 1839, Ross addressed the General Council of the Cherokee Nation. He did not insist that the Cherokee Constitution of 1828 be adopted for the nation in Indian Territory. Rather, he pointedly referred to the fact that the "late emigrants . . . constitute a large majority."¹⁰ Only a unified nation, he believed, could successfully negotiate with whites. He assured the assembled Cherokees, "[T]here is no intention nor desire on the part of their representatives to propose or require any thing, but what may be strictly equitable & just and satisfactory to the people."¹¹ Ross concluded, "[A] House divided against itself can not stand."¹² Three days later Ross wrote to John Brown, John Looney, and John

Rogers, the chiefs of the Old Settlers, saying he hoped all Cherokees could reunite under a new constitution.¹³ The Brown and Ross groups agreed to meet to discuss their differences at the Illinois Camp Ground on July 1, 1839.

Much to Ross's dismay, his supporters, as well as his opponents, erected obstacles blocking the road to unity. Another effort to discuss tribal unity at the General Council on June 10 failed. A group of conspirators, perhaps holding the Treaty Party responsible for the failure to achieve unity or perhaps enforcing the "death penalty for signing land cession treaties," executed three key members of the Treaty Party on June 22.¹⁴ The killers murdered John Ridge and Elias Boudinot in their homes and gunned down Major Ridge near the Arkansas River. With the deaths of his uncle (Major Ridge), cousin (John Ridge), and brother (Boudinot), Stand Watie vowed vengeance on the killers and on John Ross whom he held responsible. When Ross heard the news of the murders and learned of Watie's reaction, he surrounded his house with members of his constituency to protect himself from Watie's armed mob. General Matthew Arbuckle, stationed in Missouri, and alarmed at what he perceived to be near anarchy in the Cherokee Nation, suggested that the various factions meet at Fort Gibson to work out their differences. Ross declined; he feared that the journey would be too dangerous.¹⁵

The brutal executions of the leaders of the Treaty Party left Ross in a state of shock and dismay as violent factionalism placed the tribe further than ever from unity. Although the conspirators supported Ross, it appears likely that the chief knew nothing of their plans. Ross was further devastated when on June 28 the chiefs of the Old Settlers told him they believed the scheduled July 1 meeting was "irregular." They feared Ross wanted to pass laws benefiting the new eastern immigrants, and suggested meeting at Fort Gibson where "both parties shall be equally represented; and that the said convention shall have power to remodel the government for the Cherokee Nation."¹⁶

Ross ignored the invitation to Fort Gibson and presided over the scheduled meeting at the Illinois Camp Ground on July 1 instead. The result was the Act of Union, ratified primarily by Ross's supporters, and a new Cherokee Constitution similar to the one used by the Eastern Cherokees.¹⁷ Most leaders of the Old Settlers, determined to maintain their power in government, avoided the meeting as a protest over its legitimacy; some attended, however,

and signed the Act of Union. Ross viewed the new Act of Union and Constitution as hopeful documents.

Ross moved quickly to consolidate his perceived advantage in the aftermath of the meeting. First he wrote to Arbuckle, who still hoped that representatives of the Ross Party, the Old Settlers, and the Treaty Party would meet at Fort Gibson. Ross assured Arbuckle no threat of a Cherokee civil war existed, and he wanted only unity for the tribe.¹⁸ On September 12, 1839, Ross addressed the new National Council believing he had succeeded in reuniting the Cherokees, and had legitimized the new constitution by including representatives of the Old Settlers in the new government. However, the Old Settlers and their allies in the Treaty Party bitterly denounced the new government, a move backed by the United States Army and federal government. Once again meddling from outside the tribe heightened tensions within the Cherokee Nation.

While Ross savored his accomplishments, the new Cherokee Constitution and Act of Union infuriated members of the Old Settlers who had boycotted the Illinois Camp Ground meeting. The Treaty Party also remained at odds with Ross and both factions enjoyed the support of the federal government. Andrew Jackson answered an appeal from Watie in a letter dated October 5, 1839, in which he expressed sympathy for Watie's plight in light of Ross's "tyranny." He assured Watie he would write a letter to President Martin Van Buren expressing his views.¹⁹ Van Buren's government, no doubt influenced by Jackson, undercut Ross's authority when Arbuckle demanded the Cherokees turn over the parties responsible for the Ridge-Boudinot murders. United States courts did not have jurisdiction over Cherokee territory, Ross reminded Arbuckle. On July 19 Arbuckle authorized the arming of the Missouri State Militia, ostensibly to allay fears in the white population resulting from the disputes in the Cherokee Nation.²⁰ Ross, upset by what he viewed as white incursion into Cherokee affairs, assured Arbuckle that he was overreacting and that there was no threat of civil war. He implied that Arbuckle relied on untrustworthy and inflammatory sources for his information about the affairs of the Cherokees.²¹ Arbuckle also took up the cause of the dissatisfied Old Settlers who had not attended the Illinois Camp Ground meeting. Ross countered by stating that representatives of the Old Settlers, including one of their chiefs, John Looney, were present at the meeting and had signed the Act of Union and the constitu-

tion.²² Ross erroneously believed the affairs of the tribe were in order, and he left for Washington as head of another delegation.

After arriving in Washington Ross's confidence in tribal stability diminished as familiar sources undermined his authority. At a general assembly of the Cherokee Nation called by Cherokee agent Montford Stokes on January 15, 1840, the Act of Union and the new Cherokee Constitution were ratified.²³ The disgruntled Old Settlers met in February of that year and decided not to recognize Ross as chief. They sought and received Arbuckle's sanction for their actions.²⁴ The federal government also chose not to recognize the Act of Union nor Ross as chief.²⁵ At the same time a separate delegation in the capital made up of members of the Treaty Party jeopardized Ross's work in Washington. In a letter to Secretary of War Joel Poinsett, Ross worried about possible mistreatment because Poinsett believed he was involved in the murders of the Ridges and Boudinot.²⁶ On February 28 the Ross delegation addressed Congress in an effort to illustrate the validity of the Act of Union and the new constitution.²⁷ In April the delegation addressed the House Committee of Indian Affairs with much the same message. In the end Ross's trip to Washington proved fruitless, and he returned to Indian Territory to face new problems at home. The chasm between the Ross and Treaty parties yawned wider than ever and the dispute with the Old Settlers represented one more threat to the Cherokee Nation. Only the results of the January general assembly and a June meeting during which the Old Settlers and the Ross faction recognized the Act of Union offered Ross any hope for tribal unity in the future.²⁸

In late summer, 1841, Ross prepared to head another delegation to Washington. He worried that a return home, once again with no good news, would further undermine the tribe's trust in him and possibly consolidate his rivals' growing support. Ross appealed to Secretary of War John Bell on August 26, asking Bell to provide him with something tangible and positive to tell the tribe.²⁹ On September 20 President John Tyler wrote to Ross regarding the Treaty of New Echota. Tyler believed negotiating a new treaty to replace the fraudulent one "would be satisfactory and just to the Cherokees and just to both parties."³⁰ Ross could not contain his elation when he addressed the National Council on November 29, 1841. He praised the "brief administration" of William H. Harrison and President Tyler's promises.³¹ Ross was bitterly disappointed when his optimism proved premature. Like Chief Justice

Marshall's decisions, Tyler's promise came to naught. For Ross that served as one more example of the federal government's dishonest dealings with the Cherokees. However, the betrayal was not immediately apparent and Ross, at least momentarily, believed he had an ally in Washington.

Ross's optimism seemed to affect the disparate groups within the Cherokee Nation during a period marked by relative calm. However, when Stand Watie, one of the last surviving members of the original Treaty Party's leaders, killed James Foreman on May 14, 1842, it brought the Cherokee Nation to the brink of civil war.³² Foreman was one of the men accused of the murder of Watie's uncle, Major Ridge. A white pro-Watie Arkansas court tried and acquitted Watie on the grounds of self-defense.³³ Soon after, on August 8, 1843, three of Ross's supporters, acting in their capacity as election workers, were attacked; one, Isaac Bushyhead, was murdered.³⁴ The tides of factionalism had not receded completely and would affect the Ross delegation's affairs in Washington the following year.

The presence of multiple Cherokee groups undermined all appearances of unity in Washington in 1844, and once again jeopardized Ross's ongoing quest to secure sovereignty and unity for his people. The Treaty Party and the Old Settlers, both intent on dividing the Cherokees, each had representatives in the capital. Ross attempted to diminish the importance of the other bodies in a letter dated May 14, 1844, to Secretary of War William Wilkins. He wrote, "We have not been delegated to represent a party, but the whole Cherokee people."³⁵ Wilkins responded that neither he nor President John Tyler were satisfied that Ross's delegation represented the consensus voice of the Cherokees. He referred to "oppression upon two classes of your nation—the 'Treaty Party' and the 'Arkansas or Western Cherokee.'"³⁶ Wilkins intended to send a "commission of officers" to the Cherokee Nation to determine the "true and exact extent of the discontent and spirit of hostility which prevails amongst your people."³⁷ That proved to be a devastating blow for Ross who had grown increasingly optimistic after his interaction with President Tyler. Due to the political climate, Ross believed his delegation's presence in Washington would accomplish little, and he left the capital at the end of the summer.

Ross knew the commission appointed by Wilkins could badly damage his authority and he was wary of its report. He also felt betrayed as the federal government again demonstrated its will-

ingness to interfere even at the risk of tribal unity. Thus Ross was surprised and elated when the federal commission, composed of Roger Jones, Roger Mason, and Cherokee agent Pierce Mason Butler, indicated in its report of January, 1845, that the members believed many of the complaints coming from Indian Territory existed only because Washington lent a sympathetic ear. The commissioners also recommended against splitting the nation.³⁸ That substantiated the opinion Ross expressed to Wilkins in Washington the previous summer. Ross had implored then:

It is with communities as with individuals that when they know that their destinies are united forever many small causes of strife are passed over and reconciled—but where separation is easy the happiness of all parties is too often sacrificed to temporary excitement and momentary passion.³⁹

Despite Ross's opinion and the commissioners' suggestions, tribal factionalism exploded into bloodshed and terrorism in late 1845. The burning of John Meigs's house (Ross's son-in-law) preceded the murders of James Starr, a proponent of removal, and Thomas Watie, Stand Watie's brother. Stand Watie, confronted with the murder of another family member, gathered a group of men at Old Fort Wayne for his own protection. George Lowrey, acting as principal chief during Ross's absence, wrote to Watie that the "combination of so many armed men at 'Old Fort Wayne' is a subject of general and just complaint."⁴⁰ While the Cherokee Nation remained mired in a state of guerrilla warfare, Ross appealed to the new president, James Polk, as a member of yet another delegation to Washington. Delegations representing the Treaty Party and Old Settlers competed with Ross's group in Washington. Ross's opponents again argued in favor of dividing the Cherokee Nation to avoid further bloodshed.⁴¹ President Polk and the commissioner of Indian affairs supported their view and reported their opinion to Congress.⁴² With tribal unity in the balance, the various factions met in Washington and agreed to a treaty addressing the concerns of each group—a unified nation for the Ross party; a share of the per capita payment from the federal government for the Old Settlers; amnesty and monetary reparations to compensate for their suffering for the Treaty Party. In signing the treaty Ross illustrated his commitment to tribal unity by reluctantly accepting the validity of the Treaty of New Echota after more than fifteen years of trumpeting its fallaciousness.

The treaty of 1846 marked the beginning of an extended period of calm in the Cherokee Nation. But repercussions from the dislocation of removal, continued tribal conflict, and poor relations with the federal government would all play a role in John Ross's decision of 1861. Internal peace resulting from the treaty of 1846 held until the approach of the American Civil War, when recurring themes of conflict resurfaced and new divisions among the Cherokees emerged. Finally, the issue of slavery profoundly impacted John Ross's choice in the coming conflict.

Following passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, Kansas Territory, just north of the Cherokees, fractured over the issue of slavery. "Bleeding Kansas" exported the debate over slavery and open warfare across the border into the Cherokee Nation as slavery became an increasingly contentious topic. While most Cherokee full bloods did not own slaves, Ross owned more than fifty slaves by 1860 and, like most Cherokee slaveholders, was of mixed ancestry (he was one-eighth Cherokee).⁴³ However, Ross's loyal constituency consisted largely of full bloods. In his annual message of October 6, 1856, Ross affirmed slavery's protected place within the Cherokee Nation, but acknowledged growing trouble between slaveholders and abolitionist missionaries in Indian Territory.⁴⁴ In his reports to Congress in 1854 and 1855, Cherokee agent George Butler also referred to the controversy.⁴⁵ Pro-slavery Cherokees often accused the Northern Baptist missionaries Evan and John Jones of stirring up abolitionist sentiment. The Joneses did encourage slaveholding members of their congregation to free their slaves or leave the church.⁴⁶ In his study of slavery in the Cherokee Nation, Rudi Halliburton argued that Ross's relationship with the Jones family led him to veto an 1855 pro-slavery bill, but the National Council subsequently passed it over his veto. The bill made it illegal for missionaries and teachers in the Cherokee public schools to espouse abolitionist beliefs.⁴⁷ Despite that official censure, however, Evan and John Jones continued to play a key role in the slavery debate among the Cherokees.

The slavery issue divided the Cherokee Nation into opposing camps. The formation of a secret pro-slavery organization called the Knights of the Golden Circle in 1855, and the creation of the opposing Keetoowah Society (commonly known as "Pins" because of the crossed pins members wore on their shirts) in 1856, illustrated the depth of the controversy. The Knights' constitution

stipulated that all members had to be supporters of slavery. Article 6 stated:

The Captain or in case of his refusal, the Lieutenant has power to compel each and every member of their encampment to turn out and assist in capturing and punishing any and all abolitionists in their minds who are interfering with slavery.⁴⁸

Wealthier mixed-bloods with secessionist leanings filled out the Knights' membership (the organization was also called the Southern Rights Party). In contrast Unionist full bloods were more often the members of the Keetoowah Society. In his collection of Cherokee myths, ethnologist James Mooney noted that Cherokees banded together in the Keetoowah Society in response to the presence of secret societies among the mixed-bloods. He looked to class issues as a foundation of the society, noting that the non-slaveholding full blood Keetoowahs were poorer than their mixed-blood counterparts who gathered together in the "Blue Lodge and other secret secessionist organizations."⁴⁹ The Keetoowah Constitution and its amendments, written between April, 1859, and January, 1866, stipulated that membership was limited to full bloods (defined as those Cherokees who were uneducated or did not speak English). It also provided that revealing Keetoowah business was punishable by death. Other provisions included protocols for accepting new members, paying dues, and caring for sick members. The Keetoowah Constitution contained two elements critical to understanding Ross's decisions of 1861 and 1862. First, the constitution bemoaned the loss of tribal unity and offered adherence to Cherokee laws and loyalty to the government as the remedy for tribal factionalism. Second, amendments passed on September 20, 1860, read in part, "in the division between North and South, we should not take sides with either."⁵⁰

The Keetoowah Constitution blamed mixed-bloods and their secret societies for the difficulties facing the tribe. Mixed-blood leaders believed the same of the Keetoowahs, feared their numbers, their support of Ross, and their apparent alliance with the Jones family. Stephen Foremen, a slaveholder, prominent member of the Treaty Party, and later a supporter of the Confederacy, reflected on the Keetoowahs in 1862. He thought the Pins hated him solely because he was a "Watie man. . . They themselves had drawn the distinction between themselves and the half-breeds, and being a half-breed, I naturally fell on the Watie side."⁵¹ Foremen argued that the goals of the Pins included controlling the

government and abolishing slavery, and he believed the Joneses founded the Keetoowah organization.

The link between the Keetoowahs and the Jones family echoes frequently in the literature on the subject. Mooney, writing in 1890, pointed to John Jones as the founder of the Pins.⁵² D.J. MacGowan in his 1866 article, "Indian Secret Societies," wrote, "The Pin organization originated among the members of the [Northern] Baptist congregation at Peavine, Going-snake district, in the Cherokee Nation."⁵³ The conflict between the Keetoowahs and the Knights encompassed divisions between rich and poor, slaveholder and abolitionist, full blood and mixed-blood, and the Ross Party and the Treaty Party. The secret societies founded during that period simply provided a new forum for the expression of old conflicts.

Once again interference from whites exacerbated and manipulated fractious intertribal conflicts. On January 29, 1861, Ross received a letter from Henry M. Rector, the governor of Arkansas, in which Rector attempted to sway Ross to the side of the South by evoking fears of abolition he claimed would necessarily follow a treaty with the North.⁵⁴ Ross responded to Rector's letter in late February. He expressed Cherokee sympathy for the Southern cause, prayed for peace, and finally noted the importance of the treaties with the federal government.⁵⁵ Ross also dealt with pressure from white secessionists working within his tribe. Both Elias Rector and R.J. Cowart, the federal superintendent of Indian affairs and the Cherokee agent respectively, were pro-slavery and secessionists.⁵⁶ Cowart and Rector believed the Joneses led the Pins and viewed their abolitionist activity as subversive and dangerous. In the summer of 1860 they exerted their influence to quell the work of the "secret societies" under the Joneses.⁵⁷ A.B. Greenwood, the commissioner of Indian affairs, instructed Rector to have Cowart:

institute inquiry as to the existence of this secret organization, its objects and purposes; who are the counselors and advisors of this movement, and proceed at once to break it up. . . . If in his investigation he should be satisfied that any white persons residing in the Nation are in any way connected with this organization he will notify such person or persons forthwith to leave the Nation.⁵⁸

The pressure on Ross mounted after Arkansas's secession. He received letters from private Arkansas citizens and J.R. Kannady,

the commander of Fort Smith, demanding to know which side of the coming conflict the Cherokees would choose.⁵⁹

Kannady wrote of the importance of slavery to the Cherokees, noting that Indian Territory was "salubrious and fertile and possesses the highest capacity for future progress and development by the application of Slave Labor."⁶⁰ On May 17 Ross answered Kannady much as he had answered Rector months earlier. He acknowledged friendship with the people of Arkansas, but remained neutral, citing the Cherokees' treaties with the federal government. Ross was prescient when he wrote:

Our interests all center in peace. We do not wish to forfeit our rights or to incur the hostility of any people and least of all the people of Arkansas, with whom our relations are so numerous & intimate. We do not wish our soil to become the battle ground between the states and our homes to be rendered desolate and miserable by the horrors of a civil war. If such a war should not be averted yet by some unforeseen agency but shall occur my own position will be to take no part in it whatever and to urge the like course upon the Cherokee people by whom in my opinion it will be adopted.⁶¹

In May, 1861, the Confederate government commissioned Albert Pike, a Massachusetts-born lawyer living in Arkansas, as special agent to the tribes of Indian Territory, and authorized him to engage the tribes in an alliance with the Confederacy. Because of legal work he had done for the tribes, Pike knew about the divisions in the Cherokee Nation and planned to exploit them in his negotiations.⁶² The other Confederate commissioner to Indian Territory, General Benjamin McCulloch, wrote Ross on June 12, 1861. His position of neutrality would be respected, McCulloch assured Ross, unless "good cause" demanded otherwise. He asked that "those of your people that are in favor of joining the Confederacy must be allowed to organize into military companies as home guards."⁶³ David Hubbard, the Confederate commissioner of Indian affairs, applied additional pressure by attempting to undermine Ross's trust in the federal government.⁶⁴ On June 17, 1861, Ross wrote to both men. His letter to Hubbard echoed past sentiments that he had no reason not to believe the Cherokees would be well treated by the Confederate government, but he would not make war on the forces of the North.⁶⁵ Ross denied McCulloch's request to allow Cherokees to form companies of "home guards" to defend Indian Territory from Northern invasion. Such companies would violate his policy of neutrality and risk the internal security of the Cherokee Nation. Ross feared, once again with incredible

foresight, the companies would "soon become efficient instruments in stirring up domestic strife and creating internal difficulties among the Cherokee people."⁶⁶ On July 1, Ross wrote to Pike and enclosed a copy of his letter to Hubbard reiterating his neutral position.

Pike was not the only secessionist who viewed the disaffected factions within the Cherokee Nation as potential southern allies. On May 18, 1861, A.M. Wilson and J.W. Washbourne, private citizens of Fayetteville, Arkansas, wrote to Stand Watie assuring him of their support in the event that he could raise a company of 200 men. They promised to arm Watie's men and used the threat of Union-imposed abolition to spur his efforts.⁶⁷ Those events seriously threatened Ross's vision of tribal unity as Watie and his followers were more than willing to unseat Ross by coup d'état, if given the necessary Confederate support. On July 12, long before Ross agreed to treat with the Confederacy, and despite his letter to McCulloch that he would not sanction "home guards," the Confederate army mustered in Stand Watie as a colonel along with a regiment of his men.⁶⁸ Also in July, pro-Confederate Cherokees attempted to raise the Confederate flag over the Cherokee capitol in Tahlequah.⁶⁹ Ross addressed the intertribal conflict in a letter to John Drew. A relative and supporter of Ross, Drew would soon be called on to command one of the two Confederate Cherokee regiments with Watie commanding the other. Ross expressed dismay over renewed Cherokee factionalism, sensed the precarious nature of his position, and implored:

There is no reason why we should split up & become involved in internal strife and violence on account of the political condition of the states. We should really have nothing to do with them, but remain quiet and observe those relations of peace & friendship towards all the People of the States imposed by our treaties. By this means alone can we avoid every cause for hostility from either section of the Country and upon this policy we ought all to be able to attend to our ordinary affairs and avoid all causes of strife among ourselves.⁷⁰

Confederate victories at first Bull Run on July 21 and Wilson's Creek on August 10 further increased pressure on Ross by demonstrating to the Cherokees the South's apparent military superiority. In addition, the federal government began transferring troops stationed in the West, leaving the Cherokees unprotected. At the same time Pike signed treaties with the Cherokees' neighbors—Creeks on July 10, Choctaws and Chickasaws on July 12, Seminoles on August 1, and some of the Plains

tribes on August 12.⁷¹ After Ross's August 21 address to his people, members of the Treaty Party recommended that Watie negotiate a treaty with Pike before Ross was able to. They wrote:

The Pins already have more power in their hands than we can bear & if in addition to this they acquire more by being the treaty making power, you know our destiny will be inalterably sealed. It seems we should guard against this. Now is the time for us to strike, or we will be completely frustrated.⁷²

Ross's speech of August 21 was understandable in light of the circumstances. He faced an armed contingent of opponents within the tribe, hostile neighbors, the withdrawal of federal troops, and his dream of unified neutral Indian bloc destroyed. As he had in 1845 Ross willingly made great sacrifices to preserve unity within his tribe when he met with Albert Pike and signed a treaty on October 7, 1861. The treaty seemed attractive; it guaranteed the Cherokees authority over their lands, self-government, jurisdiction over the physical boundaries and persons within Cherokee territory, approval of governmental agents, a representative in the Confederate Congress, and a \$500,000 financial guarantee for the sale of the Cherokee Neutral Lands.⁷³ Additionally the treaty addressed several of Ross's concerns. It seemed the best hope for maintaining unity; it guaranteed the Cherokees their land; it dealt with the Neutral Lands (a thorn in Ross's side for some time); and it made tribal sovereignty explicit. But Ross must have realized that he had capitulated for none of those reasons. Rather, Ross allied with the Confederacy due only to pressures beyond his control, the same pressures that had weighed on him for more than thirty years.

Immediately after the August 21 meeting, Ross made provisions for raising a regiment of men composed largely of full bloods and Pins to be commanded by John Drew.⁷⁴ McCulloch viewed the regiment as inferior to Watie's troops. In a strange echo of the federal government's policy during the Polk administration, which ignored the issue of tribal unity, he recommended that Watie be allowed to expand his force and that the two regiments be kept separate.⁷⁵ Thus, at the start of the war two distinct regiments of Indian soldiers existed—one led by Watie, leader of the Treaty Party, and the other led by Drew, a supporter of Ross. Ross's relatives and supporters made up most of Drew's regimental officer corps. Although unified under the Confederate flag, the Cherokees remained divided, so much so that Watie's nephew, E.C.

Boudinot, asked his uncle to allow him to serve in Watie's regiment as an officer because "John Ross and you are rivals, he has appointed his nephew [W.P. Ross] Lt. Col. intent on keeping a foothold in the military organization."⁷⁶

Drew's troops performed poorly during the Civil War because many of the full blood soldiers fought unwillingly. On December 8, 1861, over 400 members of Drew's force deserted at the Battle of Caving Banks to join the followers of Opothleyahola, the Chief of the Upper Creeks, who remained faithful to the Union.⁷⁷ Opothleyahola and his followers fled from Indian Territory toward Kansas where they hoped to find sanctuary from the Confederate element of their tribe. Historian John Bartlett Meserve noted, "The Civil War wrought havoc among the Creeks in the Indian Territory, opening old tribal wounds and fanning into flames, the smoldering embers of their ancient tribal antagonisms."⁷⁸ His words describe the Cherokees' situation as well, which may partially explain Ross's sympathy for Opothleyahola's plight. Prior to the war, Ross had urged the Creeks to remain united and neutral. When that failed, he stayed involved in Creek affairs, acting as mediator between the tribal factions. When war appeared inevitable, Ross remained firm in his belief that a conflict between whites should not scuttle peace among the Indian tribes.⁷⁹

The desertion of Drew's men at Caving Banks indicated the level of division between Drew's and Watie's men. Already separated purposefully by the Confederate leadership, the regiments soon slipped into open conflict. In the aftermath of the Caving Banks debacle, Stand Watie's nephew, Charles Webber, killed a member of John Drew's regiment. The murdered man had prevented the raising of the Confederate flag in Tahlequah the previous summer, and Watie described him as "hostile to southern people and their institutions."⁸⁰ Another of Drew's troops, Arch Snail, also was killed after he deserted at Caving Banks. Watie had no remorse over his death and implied Drew's and Ross's indignation over the event was hypocritical.⁸¹ Ross wrote to Albert Pike expressing outrage and fear over what he described as "reckless and unprincipled persons belonging to Watie's Regiment who are under no subordination or restraint of their leaders in domineering over and trampling up the rights of peaceable and unoffending citizens."⁸² Ross watched as the foundation of his alliance with the Confederacy disintegrated. As the full blood troops under Drew did not

believe in the Confederate cause, they continued to desert, leaving Ross with neither a strong power base nor unity for his people.

As divisions among tribal factions exploded into violence, the Confederate government, much as the federal government had in the past, ignored crucial stipulations in their treaty with the Cherokees, further shaking Ross's crumbling commitment to the Confederacy. The Indian regiments stood mostly inactive until the Battle of Pea Ridge on March 7 and 8, 1862. Despite promises from Pike during treaty negotiations that the Indian regiments would be used only to protect their land, the Battle of Pea Ridge took place outside Indian Territory.⁸³ The Union victory at Pea Ridge eroded Ross's faith in the military superiority of the South. In the aftermath of Pea Ridge, Confederate troop withdrawal from the Cherokee Nation left Indian Territory largely unprotected, a source of great irritation to Ross who worried about the Cherokee treasury and tribal documents.⁸⁴ In answer to Ross's complaints, Pike assigned Drew's force the task of protecting Indian Territory. That comforted Ross, despite the meager size of Drew's force after massive desertions and furloughs.⁸⁵ On May 10, 1861, a disgruntled Ross wrote to Jefferson Davis stressing Cherokee loyalty, but complaining that the Confederacy inadequately armed Indian soldiers and failed to protect Indian Territory.⁸⁶ By June Ross openly expressed feelings of betrayal at the hands of the Confederate government.

By mid-summer, as Ross grew increasingly disenchanted with the Confederacy, Union forces in Kansas under the command of Colonel William Weer prepared for an assault on Indian Territory. Weer, who contacted Keetoowah Cherokees loyal to the Union, believed Ross was a Union man as well.⁸⁷ On June 26 Weer communicated his presence to Ross and assured him that he believed he knew Ross's true loyalty.⁸⁸ The Union forces faced little opposition and quickly advanced into Indian Territory. On July 7 Weer asked to meet with Ross.⁸⁹ Ross responded negatively, citing his treaty with the Confederacy as binding.⁹⁰ While those interchanges took place, large groups of Cherokee soldiers continued to cross the lines into the Union camp, and on July 12 Albert Pike resigned his post. Pike believed the Confederates had mistreated the Indians and used him as a scapegoat. He cited political intrigue as his motivation for stepping down.⁹¹ Two days later a contingent of Union troops occupied the Cherokee capitol at Tahlequah and prepared to contact Ross. The captain in charge also believed that

Ross held Union sympathies.⁹² On July 15 the Union force placed Ross under arrest.

Union troops took Ross to Kansas and then to Washington to meet with President Abraham Lincoln. Union general James Blunt of Kansas sent the president a letter vouching for Ross's credibility.⁹³ On September 16, 1862, Ross wrote to President Lincoln, invoking the federal government's treaty obligations to the Cherokees and maintaining the Cherokees had negotiated their treaty with the Confederacy under duress. He noted:

[N]o other alternative was left them, surrounded by the Power and influences that they were and that they had no opportunity freely to express their views and assume their true positions until the advance into their Country of the Indian Expedition during the last summer. . . . The advance of the Indian Expedition gave the Cherokee People an opportunity to manifest their views by taking far as possible a prompt and decided stand in favor of their relations with the U States Government.⁹⁴

A variety of external pressures impacted on Ross's decision to return to the Union. The continuation of factional strife imperiled tribal unity. The conflicts between the members of the Drew and Watie forces illustrated the tenuous nature of the alliance between the Ross Party and Treaty Party. Their relationship exploded almost immediately after Ross's capture. On August 21, 1862, Stand Watie's supporters elected him principal chief. The Confederacy's negligence in fulfilling treaty obligations to the Cherokees also influenced Ross's return to the Union.

Many scholars have argued that Ross told the truth when he assured Lincoln that he was a Union man throughout. Support for that argument lies in the letters of Evan Jones, William Weer, and James Blunt.⁹⁵ Annie Heloise Abel's excellent three-volume account of Indian activity in the Civil War also supports this argument. While his position as a slaveholder coupled with his distrust of the federal government offer support for the view that Ross's true sympathies lay with the Confederacy, few have argued that position. Of his contemporaries, Confederate colonel James McIntosh believed Ross strongly supported the Confederacy, but his view is in the minority.⁹⁶ A third possibility—that Ross supported neither the North nor the South, but chose his allies based on his desire for tribal unity, sovereignty, and the related issue of maintaining his personal power—is compelling. John Ross believed neither in the Union nor the Confederacy, but rather in the advancement of the Cherokee people and in his own ability to lead his

tribe intact and sovereign. Prior to the Civil War he counseled neutrality because he did not want to become embroiled in what he saw as a white man's conflict. He preferred to wait out the war and negotiate with the victor. Ultimately, recurrent tribal factionalism and external pressures destroyed Ross's dream.

Finally, military considerations and experience with past betrayals at the hands of whites also influenced Ross. The recall of federal troops from the West to supplement the Union's battered eastern forces in the spring of 1861 left Indian Territory unprotected. By abandoning their western posts, the federal government failed to maintain a presence in Indian Territory, to inspire confidence in neutral parties, and to live up to its treaty obligations. When the Union abandoned Indian Territory, the Confederacy sent representatives to negotiate treaties with the tribes. Ross's belief in unity—in his tribe, and with all of the tribes of Indian Territory—left him little choice when the Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles all signed treaties with the Confederacy. The Confederate Indians, Watie's force of secessionist Cherokees, and the presence of Arkansas and a divided Missouri left the Cherokees with secessionist neighbors on three borders and internally.

John Ross, isolated in a sea of Confederate support, threatened by factionalism within his tribe, and victimized by the federal government, had few attractive options when making his decision in 1861. Sometime after his fateful address of August 21, 1861, Ross said:

We are in the position of a man standing alone upon a low, naked spot of ground, with the water rising rapidly all around him. He sees the danger but does not know what to do. If he remains where he is, his only alternative is to be swept away and perish. The tide carries by him in its mad course, a drifting log; it perchance, comes within reach of him. By refusing it he is a doomed man. By seizing hold of it he has a chance for his life.⁹⁷

Ross's decision to accept an alliance with the secessionists did not result from a genuine belief in their cause, nor from a desire to maintain the institution of slavery, but rather arose out of pressures present for much of his career. The same factors compelled Ross's return to the Union.

John Ross was not a secessionist, but the history of his people made certain that his ties to the Union were not overly strong. In August, 1861, his goals were tribal unity and sovereignty. Ross

feared that the Civil War offered little opportunity for advancing the position of the Cherokees, and thus he acted from a defensive posture throughout the war. Ross's early belief in neutrality represented what he believed to be the ideal scenario, one in which the tribes of Indian Territory remained aloof while white men fought out their differences. It can be argued that the combination of a Confederate policy of divide and conquer, Union government negligence, and intertribal conflict undermined Ross's vision as it had at New Echota thirty years earlier. John Ross was neither a unionist nor a secessionist. Throughout his tenure as chief, his vision of a unified and sovereign Cherokee Nation dominated his political consciousness.

ENDNOTES

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¹ W. Craig Gaines, *The Confederate Cherokees: John Drew's Regiment of Mounted Rifles* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 11.

² John Ross's Address to the Cherokees, August 21, 1861, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, ed. Gary E. Moulton, 2 vols. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 2: 481 (hereafter cited as *Ross Papers II*).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Ross to McCulloch, August 24, 1861, *Ross Papers II*, 483.

⁵ Elias Boudinot to Stand Watie, March 7, 1832, *Cherokee Cavaliers: Forty Years of Cherokee History As Told In The Correspondence Of The Ridge-Watie-Boudinot Family*, ed. Edward E. Dale and Gaston Litton (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939), 8.

⁶ Cherokee Delegation to Lewis Cass, June 16, 1834, *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, ed. Gary E. Moulton, 2 vols. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 1: 295 (hereafter cited as *Ross Papers I*). The petition contained many errors which undermined John Ross's credibility with the government. He responded to charges of fraud by noting that the people protesting against the validity of the petition were the members of the unauthorized delegation that had signed the Treaty of New Echota. These were the same people whose actions the petition censured.

⁷ Cherokee Delegation to the United States Senate, March 8, 1836, *Ross Papers I*, 397.

⁸ John Ross to Joaquin Maria Del Castillo y Lanzas, March 22, 1835, *Ross Papers I*, 334. Ross contemplated relocating the Cherokees in Mexico and went so far as to contact the Mexican charge d'affaires.

⁹ Thurman Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy: The Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 329.

¹⁰ John Ross's Address to the General Council of the Cherokees, June 10, 1839, *Ross Papers I*, 713.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ John Ross to John Brown, John Looney, and John Rogers, June 13, 1839, *Ross Papers I*, 714.

¹⁴ Morris L. Wardell, *A Political History of the Cherokee Nation, 1838-1907* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1938), 18.

¹⁵ John Ross to Matthew Arbuckle, June 24, 1839, *Ross Papers I*, 719.

¹⁶ John Brown, John Looney, John Rogers, and John Smith to John Ross, June 28, 1839, *Ross Papers I*, 721.

¹⁷ *Constitution and Laws of the Cherokee Nation* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1973), 7-10, 11-29; Ross's Address to the National Council, September 12, 1839, *Ross Papers I*, 761.

¹⁸ John Ross to Matthew Arbuckle, July 20, 1839, *Ross Papers I*, 741.

¹⁹ Andrew Jackson to John A. Bell and Stand Watie, October 5, 1839, in Dale and Litton, *Cherokee Cavaliers*, 17.

²⁰ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, Doc. 1, 26th Cong., 1st sess., 402.

²¹ John Ross to Matthew Arbuckle, July 22, 1839, *Ross Papers I*, 743.

²² *Report of the Commissioner*, 404.

²³ Congressional Document 188 (Serial 366), 23.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁶ John Ross to Joel Poinsett, January 3, 1840, *Ross Papers II*, 4.

²⁷ Cherokee Delegation to The United States Senate and House of Representatives, February 28, 1840, *Ross Papers II*, 7.

²⁸ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, Doc. 1, 26th Cong., 2d sess., 269-271.

²⁹ Cherokee Delegation to John Bell, August 26, 1841, *Ross Papers II*, 99.

³⁰ John Tyler to Cherokee Delegation, September 20, 1841, *Ross Papers II*, 105.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 108.

³² John G. Ross to John Ross, May 25, 1842, *Ross Papers II*, 127.

³³ Richard Zellner, "Stand Watie and the Killing of James Foreman," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 59 (Summer, 1981): 167-178.

³⁴ John Ross's Annual Message, October 3, 1843, *Ross Papers II*, 178.

³⁵ Cherokee Delegation to William Wilkins, May 14, 1844, *Ross Papers II*, 201.

³⁶ William Wilkins to Cherokee Delegation, July 8, 1844, *Ross Papers II*, 216.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 217.

³⁸ Congressional Document 140 (Serial 457), 5-14.

³⁹ Cherokee Delegation to William Wilkins, July 17, 1844, *Ross Papers II*, 233.

⁴⁰ George Lowrey to Stand Watie, February 10, 1846, in Dale and Litton, *Cherokee Cavaliers*, 25.

⁴¹ Congressional Document 185 (Serial 485), 3.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴³ Gary E. Moulton, *John Ross, Cherokee Chief* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1978), 155.

⁴⁴ Ross's Annual Message, October 6, 1856, *Ross Papers II*, 395.

⁴⁵ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, Doc. 1, 33d Cong., 2d sess., 322-323.

⁴⁶ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, Doc. 1, 34th Cong., 1st and 2d sess., 444-445.

⁴⁷ Rudi Halliburton, Jr., *Red Over Black: Black Slavery among the Cherokee Indians* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1977), 100.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 120.

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⁴⁹ James Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokees* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970), 225.

⁵⁰ Howard Tyner, "The Cherokee Keetoowah Society, 1855-1870" (M.A. thesis, University of Tulsa, 1949), Appendix.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Mooney, *Cherokee Myths*, 225.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 226.

⁵⁴ Henry Rector to John Ross, January 29, 1861, "Letters of Henry M. Rector and J.R. Kannady to John Ross of the Cherokee Nation," ed. Harry J. Lemley, *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 42 (Autumn, 1964): 320-329.

⁵⁵ John Ross to Henry M. Rector, February 22, 1861, *Ross Papers II*, 465.

⁵⁶ David A. Nichols, *Lincoln and the Indians: Civil War Policy and Politics* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978), 26; Cherokee Delegation To The Senate And House of Representatives, June 14, 1864, *Ross Papers II*, 591. A Cherokee delegation to the federal government after the war raised the issue of the secessionist leanings of the agents in its attempt to explain why the Cherokees signed a treaty with the Confederacy.

⁵⁷ R.J. Cowart to Elias Rector, undated, in Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Slave Holder and Secessionist, An Omitted Chapter In The Diplomatic History Of The Southern Confederacy* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1915), 294.

⁵⁸ A.B. Greenwood to Elias Rector, June 4, 1860, in Abel, *The American Indian as Slave Holder*, 292.

⁵⁹ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 70 vols. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1885) Series I, 13: 493-494 (hereafter cited as *OR*).

⁶⁰ J.R. Kannady to John Ross, May 15, 1861, in Lemley, "Letters of Henry Rector," 320.

⁶¹ John Ross to J.R. Kannady, May 17, 1861, *Ross Papers II*, 469.

⁶² *OR*, IV, 1: 359.

⁶³ Harry J. Lemley, "Historic Letters of General Ben McCulloch and Chief John Ross in the Civil War," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 40 (Autumn, 1962): 286-294.

⁶⁴ *OR*, I, 13: 497-498.

⁶⁵ John Ross to David Hubbard, June 17, 1861, *Ross Papers II*, 473.

⁶⁶ John Ross to Benjamin McCulloch, June 17, 1861, *Ross Papers II*, 475.

⁶⁷ A.M. Wilson and J.W. Washbourne to Stand Watie, May 18, 1861, in Dale and Litton, *Cherokee Cavaliers*, 106.

⁶⁸ Kenny A. Franks, *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation* (Memphis, Tennessee: Memphis State University Press, 1979), 117.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁷⁰ John Ross and Joseph Vann to John Drew, July 2, 1861, *Ross Papers II*, 478.

⁷¹ *OR*, IV, 1: 426-443, 445-466, 513-527, 542-554.

⁷² William P. Adair and James M. Bell to Stand Watie, August 29, 1861, in Dale and Litton, *Cherokee Cavaliers*, 108.

⁷³ *OR* IV, 1: 669-686.

⁷⁴ John Ross to George W. Clark, August 24, 1861, *Ross Papers II*, 483.

⁷⁵ *OR*, I, 3: 691-692.

⁷⁶ Elias Cornelius Boudinot to Stand Watie, October 5, 1861, in Dale and Litton, *Cherokee Cavaliers*, 111.

⁷⁷ Gaines, *Confederate Cherokees*, 50.

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⁷⁸ John Bartlett Meserve, "Chief Opothleyahola," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 9 (December, 1931): 439-453.

⁷⁹ John Ross to Motey Kennard and Echo Harjo, October 20, 1861, *Ross Papers II*, 497.

⁸⁰ Stand Watie to Douglas H. Cooper, February 19, 1862, in Dale and Litton, *Cherokee Cavaliers*, 112.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁸² John Ross to Albert Pike, February 25, 1862, *Ross Papers II*, 509.

⁸³ *OR*, IV, 1: 669-686.

⁸⁴ John Ross to Albert Pike, March 22, 1862, *Ross Papers II*, 510.

⁸⁵ John Ross to Albert Pike, April 10, 1862, *Ross Papers II*, 511.

⁸⁶ John Ross to Albert Pike, May 10, 1862, *Ross Papers II*, 513.

⁸⁷ *OR*, I, 13: 431.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 450.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 464.

⁹⁰ John Ross to William Weer, July 8, 1862, *Ross Papers II*, 516.

⁹¹ Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1919), 337-351.

⁹² *OR*, I, 13: 431.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 565-566.

⁹⁴ John Ross to Abraham Lincoln, September 16, 1862, *Ross Papers II*, 517.

⁹⁵ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, Doc. 1, 37th Cong., 2d sess., 658-659.

⁹⁶ *OR*, I, 8: 732.

⁹⁷ John Ross to Sarah F. Stapler, February 22, 1866, *Ross Papers II*, 666.