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**The Indigenous Poster Child of the Lost Cause: An
Examination of the Historiography of Brigadier
General Stand Watie and the Legacy of Cherokee
Confederate Involvement during the Civil War**

Corey Cheung

History Senior Thesis

Advisor: Thomas Wickman

Spring, 2021

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Acknowledgements

Professor Thomas Wickman, for his instruction, insight, dependability and unwavering support. Thank you for giving me the confidence and reassurance that I could complete such a project and I am grateful to have had you as an advisor for this thesis. I cannot express in words how appreciative I am for your kind words and willingness to assist me at every step throughout this process.

Professor Jeff Bayliss, for being an amazing mentor, professor and friend. You have been the authority figure at Trinity with whom I trust the most and attribute the most of my growth to during my four years here. You have helped me through difficult times, been there for me whenever I needed you even if it was at an inconvenience to yourself and have aided immensely in my academic and personal development. I could not have asked for a better Posse mentor and I am thankful everyday that I was able to be a Posse student under your tutelage.

Professor Clark Alejandrino, for teaching me how to be a better writer and being an amazing professor. If you do end up reading this thesis professor know that every time that I wanted to directly quote a secondary source, I heard your voice in my head advising me against it (admittedly I may have a few of these direct quotes scattered throughout the work, sorry). Although I know that I will never be the accomplished historian that you are, hopefully one day I will be able to catch up to you on all the major lifts.

Jeff Liszka, for being so incredibly friendly, approachable and helpful throughout my years at Trinity and teaching me how to navigate the intricacies of online databases.

All of the history and American studies professors with whom I have taken courses with, for expanding my breadth of knowledge on American and world history.

My parents, for always being supportive of me and always making sure that I was in the right mental space during the process.

My brother who has allowed me to talk to him about this thesis despite being busy and bogged down with endless amounts of work.

Introduction

“American history is longer, larger, more various, more beautiful, and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it”¹

When generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee met at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9th, 1865 to arrange the conditions for the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, all in attendance understood the gravity of the situation and what the outcome of the meeting entailed for the future of the nation. While the armies of general Joseph E. Johnston and other Confederate generals had not yet formally capitulated, the fate of the Confederacy and its cessation as a nation had in all but name been sealed at Appomattox. Accepting the defeat of the Confederacy, most of the scattered remnants of its army slowly surrendered to Union forces and returned home to begin the process of reconciliation. Given the limitations regarding communication that existed during the era, news of Lee’s surrender at Appomattox did not reach certain battalions until weeks after and thus multiple Confederate units remained in conflict with the federal government. Of these units to remain following the surrender at Appomattox, none are particularly held in distinction or commemorated beyond that which is said about the general legacy of the Confederacy. There is however one figure who has been exalted by the Southern demographic and etched into the public memory for his reputation as being the last Confederate general to surrender: Stand Watie.

¹ James Baldwin, “A Talk to Teachers,” in *James Baldwin Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison (Library of America, 1998), 686.

On June 23rd, 1865 Cherokee brigadier general Stand Watie signed a cease-fire agreement with Union representatives at Doaksville, OK officially making him the last Confederate general to surrender². Unbeknownst to Watie, this title would catapult him to the national level, as its significance to preserving the legacy of the Confederacy and the ideologies attached to its memory were contingent on the reiteration of this designation. As such, Stand Watie's legacy has served as a channel through which various parties have espoused their own beliefs and promoted their own agendas through the exploitation of his Indigeneity and unique subject position.

With the pernicious political implications resulting from the resurgence of movements sympathetic to the Confederacy like that of the Lost Cause, there is a continued need for historians to address issues of representation and legacy. As a figure who is recognized within niche circles knowledgeable on the Civil War but not necessarily the nation in its entirety, Stand Watie's legacy is confined to literature related to the conflict and few works have been written focusing solely on his life and wartime exploits. Though few in number, the books dedicated to Stand Watie provide a considerable degree of information regarding his life and conduct throughout the war. From a historiographical standpoint, the limited literature written directly about Watie can provide insight into circumstances surrounding their construction and a comparison of their content can be extrapolated to understand the changes occurring in the national context from one decade to the next. Mabel Washbourne Anderson's *The Life of General Stand Watie: The Only Indian Brigadier General of the Confederate Army and the Last General to Surrender* was the first complete biography to be written on Stand Watie and

² "The Civil War's Final Surrender," National Museum of American History Behring Center, accessed March 21st, 2021, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/civil-wars-final-surrender>.

consequentially shaped the field of research surrounding Watie and Cherokee Confederates during the war. I seek to contribute what I can to this discussion of Civil War memory, particularly within the context of its impact on the Cherokee nation both past and present. Guiding my work is the desire to introduce a different approach to the examination of Stand Watie and the Cherokee nation, one that synthesizes the existing scholarship on the topic rather than attempting to locate undiscovered material concerning his actions or the actions of his Cherokee Mounted Rifles battalion.

The topic of Cherokee involvement in the Civil War has been largely neglected by historians and the general public alike with few outside the sphere of Civil War academia aware of its existence within the context of the war. Treated largely as it had been during the war itself, Indigenous participation on behalf of either side has been given neither the attention nor respect that it warrants especially when taking into consideration the impact of these tribal nations in deciding the wars outcome. Books that have been authored on the topic are based in the primary sources extracted from Watie and other Cherokee Confederates. This of course is to be expected of material intent on presenting the lives and actions of these Indigenous individuals and is fundamental to the subjects in focus. I myself have included within this thesis these works and structure my argument around the literature defined by these parameters. Virtually nonexistent however, are projects that seek to bridge the way that different authors have written about these events throughout the historical timeline and how they have contributed to the current political and cultural debate that surrounds the legacy of the Confederacy, and more specifically, Confederate Cherokees like Stand Watie. It is this absence, this unaddressed need for the bridging of these interconnected works and their contemporary influences and historical happenings, that drives my research within this thesis.

Chapter One, “The Beginnings of a Contentious Legacy” examines Mabel Anderson’s *The Life of Stand Watie* and its immense influence on the material that was to be produced on Watie. The resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan and the rebirth of Confederate preservation groups like the United Daughters of the Confederacy are discussed within the chapter to highlight the interconnectedness of Watie’s memory to that of the greater Confederacy and as a means of locating the beginnings of the Lost Cause ideology that would gain further traction in the coming years. Chapter Two, “A Poster Child for the Confederacy: The Myth of the Lost Cause and its Exploitation of Stand Watie” focuses on the second biography to be written on Watie authored by Frank Cunningham. From ascertaining Cunningham’s motivations to exploring the works relation to broader national happenings like the Civil Rights Movement, Chapter Two makes evident the historical revisionism that proponents of the Lost Cause have attempted to reinforce through the manipulation of Stand Watie’s legacy and identity. Chapter Three, “Past and Present Collide: Impact of Indigenous Responses to Policies of Federal Oversight and Broader National Happenings to the Contemporary Position and Memory of Stand Watie” incorporates an analysis of Kenny Arthur Frank’s *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation* and follows the progression of the literature surrounding Watie and the advancements made within the field. The change in content, language and portrayals of Indigeneity identified within these three distinct works on Watie act as the link that connects his memory to that of the entire Cherokee Nation and its tenuous position within the historical narrative of the United States. Understanding the current issues of memory and preservation that have arisen from the treatment of Stand Watie and Cherokee Confederate involvement during the Civil War opens the discussion for how a more accurate narrative that restores Indigenous agency can be produced and the steps necessary to facilitate the process moving forward.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the role that Trinity Alum and fellow history major Emily Askren's thesis on Indigenous Enslavement in Southern New England played in helping me outline my own writing and in approaching Native American issues. While our works are neither on the same tribes or during the same time periods, the interconnected need to address indigenous subjects that have been neglected for so long has made me turn towards Askren's work and has guided me at times when I have been confounded as to how I can present my findings in a manner that gives these figures proper and just attention. Like Askren, I too have found it difficult to navigate the department of diction regarding Indigenous matters and find it necessary to clarify my use of certain terminology throughout the thesis. I use the terms "Native American", "Indigenous" and "tribal" interchangeably, particularly when I am attempting to speak generally about the Indigenous community in its entirety and not solely on the Cherokee. I acknowledge that the affiliations and historical relations that these diverse and politically distinct tribal nations have had with various parties in power in the United States were not uniform and cannot be considered as such. I use these terms because this diversity in tribal sovereignty exists and any attempt to identify all of the varied responses from these groups would prove to be futile and could not possibly give adequate justice to their individual motivations and circumstances. Accepting the generalizations that are attached to my usage of these terms, I attempt to portray the general Indigenous perspective at these junctions within American history without oversimplifying the unquestionable complexities involving their identity. Another set of terms that I use sparingly within my writing are "half-blood" and "full-blood". Referring to the racial ancestry of the two factions in power within the Cherokee and further solidified through the signing of the Treaty of New Echota, these terms appear frequently in earlier works within the field. Tied to these terms are the racial connotations derived from

their association with these two competing factions and the broader conflicting notions of civility, barbarity and assimilation that beset the Cherokee Nation. Given their etymology and the political implications linked to their usage, I utilize these terms judiciously and only when referencing their inclusion in the works of other authors. Instead, I opt to use the terms “Ross Party” and “Treaty Party” as these terms convey the appropriate allegiances and historical affiliations of these two Cherokee factions without the problematic racial components bound to the characterizations of “half-blood” and “full-blood”.

While I can vividly remember the days of my early childhood when I would ask for books on the Civil War for my birthday and have been fascinated by its historical intricacies ever since, I am aware that this captivation with the conflict is not shared by most. For this reason, I, like all other historians, have been confronted with the question of why this topic is noteworthy and its pertinence to our current understanding of the nation’s history. Admittedly, there have been times throughout this process when I have doubted myself and questioned my authority to speak on matters in which I have relied on the works of other, much more accomplished, historians within the field. It has been these moments of doubt in which I simply look at the current political and social climate of the nation and am reminded of the significance of addressing the questions surrounding the legacy of the Civil War. The relevance of the issues concerning the memory of the war and the men who fought within it is glaringly apparent and has only increased in the last decade. When white supremacist organizations and far-right extremists converged at Charlottesville in 2017 for the Unite the Right Rally, it was the removal of a monument of General Lee that sparked the protest. Waving Confederate flags and chanting anti-Semitic and racially provocative slogans, these individuals acted with the intentions of making a pronounced statement to the whole of the nation; that their views, their story, their

version of history was not be ignored nor replaced. It is this same story however, this veiled narrative of history, that has caused such strife and continues to generate conflict due to its negligence in telling the full, unadulterated unfolding of events accurate to the historical record. Understanding the actions that have occurred in recent years as the culmination of everything that has preceded it, the solution for how we as a society can move forward can only be answered by examining the past. The memory and legacy of Stand Watie and Confederate Cherokees is undeniably problematic yet unmistakably beautiful. Willfully ignoring the inclusion of their experiences or altering their history in a way that subscribes to the positions that have been assigned to them, cannot be allowed to continue if the nation is to move towards a more progressive future. I hope that my work can be used to facilitate this process, serving as one of many projects that reexamines neglected historical subjects and inserts them into their proper place in the telling of our nation's history.

Chapter I

The Beginnings of a Contentious Legacy

In 1915 Mabel Washbourne Anderson completed an undertaking of immense difficulty, an unprecedented exploration into unfamiliar academic and historical territory: a published biography of Cherokee Confederate general Stand Watie. *The Life of General Stand Watie: The Only Brigadier General of the Confederate Army and the Last General to Surrender*, was the first documented and fully complete biography to be written on Stand Watie and his actions during the Civil War era. Published by the Mayes County Republican, Anderson's work was initially distributed as a bound booklet and was substantially shorter than most biographies of the time at only 58 pages. Given Watie's obscurity in both Anderson's time and the present, it is remarkable that such a work exists and the efforts taken by Anderson to secure the information necessary to produce the piece are commendable. Released on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the commencement of the Civil War, Anderson was cognizant of the potential influence her work would have on the study of Watie and other Cherokee Confederates. Despite Anderson's original work that unquestionably pioneered new ways of treating indigenous figures within the context of American history, her biography of Watie presents several issues, the implications of which are troubling and lead to complications involving a range of factors including those of race and identity. From Anderson's depiction of Watie, it becomes strikingly clear that his legacy is one that is neither neatly defined nor free from disputation. While historians specializing in Indigenous history, and more specifically in Cherokee history, have approached the subject of Stand Watie's legacy from different angles than that taken by Anderson, her work nonetheless serves as a channel through which the intersection between Indigenous history and broader

concepts like that of the Lost Cause movement and the general legacy of the Confederacy can be examined.

Taking careful consideration of the racial, political and social turbulence that dominated the 1910's, it becomes apparent that the year in which Anderson released her work contained no shortage of complex and overlapping factors that undeniably influenced Anderson and the biography that she produced. The world that Anderson inhabited as a lifelong Oklahoma resident was one heavily influenced by the existing circumstances of the time that were not necessarily conducive to the creation or distribution of material highlighting Indigenous history and achievement. Despite Indian territory comprising a fair share of the state's total land mass, Oklahoma was still gripped by the same white supremacist ideology that its more Southern neighboring states were noted for perpetuating. The first Oklahoma state constitution, enacted in 1907, segregated public facilities and made intermarriage illegal³. Additions to the constitution in 1910 maintained that the state had the right to impose literacy tests and adopt grandfather clauses to further disenfranchise non-white individuals and retain the power created by white America⁴. Perhaps the most glaring manifestation of the entrenchment of white supremacy and racist ideology came with the ascension of Woodrow Wilson to the presidency in 1913. While running on the platform of promoting fairness for all Americans and even enlisting the help of prominent black activists during his campaign⁵, Wilson quickly abandoned his previous promises to help combat institutionalized racism and segregation. Opting for a more conservative approach intent on appeasing the white majority, Wilson reiterated traditionalist sentiments in regards to the

³ "Jim Crow Laws," Encyclopedia of the Great Plains, accessed December 21st, 2020, <http://plainshumanities.unl.edu/encyclopedia/doc/egp.law.023>.

⁴ Encyclopedia of the Great Plains, "Jim Crow Laws."

⁵ Jeffrey Lauck, "Lost Cause in the Oval Office: Woodrow Wilson's Racist Policies and White-Washed Memory of the Civil War," *The Gettysburg Compiler*, December 2nd, 2015, <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1195&context=compiler>.

issues of race and equality, allowing for the continuation of Jim Crow policies and discrimination of minority populations in America. Moreover, as the first Southerner to be elected to the presidency since Zachary Taylor and the son of Confederate sympathizers⁶, Wilson's views on the Civil War were warped by his Southern upbringing. A strong proponent of the Lost Cause Myth, Wilson supported the narrative of the war that highlighted the valor of men fighting on both sides and depicted the Confederacy as a noble power fighting for a legitimate cause. Reflecting his endorsement of this myth, Wilson requested that D.W Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, a film notorious for its romanticization of the Ku Klux Klan, be privately screened at the White House. Commenting that the film was "like writing history with lightning"⁷, Wilson propelled the film into the national spotlight, adding fuel to the already racially charged fire raging across the nation. Acknowledging the social and political climate in which she was to release her work into, Anderson needed to play into the national rhetoric and frame her biography to be a piece that all Americans could find some value in reading. By looking at the influence of these external factors on Anderson's writing, it becomes easier to extract how she encourages these views or attempts to navigate their complicated implications. Ultimately, this provides a better understanding of why the biography appears as it does, what Anderson accomplished with its creation and how its reception in early twentieth century America reflects broader patterns of race and memory.

If the year of her birth was any indication of the work that Anderson would find herself producing later in life, it would be nothing less than fitting given her contributions in expanding

⁶ Saladin Ambar, "Woodrow Wilson: Life Before the Presidency," accessed December 21st, 2020, <https://millercenter.org/president/wilson/life-before-the-presidency>.

⁷Mark E. Benbow, "Birth of a Quotation: Woodrow Wilson and "Like Writing History with Lightning,"" *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, no.4 (October 2010): 509. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20799409?seq=2#metadata_info_tab_contents

the historical record of the Civil War. Born in 1863 at the height of the Civil War⁸, Anderson's attachment to the conflict was one derived from both the circumstances of time lending itself to the immediacy of her interest and her personal relationship to the figures that she focused her biography on. The granddaughter of John Ridge and distant cousin to Stand Watie⁹, the zeal with which Anderson wrote her biography on Watie was unquestionably linked to her inextricable ties to the Treaty Party stemming from her familial relations. Her fascination with the topic of Cherokee involvement in the Civil War can also be traced back to her own personal upbringing and experiences as a resident of the state of Oklahoma. Graduating from the Cherokee Female Seminary, an institution based in Tahlequah¹⁰, Anderson used her education to further immerse herself within the Cherokee community becoming a teacher in Cherokee public schools¹¹. While Anderson would later move out of Cherokee territory after her marriage to John Anderson, she never strayed far from her place of birth as she resided within the state of Oklahoma for the duration of her life¹². During her career as a schoolteacher, Anderson remained active as a writer contributing to Indian Territory and Oklahoma magazines with some of her works even being picked up by out-of-territory publications¹³. Anderson's engagement with the Cherokee community through both her life actions and writings demonstrates her attachment to the tribe and provides a better understanding of who she was not only as an author but as an individual. Moreover, it provides insight into the motivating factors that contributed to the construction of

⁸ Anderson, Mabel Washbourne. "Mabel Washbourne Anderson (Cherokee)." In *Changing Is Not Vanishing: A Collection of American Indian Poetry to 1930*, edited by Parker Robert Dale, 242-51. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. Accessed November 21, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fj58m.50>.

⁹ Mabel Washbourne Anderson, "Mabel Washbourne Anderson (Cherokee)," in *Changing Is Not Vanishing: A Collection of American Indian Poetry to 1930*, ed. Robert Dale Parker (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 244, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fj58m.50>.

¹⁰ Anderson, "Mabel Washbourne Anderson", 242.

¹¹ Anderson, "Mabel Washbourne Anderson", 242.

¹² "Selected Works of Mabel Washbourne Anderson," Sequoyah Research Center, accessed November 12th, 2020, <https://ualr.edu/sequoyah/creator/mabel-washbourne-anderson>.

¹³ Sequoyah Research Center, "Selected Works of Mabel Washbourne Anderson."

her work on Watie and supplies the necessary background information on Anderson herself that is needed to discern the reasons for why the biography is written the way it is.

A prolific writer on Cherokee affairs, Anderson engaged with indigenous issues extensively within her earlier works and developed her writing through the interaction with these topics. Examining these earlier pieces allows one to better understand Anderson's identity as a writer and the stylistic choices in her presentation of historical material. Moreover, it provides one with the benefit of knowing what to expect within the biography as the structure of the book incorporates elements from her earlier pieces. While her biography on Watie stands as her magnum opus, Anderson produced several academic pieces throughout her lifetime, most notably the poem *Nowita, the Sweet Singer*¹⁴. Written nearly a decade before the biography in 1906¹⁵, *Nowita, the Sweet Singer* chronicles the life of Cherokee heroine Nowita, a "sweet singing Cherokee maiden, a pupil in the Female Seminary, a young professor from the East"¹⁶ as she falls in love with "the pale faced stranger"¹⁷ who promises to return following his departure but is never seen again. By comparing this work to her biography on Watie, it becomes apparent that the themes and personal beliefs that Anderson introduces in *Nowita* are replicated and reinforced in the biography and reflect both her writing style and opinions on indigenous issues.

One of the themes that can be extracted from the poem that Anderson later reinforces in her biography of Watie is the concept of fate as it pertains to loss and suffering. When describing the circumstances that led to the meeting of Nowita and the professor and their eventual parting,

¹⁴ Mabel Washbourne Anderson, "Mabel Washbourne Anderson (Cherokee)," in *Changing Is Not Vanishing: A Collection of American Indian Poetry to 1930*, ed. Robert Dale Parker (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 244, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fj58m.50>.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 244.

¹⁶ *Ibid* 243.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 244.

Anderson chalks it up to fate claiming that “Fate, that with cruel and restless hand, had brought together these two people so dissimilar by environments and nationality, decreed that one of them at least, should fulfill the destiny allotted to her”¹⁸. On its own, this statement reads as any other that exists within a fable intent on preaching a moral and is nothing to take note of.

However, its significance is magnified when compared to her work on Watie wherein the same appeals to external and otherworldly factors as the primary cause for the suffering of the protagonists is used. When describing the later years of Watie’s life in the biography, she states “After the close of the war General Watie broken in fortune and health, began to follow the quiet pursuit of his early manhood and to separate himself, as far as possible, from public life, which fate had thrust upon his home-loving nature, but for which he never had any ulterior motives”¹⁹.

Casting aside the validity of this claim for the time being, it is interesting to see how Anderson frames the circumstances that led to the unfortunate situations that both Nowita and Watie ended up in in a nearly identical manner. In the case of Nowita, while Anderson acknowledges the conflicting backgrounds of the two characters, Nowita’s misfortune is primarily ascribed to fate, an uncontrollable and unpredictable force beyond any individual’s control. In the biography, Anderson makes the same argument that fate forced Watie into the position that he found himself in. Its importance however, is dramatically increased, as making this claim allows Anderson to depict Watie as a victim of circumstance rather than acknowledging his active role in causing the misfortunes that fell upon him and the Cherokee nation for their involvement in the Civil War.

By using the word fate, Anderson neglects the human agency that caused the issues experienced by the individuals involved, implying that it was inevitable that the situations would

¹⁸ Ibid, 244.

¹⁹ Mabel Washbourne Anderson, *Life of General Stand Watie: The Only Indian Brigadier General of the Confederate Army and the Last General to Surrender* (Oklahoma: Mayes County Republican, 1915), 33.

have unfolded the way that they had regardless of the individual's actions. In this regard, Anderson unintentionally perpetuates the trope, commonly utilized by individuals of the era writing on Indigenous affairs, that Native Americans possessed no sovereignty over their own actions and were subject to the consequences and policies decided by the federal government. While it is true that the white governments of the Union and Confederacy exerted a strong sense of control and possessed more military resources than their Native American counterparts, the actions of indigenous tribes should not be seen as being solely dependent on the actions of white men. Non-indigenous writers habitually retold these misconceptions pertaining to the individual sovereignty of Native Americans, replacing a more accurate presentation of their autonomy with a view that labelled Indigenous tribes as victims of circumstance who were incapable of securing adequate protections (and thus could be easily manipulated) and possessed limited to no control over their own actions. This can once again be tied back to the classification of Native Americans as a barbaric race with limited ability or power to define their own political, economic and social future. Claiming that Anderson supported these same beliefs and was conscious of her own role in furthering these fallacies, is erroneous and neglects the work she produced to build upon the public's understanding of Cherokee history. However, it is important to note her absorption and reinforcement of these tropes, even if it was not her intent, as it demonstrates the pervasiveness of the thoughts circulating in the time frame that she was researching as well as writing in.

Also, given the extensive research that Anderson conducted on Watie and her prior knowledge on Cherokee affairs, she knew precisely how contentious a figure Watie was within the Cherokee community and was aware that many individuals blamed him for the devastation of the nation in the aftermath of the war. The usage of the word fate can therefore be read as an

effort by Anderson to dispel any notion that Watie provoked the Cherokee Nation to enter the war and that it was fate, not his own personal agenda, that led to the Cherokee Nation entering the war and the subsequent effects of their involvement. This connects with her overarching argument that Watie was a natural leader, one who did not ask to be placed in the position that he found himself in but understood the inevitability of war and took on the role to benefit his people. In promoting the concept of fate, Anderson constructs a narrative that avoids addressing the impact of one's actions, instead replacing it with a romanticized depiction devoid of assigning responsibility to the individuals involved.

Nowita also provides insight into Anderson's opinions on issues within the Cherokee community, specifically those that pertain to identity and race. Adopting the initial façade of a cautionary tale told to full-blood Cherokees warning against racial assimilation and integration, Anderson's work can be read as a criticism of the myopic mindset of full-blood Cherokees and a broader critique of the rigid categories of race and descent present within the Cherokee nation. Speaking on the character of this group of Cherokees, she states "the dignity and native pride of a fullblood Cherokee are conceded by all who are familiar with their character. Cruel and revengeful they may be, when under oppression, and perhaps treacherous, but coarse or vulgar never"²⁰. The division that Anderson elucidates with her work are substantiated by the well documented cases of intratribal strife existing between the two racial groups. Historian Brad Agnew attests to this in his statement that "they (full-bloods) sought to wrest of the nation from the mixed-bloods, whose influence had been growing for several generations"²¹. The schism

²⁰ Mabel Washbourne Anderson, "Mabel Washbourne Anderson (Cherokee)," in *Changing Is Not Vanishing: A Collection of American Indian Poetry to 1930*, ed. Robert Dale Parker (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 244, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fj58m.50>, 244.

²¹ Brad Agnew, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory* (University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 67.

within the Cherokee Nation was well known to all individuals versed in the affairs of the tribe and Anderson evidently had her own opinions on the issue and used Nowita as a vehicle to voice those sentiments. This distinction between “full” and “mixed blood” Cherokees, and more specifically where Anderson stands on the matter, is significant because it serves as a preview into her own beliefs regarding intratribal issues that in turn, influences the way that she later depicts Watie.

Being part Cherokee herself and the descendant of prominent Treaty Party Cherokee leaders, it comes as no surprise that she is partial to that group and therefore depicts so-called “fullbloods” as being primitive and too consumed with ways of the past. In this regard, Nowita can be seen as a precursor to her Watie biography, acting as an attempt to highlight the debilitating consequences of exclusionary Cherokee traditionalism and the refusal to adapt to modernization and the changing circumstances of the era. Drawing out this distinction in thought and values between two supposedly monolithic racial groups allows Anderson to perpetuate the idea that people of exclusively Cherokee ancestry lacked the foresight required to understand the futility of resistance and were not capable of understanding that the best way to preserve Cherokee identity and culture was to concede to certain government demands. This claim to rationality on behalf of people of diverse ancestry is a subtle attempt to exonerate the actions of the Treaty Party, whose leaders and general make-up were predominantly of mixed descent. While it is true that the head of the Ross faction, the group in opposition to the Treaty Party, was John Ross, a mixed blood himself, the majority of his supporters were full-bloods who staunchly opposed attempts to assimilate the tribe into western cultural standards²². Anderson’s use of the

²² W. Craig Gaines, *The Cherokee Confederates: John Drew’s Regiment of Mounted Rifles*, (Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 3.

terms “revengeful” and “cruel” in regards to the character of Ross Party Cherokees, foreshadow the eventual opprobrium that she delivers on those who murdered the leaders of the Treaty Party in response to their capitulation to government demands in her *Watie* biography. This subdued criticism of Ross Party Cherokees and those who could not grasp the realities of their circumstances in *Nowita*, sets the stage for what is to come in the biography wherein she amplifies her opinions on certain parties and figures.

Given the absence of sources pertaining to Cherokee involvement in the Civil War at the time of her undertaking, Anderson was also allowed the exclusive opportunity to produce original work supplemented by the experiences of veterans that had never before been utilized as historical evidence. Acknowledging the gap in knowledge on the topic as a result of its obscurity, Anderson knew that the work that she would ultimately produce would be treated as the standard for any future research conducted on the matter. This self-awareness in regards to her own significance in the field is reflected in her admittance that the construction of the biography “has been a long and slow work”²³ because “there is very little printed matter to aid one in a work of this kind and that little is not easily obtained”²⁴ finally stating “that any corrections or interesting additions will be gratefully received”²⁵. By welcoming any corrections or additions to her work, Anderson expected that her biography, being the first of its kind, was to be examined by future historians and deeply invested Cherokee community leaders as a reference. Furthermore, her desire to “stimulate the minds of the student body of Oklahoma”²⁶ implies that she intended for her work to be read by younger audiences as well, suggesting that the biography was to cover all levels of education and age groups. Calling attention to her exclusive role as the first documented

²³ Anderson, *Life of General Stand Watie*, 6.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 6.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 6.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 6.

historian to write on this matter and her own awareness of this influential position is significant in that it creates the context for which one can analyze her motives for writing, the sources that she seeks out and incorporates, and her intended effects from the production of such material.

While historians of the modern era must rely on written materials left behind by those who lived through the war, Anderson was able to personally engage with veterans of Watie's battalion as many of them were still alive when she was constructing the biography. To validate the authenticity of her work, Anderson states that she obtained most of her information from "living lips"²⁷: veterans who had fought within Watie's regiment and had participated in the battles that she includes within the biography. Of this group of individuals, she specifically gives thanks to the following individuals; Judge J.M Keys of Pryor, James Bell of Bernice and Hoolie Bell of Venita²⁸. At the time of the biography's publication in 1915, all three of these individuals were approaching the end of their lives. Keys was 72 and would pass away in 1917²⁹. Hoolie Bell was 76 and died shortly after the release of the biography³⁰. James Bell would live to be the oldest of the trio passing away in 1915 at the age of 89. While Anderson herself does not explicate the exact reasons that might have influenced the decision of these individuals to want to be interviewed, a brief overview of the historical context in which the book was released might provide valuable insight. When these individuals were interviewed by Anderson in the 1910's³¹, the federal government had enacted several policies designed to extend their jurisdiction over Indigenous tribes. Among these policies was the infamous 1887 Dawes Act,

²⁷ Ibid, 6.

²⁸ Ibid, 6.

²⁹ "James McDaniel Keys," Find a Grave Memorial, accessed December 10th, 2020, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11218594/james-mcdaniel-keys>.

³⁰ "Lucien Burr Bell," Find a Grave Memorial, accessed December 10th, 2020, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/5855045/lucien-burr-bell>.

³¹ The exact time and date at which Anderson conducted these interviews is unknown.

which was established to seek allotment of the lands of the Five Civilized Tribes and the Oklahoma Enabling Act (1906) that provided admission of Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory as a single state³². While the Five Tribes Act (1906) abruptly reversed the program to terminate the tribes, allowing Indigenous tribes like the Cherokee to survive as a legal entity of governance, the Cherokee Nation land base was ultimately destroyed by the allotment established by the Dawes Commission and other policies³³. As a result of this concession of land and power, the Cherokee were involved in an intense struggle to preserve “tribal identity and authority”³⁴ in the first half of the twentieth century. Understanding the precarious situation that their tribe was in at the time of the biography’s construction, these three individuals most likely welcomed Anderson’s requests for interviews as her construction of the biography would serve as further evidence for the necessity of the preservation of not only Cherokee history but the Cherokee tribe. By highlighting the actions of a Cherokee figure like Watie and tying his legacy to that of the greater American memory of the Civil War, the biography could work towards swaying public opinion in support of the protection of Cherokee land and sovereignty from further encroachment by the federal government. Furthermore, the fact that these individuals were nearing the end of their lives must have been a detail that they considered and they surely wanted to contribute what they could to constructing a narrative that displayed both their own actions, and the actions of the Cherokee as noble and heroic.

Using the testimonies of these individuals as the foundation of the biography, Anderson presents a fascinating, albeit exclusive, chronicle of Watie’s life. The intense attention to detail that accompanies each description of the battles within the work are not lost upon the reader and

³² “Cherokee,” Oklahoma Historical Society, accessed December 14th, 2020, <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entryname=CHEROKEE>

³³ Oklahoma Historical Society, “Cherokee.”

³⁴ Oklahoma Historical Society, “Cherokee.”

can undoubtedly be attributed to Anderson's meticulous gathering of information from the aforementioned veterans. While the inclusion of such comprehensive information and the efforts taken by Anderson should be lauded, the limitations of her research must be acknowledged. All three individuals that Anderson consulted with were members of Watie's brigade and had served directly under him. Both James Bell and Hoolie Bell held the rank of colonel with James Bell also being the brother-in-law to Watie through the marriage of Bell's sister Sarah³⁵.

Consequently, it is only natural that the image of Watie depicted through these sources is one with few criticisms of both his actions and character. As soldiers serving under Watie's command, their input is essential to the construction of a holistic representation of Stand Watie. However, while their perceptions of Watie and, by extension, Cherokee involvement in the Civil War, are fundamental to this narrative, they do not constitute the entirety of the Cherokee nation and therefore do not reflect all motives or beliefs of the Cherokee nation regarding its involvement in the war. By consulting only members of Watie's brigade and not those belonging to John Drew's regiment, Anderson makes it apparent that beliefs of the war within the Cherokee nation are to be understood through the eyes of those affiliated with the Watie party.

As the granddaughter of one of the more contentious figures in Cherokee history, Anderson was acutely aware of the intratribal political implications of her decision to use such sources whilst excluding others. The factional lines within the Cherokee nation were and remain to this day, distinctly drawn; a fact that Anderson was undoubtedly conscious of as she constructed her narrative. Serving as a direct testament to this affinity with the Treaty Party is her dedication of the biography to "the memory of Major John Ridge and other signers of the treaty of 1835, and to the brave veterans, both living and dead, who fought under Stand Watie"³⁶.

³⁵ Gaines, *The Cherokee Confederates*, 5.

³⁶ Anderson, *Life of Stand Watie*, 6.

This dedication is noteworthy given the historical context and prior knowledge about the Cherokee nation that one would need to possess in order to understand its implications.

Assuming that the audience Anderson was initially writing for was the general American public, a dedication written in this manner would simply be read as one highlighting the achievements of Cherokee leaders. For many individuals, Anderson's piece was the first introduction to Cherokee history that they would have read and therefore would have readily accepted any information that she was to present. Many of these individuals did not know about the bitter rivalry between the two factions of the Cherokee and it would not be a stretch to suggest that they did not know that two factions even existed. The Cherokee nation was treated as one group with shared interests and therefore, by Anderson making a dedication to these specific individuals, she established that they were, exclusively, the Cherokee individuals to be praised and remembered. Unless one knew about the Ross Party or the specifics of Cherokee history, there was no reason to think otherwise. The obscurity of the topic and the limited information produced on it benefitted Anderson in the sense that it made it nearly impossible for individuals existing outside the Cherokee nation to refute her claims on account of the lack of information alone. Therefore, her dedication can be read as a means of establishing the dominant view that individuals were to perceive Cherokee leaders within without surrendering her claim to objectivity. Essentially, her dedication is a preview of the subjectivity that is to follow in her work which historians and society at the time did not have the means to disprove.

Interestingly, while Anderson dedicates the biography to John Ridge, she does not explicitly mention her personal relationship to him. This omission can be read as an attempt to establish some form of legitimacy on Anderson's part as the inclusion of any ancestral ties to John Ridge and his supporters could potentially generate allegations of bias on her behalf. While

her white audience would be unaware of the strife within the Cherokee nation and the controversy surrounding Ridge and his family, divulging her familial ties to Ridge and the Treaty Party would not be conducive to her goal of attempting to pose as an objective historian. By presenting the dedication exactly as she had, Anderson could assume the role of a relatively impartial historian who, after conducting her research, supported the actions of the Treaty Party based on its historical effects. Distancing herself from her relationship to Ridge provided the opportunity for Anderson to be accepted as a credible source, even with all of her additional commentary, and not just as the granddaughter of a controversial Cherokee leader hoping to preserve the family image.

Part of what makes Anderson's work so alluring, even with its controversial implications, is the omnipresence of her voice and the insight into her own thought process as she goes through Watie's life events. Anderson's self-identification as a historian whose desire to create this "Life Sketch"³⁷ of Watie in a manner "as authentic as possible"³⁸ is counterbalanced with her detectable biases that reveal themselves in her accompanying evaluation of major events that she recounts. To be fair, Anderson herself does not use the words objective or impartial to describe her work and her description of events. However, she does use the word authentic and if the word is taken to mean "conforming to an original so as to reproduce essential features"³⁹ is it not also fair to criticize her inability to remain within these parameters? If the "original" piece is Watie's life and Anderson's goal is to reproduce it in as authentic a manner as possible, how can her conscious omission of anything negative pertaining to Watie's life be reconciled? These questions are certainly problematic and should not be disregarded. However, it is equally

³⁷ Anderson, *Life of Stand Watie*, 6.

³⁸ Anderson, *Life of Stand Watie*, 6.

³⁹ "Definition of Authentic," Merriam Webster, accessed December 19th, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/authentic>.

important to treat Anderson's comments as historic relics themselves that reflect the context in which she writes them. Taking into consideration Anderson's familial ties to leaders of the Treaty Party and her transparent goal of wanting to glorify Watie, the question that Anderson is left to grapple with is whether to structure her writing around her own opinions and run the risk of being criticized for subjectivity or to shy away from voicing her thoughts and allow the historical record to speak for Watie. Teetering the line between these two approaches, Anderson adopts a style of writing that relies heavily on her own commentary to suggest Watie's greatness but frames it in a manner that makes it appear almost as historical truth.

One particularly significant instance of her subjectivity is in her description of the Treaty of New Echota, and more specifically, why the members of the Treaty Party including Stand Watie, chose to capitulate to its terms. She first begins her analyzation of the event by summarizing John Ross's approach to the issue by stating "Many of the Cherokee were advised by John Ross, that if they persisted in refusing negotiations with the United States government that they might hope yet to receive recognition in the courts of Georgia and remain in their own homes, or get a better price for their lands if they did remove."⁴⁰ With this assessment, Anderson creates for herself the opportunity to discuss the other approach taken by members of the Treaty Party in a way that is more digestible and can ultimately justify what many members of the Cherokee nation saw as an act of betrayal. Her analysis of the motives of the Treaty Party in signing the Treaty of New Echota begins with the rationalization that "there were other men in the Nation, who held a different view of the situation, prominent leaders of the Cherokees, possibly men of foresight, who judging the future by the past, saw the inevitable result and no

⁴⁰Anderson, *Life of Stand Watie*, 10.

hope for better terms nor greater remuneration for their estates”⁴¹. Anderson continues her defense of the Treaty Party stating “they believed delay would bring only a greater oppression upon them as a Nation, and thought that the wisest and most expedient thing to do, was to lead the people to a treaty or conclusion with the United States, in which they could have some representation, rather than be driven out under more grievous circumstances in the future.”⁴² Echoing her own beliefs on the nearsightedness of so called full-blood Cherokees as presented in *Nowita*, and by extension the Ross faction as a whole, Anderson simplifies the matter into a choice between two evils, an issue in which the Treaty Party ultimately stood on the right side of.

More than anything it is interesting to see how Anderson talks about the concept of foresight to suggest that the leaders of the Treaty Party were realists who understood that resistance to the government was futile. The suggestion that these leaders possessed foresight has elements of circular reasoning in that the reason the Cherokee suffered so immensely can directly be attributed to the terms of the treaty, which is what Anderson is trying to argue that the leaders were trying to prevent by signing the treaty. However, the entire debate on the Treaty of New Echota is contingent on the question of whether or not the signing of the treaty would have prevented the devastation inflicted on the Cherokee nation. In this respect, it seems odd for Anderson to justify the actions of the Treaty Party through their so called “foresight” when they directly contributed to the events that they were hoping to prevent.

The foundation of Anderson’s justification for the actions of the Treaty Party is also notable given that it rests on the pretense that the leaders of the Treaty Party were authorized to sign a legally binding document with the United States government to represent the interests of

⁴¹ Anderson, *Life of Stand Watie*, 10.

⁴² Anderson, *Life of Stand Watie*, 10.

the Cherokee nation. Anderson does not attempt to legitimize the authority of these leaders and instead turns the debate into one of morality by appealing to what she identifies as duty and self-sacrifice on behalf of these individuals. She states, “No class of men in the Cherokee Nation had more to lose, or a greater sacrifice to make, from the sad change that was to follow this removal, than the signers of this treaty”⁴³ further adding “it takes more cool-headed courage to lead an unwilling, uncomprehending people into unknown country, than to lead an inflamed populace into battle”⁴⁴. With this statement, Anderson is asserting that these men did what was best for the Cherokee and that rather than the terms of the treaty being responsible for the devastation inflicted upon the Cherokee, it was the resistance to the terms, on the advice of Ross Party leadership, that actually triggered the calamities. Furthermore, she unknowingly alludes to the possibility of financial considerations playing a role in prompting Watie and other leaders of the Treaty Party to agree to the conditions of the treaty. While the terms of the treaty stated that the Cherokee Nation would receive \$5,000,000 to be distributed per capita amongst the people of the tribe⁴⁵, Watie and other Treaty Party officials might have realized the individual economic and political incentives behind a concession to the treaty. Leading historian in Cherokee affairs, Theda Perdue contends that “this rising middle class, envious of the wealth and power of the elite and disdainful of the desire of the masses, saw in the removal issue an opportunity to usurp political authority and reap rewards and concessions from the United States”⁴⁶ further adding “it was members of this class, rather than the “common Indians” who ultimately burst their bonds of slavery by negotiating a treaty”⁴⁷. Watie’s own actions following the signing of the treaty further

⁴³ Anderson, *Life of Stand Watie*, 10.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 11.

⁴⁵ Thurman Wilkins, *The Cherokee Tragedy: The Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 15.

⁴⁶ Theda Perdue, "The Conflict Within: The Cherokee Power Structure and Removal," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (1989), 483.

⁴⁷ Perdue, "The Conflict Within," 483.

point to the possible existence of ulterior motives as the monetary compensation that he received was used to generate more wealth allowing him to become even more financially prosperous than he had been prior to the treaty⁴⁸. It seems rather suspicious that during a time largely considered to be the most devastating in all of Cherokee history, that a Treaty Party figure like Watie was experienced unprecedented degrees of wealth (unprecedented for him at least). Neglecting the fact that “an illegal body” sanctioned this “unauthorized act”⁴⁹, Anderson offers a depiction that shies away from the historical intricacies, alternatively promoting a broader and more subjective narrative (although she herself does not admit to doing so). In doing so, she is able to avoid directly confronting the historical truth and create a retelling of the incident that romanticizes the Treaty Party. This falls in line with Anderson’s tendencies as a writer to use the limited historical evidence she presents to bolster her own opinions which, when standing alone hold little weight, but when supported by evidence within a field lacking sufficient research, pose as the prevailing truth.

Moving through the factors contributing to the construction of the biography, one inevitably arrives at her motivations for compiling the work. Touched upon briefly in the introductory paragraphs of this thesis, it is important to intently extract these motivations as they present a clearer view of her work and provide the opportunity to assess her success in achieving the outlined goals. Fortunately, there is no need to speculate on her intentions as Anderson outlines in the introduction the purposes of her work and the reactions she hopes to evoke within the audience by its conclusion. Her three-fold purpose, as she terms her project’s goals, are listed as follows: to pay tribute to Watie whom she characterizes as a “great Indian character of

⁴⁸ Robert J Conley, *Cherokee Thoughts Honest and Uncensored* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 20.

⁴⁹ Carl J. Vipperman, "The Bungled Treaty of New Echota: The Failure of Cherokee Removal, 1836-1838." *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (1989), 540, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40582016>.

Oklahoma”⁵⁰, to awaken public interest in the work of the Oklahoma chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy⁵¹ and to generate a greater desire within the student body of Oklahoma to seek out more accurate and holistic representations of the Cherokee and other indigenous tribes in the historical record⁵².

Moving in sequential order through Anderson’s self-delineated purposes of the biography, one arrives first at her desire to give proper recognition to Stand Watie. By characterizing Watie as a “great Indian character” while simultaneously asserting that he has been denied sufficient tribute and praise, Anderson makes two important claims. The first is that Watie’s identity is inextricably tied to his indigeneity and that his “greatness” is an immediate reflection of the beneficial effects that his actions had on the Cherokee nation. The second claim that can be extracted from Anderson’s initial self-stated purpose is that his actions are worthy of praise and thus need to be documented so that the general public can be made aware of them. Despite the seemingly straightforward nature of these two claims, their implications and the way in which Anderson actually addresses them within her work present a host of issues that consequently affect the way in which the biography is received and the message it produces by its conclusion.

Beginning with the first claim, the issue does not lie with the statement itself but rather in the way that Anderson attempts to construct Watie’s image without grounding her argument in his Cherokee background. Conceptually, the claim that Watie’s identity as a member of the Cherokee nation serves as the foundation for everything he does during the war, is legitimate and its exploration would produce a narrative structured predominantly around his indigenous status.

⁵⁰ Anderson, *Life of Stand Watie*, 6.

⁵¹ Anderson, *Life of Stand Watie*, 6.

⁵² *Ibid*, 6.

Based off of the way that Anderson pairs his greatness with his Indian identity, it is reasonable to assume that her work will follow these parameters relatively strictly. Her purpose sets up the biography to be a work dedicated to Watie's Cherokee roots and the influence of his Indian background on his actions. Presumably, these actions would in turn be framed by Anderson to reveal how his actions generated beneficial effects for the Cherokee in the years following the Civil War. Surprisingly, the reader is presented with an entirely different piece of work than what Anderson herself stated that it would be, as the biography becomes less of a book about a "great Indian character" and more of a work idolizing a Confederate general who was Indian.

What exactly is meant by this commentary on her biography and what does Anderson do specifically in her work to bring about such a claim? To address the first point on what is meant when I say that her biography is a glorification of a Confederate general who was Indian, I am speaking to the fact that the biography treats Watie's Cherokee identity as second to that of his status as a brigadier general within the Confederate army. Anderson places an increased emphasis on highlighting his military pursuits as he operated under Confederate leadership than on the effects of his actions on the Cherokee community. He is heralded by Anderson for his status as the last Confederate general to surrender and not for his position as one of the key leaders of the Cherokee during the Civil War years. Anderson commits the fallacy of assuming that the desire for mutual success between the two allied powers equated to identical interests. Anderson's simplification of the matter can be broken down as follows. Since Watie and his Cherokee supporters joined the war on the side of the Confederacy, they must have supported Confederate values and hoped for a Confederate success. This desire for a Confederate victory shared by both parties meant that in defeat, both parties would suffer similar consequences. Therefore, since Stand Watie's actions were noble and valiant and were accomplished under the

command and behalf of the Confederacy, the legacy of the Confederacy and what it stood for should be treated in a similar fashion. While Anderson does not deconstruct her argument in this manner, she does not need to as her words speak for themselves. She states that “he was a firm believer in States rights, a Southerner by birth and breeding. There was no hesitation in his choice when he cast his lot with the Confederacy”⁵³. As explicit as she can conceivably be, Anderson lets it be known that she perceives Watie to be a Confederate soldier through and through and that her audience should see him as such. Her intention with the inclusion of this statement is to dispel any skepticism in regards to Watie’s devotion to the Confederate cause by insisting that his loyalties ran deeper than the treaties of alliance that were signed between the Cherokee nation and the Confederacy. The problem that Anderson runs into with this assertion is that by arguing that Watie was no different than other Confederate soldiers as far as loyalty to the cause was concerned, she inadvertently weakens her previous claims regarding Watie’s greatness as an Indian figure. The cause that Watie was fighting for in Anderson’s assessment was that of the Confederacy and by association the Cherokee nation when in actuality the reverse would be more fitting. By portraying Watie and Cherokee involvement in the war in this manner, Anderson gives credence to the misconception that Native Americans were merely victims of circumstance and not political beings who used the war to secure political and economic protections and liberties. As much as their involvement in the war was a necessity in preventing the loss of tribal lands, it was also a channel that could be manipulated to negotiate favorable terms, or at the very least, terms that would have otherwise been nonexistent had there been no demand for Native American soldiers. As a result, the conflict should not be seen as a white man’s war in which Native Americans were manipulated into participating in without the ability

⁵³ Anderson, *Life of Stand Watie*, 14.

to exercise their own sovereignty. If Watie was in fact the great Indian that Anderson says he was in her introduction, his loyalties would be to that of his tribe above all else. Therefore, it would be more accurate to argue that Watie was loyal to the Cherokee and since they were aligned with the Confederacy, he fought for a Confederate success because it would provide the best opportunities for his people in the post-war years.

Disputing Anderson's classification of Watie's identity as principally Confederate in nature, would be rendered ineffective without evidence suggesting otherwise. However, being that Watie's identity is the topic of discussion, the only evidence that would concretely resolve this debate would need to come from Watie himself. Fortunately, such evidence exists in the form of statements written by Watie in war correspondences to fellow Confederate generals. In one such document, Watie voices his dissatisfaction with the Confederate high command for what he considers to be a neglect of the Indian people and their safety. He disparages Confederate officials for not upholding their end of the treaty, allowing Union soldiers to "desolate the land and rob the people"⁵⁴, further insisting that "the promised protection of the Confederate government, owing, I am compelled to say... has accomplished nothing"⁵⁵. Watie contends that "the Indian troops had been true to the South from the very first"⁵⁶ but that he "fears that we can reasonably look for no change for the better, but that Indians will have at last rely upon themselves alone in the defense of their country"⁵⁷. Finally ending his tirade with the acceptance that "we cannot expect to do this without serious losses and many trials and privations; but if we possess the spirit of our fathers and are resolved never to be enslaved to an

⁵⁴ Arrell Morgan Gibson, "Native Americans and the Civil War." *American Indian Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1985), 392, doi:10.2307/1183560.

⁵⁵ Gibson, "Native Americans and the Civil War," 392.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 392.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 392.

inferior race, and trodden under the feet of an ignorant and insolent foe, we, the Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Seminoles, and Cherokees, never can be conquered”⁵⁸. Watie’s decision to use the pronoun “we”, reflects the conscious desire to create an exclusive group of Indigenous actors that exists alongside the Confederacy but not directly within it. Like Anderson, Watie actively attempts to dispel any notions of disloyalty by opening his letter with the reassurance that the Indian troops had been and would continue to be supportive of the Confederacy, but deviates from Anderson in the way he conceives his own involvement in the war. There is no ambiguity in his motives for fighting with the Confederacy. He makes it abundantly clear that the Indian people are his priority and that the “we” that he is referring to is not the Confederacy as a whole but the indigenous tribes that are aligned with the Confederacy. He calls on his fellow Indigenous brethren to assist in the defense of their homeland from Union forces because he knows that the interests of the Confederate government are not aligned directly with his interests as a Cherokee leader. While he is irate that the Confederate government has done little to secure the safety of Indigenous people, he seems to have come to terms with the fact that the well-being of the indigenous community will never be a priority of the Confederacy. As one of the prominent leaders of a nation himself and as much as he disapproved of the Confederate government’s handling of Indian affairs, Watie knew that the interests of the Confederacy would trump those of the Indian community. Watie understood that he was not like every other Confederate and he was acutely aware of the racial and ethnic boundaries that separated him from his white Confederate allies. Not only did he understand these boundaries, he made no effort to override them as the blurring of these clearly distinguishable values and goals would produce a result detrimental to the Cherokee nation. The clear division in the interests of these

⁵⁸ Ibid, 393.

two allies is expressed in Watie's writing but is given no attention by Anderson who instead replaces it with a false sense of unity.

The second motivation that Anderson outlines in her introduction is to “awaken public interest in the noble work the Oklahoma division of the Daughters of the Confederacy have undertaken, erecting a lasting monument to his memory”⁵⁹. The monument that Anderson is referring to in this dedication is one that previously rested, until June of 2020, in front of the Cherokee Nation Courthouse in Talequah, Oklahoma. Commissioned and funded exclusively by the Daughters of the Confederacy, the monument was comprised of both an engraving of Watie's face and a plaque praising him for his services to the Confederate army⁶⁰. Of the motivations that she lists, this one is perhaps the most complex relative to its rather straightforward phrasing. The complexity of this motivation can be attributed to its interconnectedness with the Lost Cause myth, a relationship that is nearly impossible to extract without extensive prior knowledge on the Civil War and its post-war memory. For most individuals reading the biography, this motivation seems almost self-explanatory as it would make logical sense for Anderson to want to praise an organization that dedicated a monument to the figure that she is attempting propel into the national spotlight. While this is partially the case, Anderson's support for the Daughters of the Confederacy is tied more to the narrative of the war that the organization was and still is promoting rather than the direct creation of the monument itself. The monument can therefore be seen as just a fragment of a broader attempt to legitimize and proselytize Lost Cause ideology or what Anderson describes as “the noble work” of the organization.

⁵⁹ Anderson, *Life of Stand Watie*, 6.

⁶⁰ Jacob McClelland, “As Cities Remove Confederate Monuments, Cherokees Grapple with Civil War Past,” *KGOU*, August 31st, 2017, <https://www.kgou.org/post/cities-remove-confederate-monuments-chokees-grapple-civil-war-past>.

Both Anderson and I have mentioned The Daughters of the Confederacy, attesting to its significance in the study of Watie and their influence on the public memory of the Civil War but what was this organization and why was Anderson so adamant about bringing attention to their “noble work”? Established on September 10th, 1894 in Nashville, Tennessee by founders Caroline Meriwether Goodlett and Anna Davenport Raines⁶¹, the United Daughters of the Confederacy is an organization dedicated to “collect and preserve the material necessary for a truthful history of the War Between the States and to protect, preserve, and mark the places made historic by Confederate valor”⁶². The organization is comprised of local chapters that have aided in the construction of Confederate monuments intent on preserving the legacy of the Confederacy and to “honor the memory of those who served and who fell in service of the Confederate States of America”⁶³. While the preservation of Confederate monuments as historical artifacts is not inherently immoral, it is the denial of the Confederacy’s racially motivated conception by the organization that presents issues. Professing their “sadness that some people find anything connected with the Confederacy to be offensive”⁶⁴ and asserting that “Our Confederate ancestors were and are Americans”⁶⁵, the organization neglects the influence of slavery on Southern secession and the war. Refusing to explicitly use the term slavery, the organization also attempts to absolve any wrongdoing on behalf of those in support of the Confederacy stating “we as an organization do not sit in judgement of them nor do we impose the standards of the 19th century on Americans of the 21st century”⁶⁶. Espousing the same

⁶¹ “About,” United Daughters of the Confederacy, accessed December 15th, 2020, <https://hqudc.org/about/>.

⁶² United Daughters of the Confederacy, “About.”

⁶³ United Daughters of the Confederacy, “About.”

⁶⁴ “Statement from the President General,” United Daughters of the Confederacy, accessed December 15th, 2020, <https://hqudc.org/>

⁶⁵ United Daughters of the Confederacy, “Statement from the President General.”

⁶⁶ United Daughters of the Confederacy, “Statement from the President General.”

negationist beliefs in regard to the white supremacy that the Confederacy was predicated on as the Lost Cause myth, the organization feeds into the troubling depiction of the war as one centered around Confederate heroism and sacrifice. Its direct relationship to the Lost Cause myth and the work it has accomplished in spreading this portrayal of the war is fundamental to understanding why Anderson would dedicate such attention to promoting their achievements as her argument about Watie is contingent upon the acceptance of this myth.

Described by historian Gaines Foster as “The Southern interpretation” of the Civil War⁶⁷, the Lost Cause myth is the belief that the Confederate States were fighting for a just and noble cause and that its supporters were defending their rights and homeland against a tyrannical power in the federal government. Pointing to the constitutionality of secession and the impositions of the federal government on states’ rights, proponents of the Lost Cause movement seek to promote what they consider to be the “correct” narrative of the war⁶⁸. Left intentionally ambiguous are the specifics behind the concept of states’ rights and which states’ rights in particular the Confederacy was fighting to maintain. Impossible to ignore, the institution of slavery is not entirely expunged from the Lost Cause myth but is significantly downplayed as being a driving cause of the war. Shifting away from the explicit details behind the practice, the architects of the myth focused on portraying the Antebellum South as a harmonious environment wherein slaves were content with their condition at the hands of their benevolent and paternal white masters. By replacing the true slave experience wrought with suffering and violence with a completely fabricated romanticization of the pre-war South, supporters of the myth were able to perpetuate the idea that slavery was not the cause of the war and that the Confederacy was

⁶⁷ Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), 1.

⁶⁸ Gallagher and Nolan, *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*, 1.

fighting for more noble purposes. Based on the approach taken by the creators of this pseudo-historical retelling of the war, historians have classified the Lost Cause as an American legend, christening it the “American Beowulf” for its parallels to the great Anglo-Saxon saga⁶⁹. Historian Alan T. Nolan builds upon this comparison in his statement describing the Lost Cause myth contending “the legend tells us that the war was a mawkish and essentially heroic and romantic melodrama, an honorable sectional duel, a time of martial glory on both sides, and triumphant nationalism”⁷⁰. To advocates of the Lost Cause, the current historical narrative of the war taught in schools and acknowledged by the general public is a falsified version of history that fails to give proper recognition to the heroism of Confederate veterans. Accentuating the Confederacy’s supposedly righteous values through the lionizing of prominent generals like Robert E. Lee, the myth conveniently emphasizes the details of the war that can loosely be separated from the institution of slavery, like the military exploits and achievements of the Confederate army. By embellishing the Confederate military and its generals, the Lost Cause myth retains its focus on the valor and sacrifice of the soldiers involved rather than on the far messier political and social dimensions of the war⁷¹.

With its focus on portraying the shattering defeat of the Confederacy in the best possible light, the Lost Cause myth reframes the war to be one about sacrifice and nobility; that the war was not about the defense of slavery but for the defense of the South against northern aggression. This idea serves as the foundation behind one of the more puzzling tenets of the myth which is that those in South understood the futility of fighting against a numerically and technologically superior power but were willing to do so because it was the heroic and patriotic thing to do.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 12.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 12.

⁷¹ Ibid, 2.

Acknowledging that the South was essentially destined to lose, this principle attempts to argue that the motivations for the war stemmed from a moral fight against the imposition of the federal government on the Southern homeland. To reinforce the claim that the Confederacy had been fighting a defensive and unwanted war, the legacies of Confederate generals like Robert E. Lee have been reconfigured and transformed in a manner that depicts their involvement in the war to be strictly tied to their loyalty to their home state. Utilizing the writings of these individuals, the architects of the myth were able to put forth the narrative that these Confederate generals, and by effect the Confederacy as a whole, did not wish to wage war but that their prevailing sense of duty and loyalty took precedence over their personal inhibitions surrounding the war.

Serving as the ideal candidate to maintain this concept, Robert E. Lee was elevated by proponents of this myth who referred to his pre-war writings as evidence that the war was fought for reasons entirely separate to that of slavery. Lee's status as a heralded and highly respected figure even following the Confederacy's defeat, serves as an explanation for why Anderson chooses to make repeated comparisons between him and Watie. Suggesting that the two figures were similar in both character and their motivations for entering the war, Anderson contends that "Although he never knew the definition of fear, like Lee he hated the thought of war, and dreaded to see his people again in strife, from which they had just emerged"⁷². Anderson's claim that Lee hated the thought of war is derived from Lee's prewar writings, specifically one letter in which he declared "If Virginia stands by the old Union, so will I. But if she secedes (though I do not believe in secession as a constitutional right, nor that there is a sufficient cause for resolution), then I will follow my native State with my sword, and, if need be, with my life"⁷³.

⁷² Anderson, *Life of Stand Watie*, 14.

⁷³ Emory M. Thomas, *Robert E Lee: A Biography* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 187.

Anderson's pairing of the two Confederate generals represents her wish to connect the experiences of the two individuals in a traceable and easily understood way. In arguing that Lee and Watie both did not agitate for war but were presented with no alternative choice as dutiful leaders, Anderson is actively attempting to defend the actions of both leaders and the Confederacy as a whole. Lee was eulogized for his loyalty to Virginia and Anderson creates this association between him and Watie to imply that Watie was moved by this same loyalty but to the Cherokee Nation and therefore deserves equal praise. While Watie did not come from the same distinguished military background as Lee⁷⁴, he certainly fought in a comparable number of battles to the esteemed leader of the Army of Northern Virginia. Participating and commanding Cherokee troops in the battles of Wilson Creek, Bird Creek, Pea Ridge, Newtonia and a multitude of other major battles and skirmishes, Watie learned the principles of warfare by directly engaging in its execution. In fact, his rapid rise within the ranks of the Confederate military despite the lack of a formal military education, is used by Anderson to strengthen the connection between the two leaders by suggesting that like Lee, Watie was a natural leader who could excel regardless of the circumstance. Furthermore, by directly supporting this Lost Cause conception of Lee, Anderson was hoping to capitalize on Lee's popularity to increase the attention given to Watie by the greater American public. As the leading Confederate general during the war, Lee was a widely known figure throughout the nation. His idolization by the founders of the Lost Cause myth generated even more publicity for him and upraised him to a status unmatched by even Union generals like Grant or Sherman. The public's adoration of Lee was undoubtedly known to Anderson and her decision to repeatedly create a connection between

⁷⁴ Thomas, *Robert E. Lee: A Biography*, 50. Lee graduated second in his class at WestPoint and was the son of highly esteemed Revolutionary War general Henry "Lighthouse Harry" Lee.

him and Watie reveals her desire to use his fame to build her own case concerning Watie's worthiness as a historical figure deserving memorialization.

Another tenet of the Lost Cause myth that Anderson perpetuates with her biography on Watie is the erasure of information regarding the influence of slavery on causing the war. Adopting an even more radical approach to the subject than most Lost Cause advocates, Anderson does not even mention the Cherokee Nation's affiliation to the institution at any point in the biography. In the first sub-chapter, when she is going over Watie's life and background, she extensively covers his upbringing and familial relations, showcasing the wealth of information that she has gathered on Watie through her research. Absent however, is any information regarding the prosperity and power accrued by the Watie family through slavery or any indications that the Cherokee Nation had slave-holding tendencies. If the biography was indeed to be a full glimpse into the life of Stand Watie, this section would be the optimal time to divulge the details surrounding the Watie's family ties to slavery and how their key positions within the Cherokee Nation were directly linked to their status obtained through the practice⁷⁵. While it would be naïve to ascribe Anderson's omission of this pivotal, and more importantly incriminating, bit of knowledge on Watie to the impediments she faced as a historian working with limited resources, it could be argued if she had later acknowledged the prevalence of slavery in the Cherokee Nation and its influence in causing the war (and causing the Cherokee to align themselves with the Confederacy). Failing to include information on Watie's personal relationship to slavery is suspect but ultimately forgivable whereas failing to address the

⁷⁵ Conley, *Cherokee Thoughts Honest and Uncensored*, 19.

interrelation between slavery and Cherokee involvement in the war reflects a clear desire to conceal its significance.

The Cherokee Nation's attachment to the institution of slavery was not a secret meant to be obscured from the public eye in 1915. Introduced in the late 18th century and following a similar pattern of growth to the rest of the American South in the early 19th century, the population of slaves within the Cherokee Nation had ballooned to over four thousand by the start of the Civil War⁷⁶. For a nation with a total population of only twenty-two thousand, slaves accounted for a significant portion of the Cherokee and were crucial to its economy. Historian W. Craig Gaines further elaborates on the indispensability of slavery to the Cherokee Nation in his assertion that "by heritage the Cherokees were generally Southerners"⁷⁷ contending that they had "grown up" under the system of slavery on plantations and small farms. Denying how entrenched slavery had become within the Cherokee Nation is nugatory especially when considering that the Cherokee themselves voiced their approval of the practice and that their alignment with the Confederacy was largely swayed by its protection of slavery. This is reflected in the 1861 Cherokee Declaration of Causes. The document was constructed following a convention held between the Cherokee National Committee and Council, headed by John Ross, and the representatives of the Confederate States of America⁷⁸. It outlined the reasons for an alliance between members of the Cherokee and the Confederacy and the terms of their allegiance. One of its section's states "whatever causes the Cherokee people may have had in the past, to complain of some of the Southern States, they cannot but feel that their interests and

⁷⁶ Gaines, *The Cherokee Confederates*, 1.

⁷⁷ Gaines, *The Cherokee Confederates*, 1.

⁷⁸ "Cherokee Declaration of Causes", <https://cherokee.org/About-The-Nation/History/Events/Cherokee-Declaration-of-Causes-October-28-1861>, (accessed 5/5/19).

destiny are inseparably connected with those of the South”⁷⁹ further adding “the war now raging is a war of Northern cupidity and fanaticism against the institution of African servitude; against the commercial freedom of the South”⁸⁰. Unlike the federal government, the Confederacy had guaranteed “that the nations could govern themselves as long as they chose, promised to protect Indian territory and pay annuity obligations and recognized slavery”⁸¹ in each of their treaties with the Native Americans. The Cherokee were acutely aware of the threat that a Union victory posed on the institution of slavery. Therefore, to ensure that their economic interests would be secured and protected, they needed to align themselves with the side that would interfere the least with their practicing of slavery. Rather than being victims of circumstance, the Cherokee were active political beings whose alliance to the Confederacy for the purposes of maintaining slavery reflects their reliance on the institution and its influence in prompting Cherokee involvement.

Anderson’s endorsement of this Lost Cause portrayal of slavery demonstrates her acknowledgment of the impact that such a revelation, in regards to Stand Watie’s personal connection to the practice, would have on her argument and the narrative that she was producing. Because Anderson’s argument concerning Watie’s greatness relies on his exploits as a Confederate general, it is imperative that the values for which the Confederacy fought for are depicted as being noble and just. If the truth concerning the Confederacy’s interests in the protection of slavery are revealed, it is inevitable that the Cherokee Nation’s alliance to the Confederacy for this mutual interest in the institution will also be disclosed. Therefore, if Watie

⁷⁹ “Cherokee Declaration of Causes”, <https://cherokee.org/About-The-Nation/History/Events/Cherokee-Declaration-of-Causes-October-28-1861>, (accessed 5/5/19).

⁸⁰ Cherokee Declaration of Causes”, <https://cherokee.org/About-The-Nation/History/Events/Cherokee-Declaration-of-Causes-October-28-1861>.

⁸¹ Agnew, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory*, 69.

was both a Confederate general and a Cherokee leader whose actions during the war reflected his commitment to both powers, how persuasive could Anderson truly make her argument that he was a figure worth remembering to the greater American public? By not addressing his or the Cherokee's relationship to slavery, Anderson avoids having to try to justify his support of the practice and can instead frame her argument almost entirely around his military achievements and heroism on the field. Existing as a symbiotic relationship, Anderson seeks to play into the Lost Cause myth because it builds her argument surrounding Watie's greatness as a figure who fought for a noble cause disconnected to slavery. In turn, proponents of the Lost Cause can use Anderson's biography of Watie as evidence suggesting that the war did not carry a racial element to it, pointing to the fact that an indigenous figure like Watie was able to become a brigadier general in the Confederate army and that a majority of Native American tribes aligned themselves with the Confederacy. Working in tandem, these actions attempt to dismantle claims made towards the Confederacy's white supremacist foundation, creating the opportunity for it to be depicted in a more admirable manner.

Arriving at Anderson's last motivation for writing the book, one is told that her final desire is to "stimulate the minds of the student body of Oklahoma a greater desire for a more careful study of the early history of the Cherokees"⁸². As attached as Anderson was to Lost Cause conceptions of the Confederacy's nobility and wanting to enhance its legacy, to suggest that she engaged with a figure like Watie strictly for these purposes is conjectural at best. From her continuous and unforgiving praise of Watie's actions and character, it is clear that Anderson was truly invested in him as a historical figure and wished for him to be acknowledged by the wider American public. Her decision to release the book in 1915 can therefore be considered an

⁸² Anderson, *Life of General Stand Watie*, 6.

attempt to popularize Watie and increase interest in the study of the Cherokee nation as a whole. When Anderson released the biography in 1915, the Lost Cause movement was steadily gaining traction as organizations like the Daughters of the Confederacy were working to restructure the legacy of the Confederacy through the funding of statues and monuments. Perhaps the most instrumental in publicizing Lost Cause ideology was the release of the film “*The Birth of a Nation*” by D.W. Griffith in 1915. Chronicling the relationship of two families standing on opposite sides of the Civil War, the film is credited for inspiring the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan for its heroic portrayal of the organization and its sympathetic views concerning the Confederacy⁸³. Despite the film’s blatant appeals to white supremacy, it was met with an incredibly positive reception by audiences with the Los Angeles Times proclaiming it “the greatest picture ever made and the greatest drama ever filmed”⁸⁴. Crowds in New York City and Chicago gathered for Klan themed parties, filling the streets as they donned the organization’s signature white robe and hood⁸⁵. President Wilson himself was enamored with the film and requested that it be shown in a private screening at the White House⁸⁶. Reflecting the public’s increased interest in Civil War content, these actions were surely taken note of by Anderson who sought to take advantage of the situation by publishing and distributing her biography the same year. Understanding the general lack of interest in indigenous figures and history, Anderson needed to present her biography of Watie as something worth reading.

By titling the biography “Life of General Stand Watie: The Only Indian General of the Confederate Army and the Last to Surrender” she could appeal to his status as the last

⁸³ Mary Beth Norton, *A People and a Nation* (Stamford: Wadsworth Publishing, 2004), 35.

⁸⁴ David Rylance, “Breech Birth: The Receptions to D.W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation*” *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 24, no.2, (December 2005), 1.

⁸⁵ Southern Hollows, “A 1905 Silent Movie Revolutionizes American Film- and Radicalizes American Nationalists,” podcast audio, June 3rd, 2018.

⁸⁶ “President to See Movie [sic],” *Washington Evening Star*, February 18th, 1915, 1.

Confederate general to surrender, drawing in individuals primarily interested in learning more about Confederate history who would otherwise be indifferent to learning about Cherokee history. Her skepticism in regards to how receptive the public would be to a biography of a Cherokee figure if he was not attached to the Confederacy as a whole is not unfounded.

Cherokee historian Robert Conley attests to this in his comment that “there are those Southern sympathizers who know little or nothing about Cherokee history but praise Watie to high heaven because he was a Confederate, and not just any Confederate, but an American Indian Confederate who was the last Confederate general to surrender”⁸⁷. Conley’s statement displays the obstacle that most writers engaging with indigenous history must overcome which is the limited interest in the subject matter by the general public. Anderson’s deliberate titling and release of the book at the peak of interest for Civil War material, demonstrates her awareness of the time period that she was operating within and the conscious efforts she took to provide her work with the best opportunity for success in the public realm.

While the biography offered material that was new to audiences in 1915 and approached the topic of Cherokee involvement in the Civil War in an unprecedented manner, it is important to remain aware of the societal and political atmosphere of the era. Identifying the structural racism that was embedded in Oklahoma and the nation in its totality allows one to understand that despite the new literature that was being produced on previously obscure and understudied subjects, like Indigenous history, the nation was far from being racially harmonious. Following the book’s release in 1915, Oklahoma experienced one of the worst incidents of racial violence ever recorded in American history. The Tulsa Race Massacre, prompted by the alleged assault of

⁸⁷ Conley, *Cherokee Thoughts Honest and Uncensored*, 28.

a white woman by a black male⁸⁸, saw racial tensions violently erupt. Within two days, 36 people had been killed, over 800 had been hospitalized and millions of dollars in black personal property had been destroyed⁸⁹. The level of destruction caused by the incident clearly reflects the presence of underlying racial issues whose roots could be traced back several decades to the Civil War. For a country which had fought on the premise of the preservation of democracy and freedom in the First World War, there seems to have been a disconnect in the rhetoric of national policy and its actual implementation domestically. The circumstances that contributed to the outbreak of the Tulsa Race Massacre and other racially-motivated crimes took time to build, revealing the structural racism of the period. These same conditions and views on race were present as Anderson was constructing the biography and reflect the influence that they carried in shaping her work and how it was to be received by the public and future audiences.

The influence of Mabel Anderson's "*Life of General Stand Watie: The Only Indian Brigadier General of the Confederate Army and the Last General to Surrender*" on furthering the scholarship on Stand Watie and Cherokee involvement in the Civil War is immeasurable. Mabel Anderson's work as the first true attempt to construct a biography of Stand Watie, subsequently created the set of precedents that other historians were to follow in their depiction and presentation of the material relevant to Watie and his life. While the pervasiveness of Anderson's personal opinions on Stand Watie and the Confederate cause is not lost on the reader, its original intent was still biographical in nature, consequently dictating the style of writing that future historians would take on the subject. Anderson's influence on other writers hoping to engage with the topic is noticeable in the conscious efforts taken by these historians to either align

⁸⁸ Unknown Author, *Tulsa Race Riot: A Report by the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (Commissioned by the State of Oklahoma, 2001), 23.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 23.

themselves with Anderson's opinions on Watie and expand on the historical evidence through that perspective or to dismantle her views by showcasing Watie's shortcomings. Frank Cunningham's *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians* and Kenny Arthur Frank's *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation* all pay homage to Anderson's contributions to the study of Watie by either using her as a reference or mentioning her efforts throughout their own work. Moreover, what Anderson accomplished with her work was the creation of the type of historical work that was to be done on Watie, that being a factual recounting of events speckled with opinions but nothing venturing past their immediate effects. I do not mean to suggest that all historians attempting to write on Stand Watie subscribe to the same views as Anderson or that their writing is structured in the exact same manner as her original work. It would be injudicious and unreasonable to argue such a claim as a quick glance into the work of other historians specializing on the topic would serve as sufficient evidence against its validity. What my intentions are in highlighting Anderson's impact on the subsequent scholarship written on Watie following her publication, is to bring attention to the absence of material that situates all of these works into not only the context of their own individual times but into the present day and the ongoing debate regarding Cherokee history.

Chapter Two

A Poster Child for the Confederacy: The Myth of the Lost Cause and its Exploitation of Stand Watie

The impact of Mabel Washbourne Anderson's *The Life of General Stand Watie: The Only Indian Brigadier General of the Confederate Army and the Last General to Surrender* on the scholarship centered around Stand Watie and Cherokee involvement during the Civil War, has been rightfully harped upon in the previous chapters. Notwithstanding the more contentious Lost Cause beliefs underlying her writing, the immeasurable influence she had on advancing the research conducted on Cherokee Confederates generated considerable attention to a subject that, while still understudied in modern times, was virtually unheard of prior to the release of her book. Given this continuous and repeated commendation of her influence on the topic, it is arguably equally as important if not more, to examine the subsequent works produced by authors who took inspiration from Anderson and attempted to create their own original works on Stand Watie and Cherokee Confederate involvement in the Civil War. In the previous chapter, the claim that Anderson had unknowingly established the framework for the work that was to be done on Watie was introduced. This claim suggested that Anderson's biography had set the precedent for writings on Watie and that it normalized a model of biographical research within this field wherein the presentation of information was accompanied by the personal opinions of the author but the long-term effects of said information were not adequately addressed. Simply put, Anderson's book and the ones that would follow it, talked about the exploits of Watie and Cherokee Confederates but did not go into explicit details about how their involvement in the war impacted the Cherokee nation after the war's conclusion. As the first historian to construct a complete and accessible biography of Watie, Anderson held considerable sway in the

methodology to be adopted by future researchers. Regardless of whether the individual would draw inspiration from her work and seek to support it or denounce it as a work perpetuating Lost Cause ideology, they would ultimately be inclined to follow her model of, for lack of a more appropriate term, storytelling.

While eliminating bias, especially in regards to the writing of a biographical work, is difficult and is deemed impossible by some, in Anderson's work there is not even an attempt made to be impartial and the work clearly expresses her personal sentiments. This is not to detract from her work but to reiterate that her decision to write the biography in this manner heavily impacted the way in which other authors were to write about Watie and Cherokee Confederates. Demonstrating this point is Frank Cunningham's *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, a work that exemplifies the control of Anderson's piece in this highly specific field. Published in 1960, Cunningham's book can be classified almost as an extension to Anderson's work in that he seeks to expand Anderson's own views on Watie, offering a deeper examination into the military actions of Watie's regiment throughout the course of the Civil War but subscribing to the same Lost Cause principles that were promoted in Anderson's biography.

As indicated by the title, Cunningham's work is not dedicated solely to the chronicling of Watie's life but rather Watie and his regiment in its entirety. This is one of the primary differences between Cunningham's book and Anderson's and is important to take note of as the two works focus on slightly different aspects of Watie's life. Cunningham engages in a more detailed dive into Watie's actions during the Civil War and at times shifts the attention away from Watie and onto other men within his regiment. Despite the differences in the amount of attention placed on Watie individually between the two works, the shared subject matter and the fact that Cunningham's book is one of first to be published on Watie after Anderson's biography,

a comparison between the texts is inevitable. Both authors label Watie as the principal historical figure to be focused on yet the narratives that Anderson and Cunningham are pushing in their respective texts differ quite dramatically. In Anderson's work, it is clear that she feels a strong affinity towards Watie and those affiliated with his group of Cherokees because of her familial ties to members of the original signers of the Treaty of New Echota. This attachment to Watie and the Cherokee Confederates who served under him are interwoven with Anderson's own ties to the state of Oklahoma and coalesce to form an identity that ties the legacy of the Confederacy and the legacy of Cherokee Confederates together into one inseparable memory. For Anderson, one cannot praise Cherokee Confederates and their actions without simultaneously upholding the legacy of the entire Confederacy and thus makes it her goal in her writing to consciously do both. Accomplishing this goal required the promotion of Lost Cause ideology and the support of groups like the United Daughters of the Confederacy who present a flawed historical narrative of the war. However, her ultimate allegiance to the Cherokee nation and the genuine desire to preserve the memory of a figure like Watie can be evinced from her writing and her overall involvement in the Cherokee community.

As a teacher within the Cherokee Seminary as well as the author of works dedicated to other Cherokee issues, it is made abundantly clear that Anderson cared deeply about Cherokee history and hoped to broaden its relevance through writings like her biography on Watie. This multi-faceted and highly complex approach to introducing Cherokee history to the public and making it palatable to a larger white audience is detectable from Anderson's work. The same cannot be said of Cunningham as his writing can easily pass as an anti-abolitionist anti-Northern polemic and is only barely saved by such a classification by the title of his work and the Cherokee Indians that he chooses to use as vehicles for the defense of the Confederacy.

Cunningham seems to care little, if at all, about preserving Watie's legacy and only takes on the task of writing about his battalion's exploits because it can be twisted in a way to benefit the legacy of the Confederacy. Anderson's primary goal was to preserve the legacy of Watie and Cherokee Confederates and therefore bought into the Lost Cause myth as it presented an opportunity for them to be recognized and memorialized on a national level. Contrastingly, Cunningham appears to have undertaken the task of writing about Watie and his regiment in hopes of reinforcing the Lost Cause myth and preserving the legacy of the wider Confederacy. As indigenous individuals, Watie and his battalion of Cherokee Confederates were the perfect vehicles for Cunningham to focus on as their indigeneity could be used to divert attention away from the racial component that characterized the actions of the Confederacy, instead flipping the argument against the federal government to suggest that like the oppression and systematic extermination of the indigenous community, the antebellum South had faced similar abuse at the hands of the aggressive North.

Admittedly, the description of Cunningham and his work in the preceding paragraphs has been rather critical. Without delving into his publication history or even who he was as an individual, it is impossible to pass fair judgement on the biography he produced let alone determine his reasons for undertaking the project. Serving as a gateway to the rest of the author's life and by extension, the possible external motivating factors that contributed to their writing, the question of who the author was arises and can potentially help to uncover information to aid in this complicated process. In this specific case, who was Frank Cunningham and did his life and upbringing have any bearing on the work he was to produce on Watie?

Born in Roanoke, VA in 1911 to Frank and Ruby Cunningham⁹⁰, Frank Cunningham's background shares some notable commonalities with that of Andersons. Like many second and third generation southerners, Cunningham had grandparents who had lived in the South and had taken up arms for the Confederate cause when war broke out. While Anderson had familial ties to Watie and members of his regiment, Cunningham's ancestors did not serve directly in the Cherokee Mounted Rifles or any other indigenous regiment raised for the Confederacy. His paternal grandfather, George Lodiwick Cunningham, had been a planter in Bedford, VA and joined the Confederate army as a private, eventually rising to the rank of captain by the wars end⁹¹. Noted in his self-written author biography located at the end of his book on Turner Ashby, Cunningham "grew up steeped in the atmosphere of the fighting men of the Confederacy"⁹² further insisting that his parents "reared him with a devotion to the States Rights cause"⁹³. While the foreword itself contains information to be dissected, its examination will temporarily be put aside and analyzed later in the chapter. Regardless of any personal animosity one might have towards Cunningham after reading his work or the beliefs he endorsed throughout his life, it should not be mistaken that he was an individual with no credentials. Though not a historian by profession, his background in journalism and the academic connections he obtained through his studies in both the under and post graduate settings, provided a relatively strong base for him to conduct his research on Watie. Graduating from Washington and Lee University in 1932, Cunningham worked as a writer for the United Press and the Washington Herald while intermittingly producing features for the Norfolk Virginian Pilot and the Philadelphia Inquirer⁹⁴.

⁹⁰ Frank Cunningham, *Knight of the Confederacy: General Turner Ashby* (San Antonio: Naylor Press, 1960), 223.

⁹¹ Cunningham, *Knight of the Confederacy*, 223.

⁹² *Ibid*, 223.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 223.

⁹⁴ Ashby 223

Expanding from his relatively contained sphere of journalism and writing, Cunningham appeared frequently as a radio commentator for the Interstate Broadcasting System⁹⁵. After establishing himself in the writing community, Cunningham was asked to be a writer for film studios and several motion picture radio programs in addition to contributing to the development of a syndicated Hollywood column⁹⁶. He eventually served as the vice president of Sequoia University and Fremont College and obtained his doctorate in philosophy from University of the West and St. Andrew's College⁹⁷. It should be noted that Sequoia University was an unaccredited college notorious for its reputation as a "degree mill" and that the controversial founder of the Church of Scientology, Ron Hubbard, obtained his doctorate from the institution. This does not necessarily detract from the rest of Cunningham's educational resume but it is certainly information to be considered and taken as an indication to proceed with caution when viewing his work. As for his relationships and ties to more personal organizations and communities, Cunningham was a member of the New York Southern Society, the Sons of the Confederate Veterans and was on the General Staff of the Order of the Stars and Bars⁹⁸. Furthermore, Cunningham was bestowed the Star of the Macabees, Freedom Award and Freedom Liberty Award for his outspokenness against communism, proclaiming himself to be a staunch advocate for "the American Way of Life as opposed to Socialism and Marxism"⁹⁹.

With all of this background research conducted on Cunningham now completed, it is easier to now identify how certain aspects of Cunningham's life directly or indirectly connect to his writing thus allowing one to make reasonable and credible assertions regarding his

⁹⁵ Cunningham, *Knight of the Confederacy*, 224.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 224.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 224.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 225.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 224.

motivations for writing the biography on Watie's battalion. As shown with Anderson's work, it is not unusual to find an author of a biographical piece who has ties to the featured individual or individuals and wished to preserve that figures legacy for posterity. Anderson, as a descendant of Watie and other members of the Treaty Party, had a rather obvious goal of wanting to preserve her family's legacy by pushing the narrative of their sacrifice for the greater Cherokee Nation. Understanding fully that the Treaty Party was held in contempt by a majority of the Cherokee Nation, Anderson knew that the best chance of restructuring this narrative that depicted her ancestors in a negative light was to recount their exploits and actions in a manner that not only glorified them but would also be accepted by the general American populace, ultimately replacing the former dominant narrative of the Treaty Party being traitorous. This same protection of family image and history could be applied to Cunningham's work if he in fact had family members who served in the Cherokee Mounted Rifles. However, he neither had family members who served in this regiment nor did he claim to have Cherokee ancestry. So why exactly does Cunningham choose to focus on Watie and his regiment? One could naively assume that he does so out of a pure interest for Cherokee history and for the preservation of Cherokee figures like Watie but for someone with as extensive a track record in Civil War history and who simultaneously identified as strongly with the Southern Cause as Cunningham, it seems more likely than not that his motivations stem from another source. Furthermore, with the opprobrious language he utilizes when referring to any party associated with the Union, it is apparent that he harbors strong anti-Northern sentiments and is not merely recounting the exploits of the Cherokee Mounted Rifles as objectively as possible. Understandably, this is a rather serious accusation as it suggests that Cunningham's work is more in line with Lost Cause propaganda than with a solid biographical project. It is true that without direct statements from

Cunningham himself that any claims made about his true motivations cannot be conclusively proven. With that being said, by examining not only his work on Watie but previous writings and those he produced after the release of *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, a fair and justified inference can be made as to the primary reason why Cunningham wrote and released the book in 1960.

While looking at an author's other works to determine the reasons as to why they produced a separate work is by no means the most ideal method, it is one that can provide some helpful insight especially if no statements regarding the authors intentions exist. One of the more glaring aspects that may point to his ulterior motives surrounding the production of this book is that none of his other works are about indigenous figures or mention anything related to indigenous issues. This alone cannot be used to indict Cunningham but when a more comprehensive delve into his publication history is conducted, certain works he authored cast doubt on his intentions to "revive interest in that great character who lived and fought in Oklahoma for Southern ideals and principles"¹⁰⁰. Of all his works, the one that stands out the most as a vehicle for promoting Lost Cause beliefs is *Knight of the Confederacy: General Turner Ashby*. Published the year after his work on Watie, *Knight of the Confederacy: General Turner Ashby* was to Cunningham, for comparative purposes, what *The Life of General Stand Watie* was to Mabel Anderson. Adopting a similar structure and tone as his piece on Watie, *Knight of the Confederacy* was Cunningham's attempt to highlight the actions of Confederate calvary commander Turner Ashby. Equating this piece to Anderson's work on Watie stems from the fact that like Anderson, Cunningham had familial connections to members of Ashby's brigade and wrote in a manner that predictably demonstrated such relations. Analyzing this work is a

¹⁰⁰ Frank Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians* (San Antonio: Naylor Press, 1959), 8.

necessary component in understanding who Cunningham was and what beliefs he was trying to promote as it was a work that held considerable sentimental value.

Furthermore, given the intensely personal connections to Ashby and members of his brigade, it would be within the realm of reason to suggest that this piece was his attempt to protect the legacy of his paternal grandfather and by extension, the greater Confederacy thus making his motivations for producing the work on Watie all the more suspicious. In brief, why would Cunningham write about Watie prior to the release of this book if he never showed any previous interest in Cherokee history either in his research or in his preceding publications? If *Knight of the Confederacy* is his version of a “protection piece”, meant to protect the legacy of his Confederate ancestors as Anderson’s book did for her ancestors, then what would motivate Cunningham to write about Watie if he had already intended on producing a subsequent work expressing his Confederate sympathies? If we accept one of the driving motivations behind Anderson’s work to be connected to her desire to preserve her family’s image thus providing the perfect explanation for her decision to choose Watie as the figure to elevate and focus on, how can we rationalize Cunningham’s motivations for creating this piece on Watie if this same familial attachment is not present and was already planning to be addressed in a following work?

Knight of the Confederacy is embedded with Cunningham’s highly contentious thoughts surrounding all things related to the Civil War retold from the Southern perspective. Predictably, the presence of such controversial content could easily lend itself to the creation of an entirely separate thesis dedicated solely to this work and its overall connection to the perpetration of the Lost Cause myth. Given the purpose of the chapter, that is being able to locate approximately how the production of a work like this can provide further insight into Cunningham’s ulterior motives and beliefs, it would be more beneficial to broaden the scope and to extract

Cunningham's general ideas within the work rather than focusing too heavily on the specifics of each page or chapter as it appears in the book. With the work, Cunningham is attempting to depict Confederate cavalry commander Turner Ashby as the consummate Southern soldier. As exemplary of a man and soldier as he stands in Cunningham's eyes, Ashby is portrayed not as an outlier nor is he upraised to a divine status. His allure, at least from the perspective of Cunningham, derives from his humility and devotion to the defense of the Confederacy which is structured to resonate with the Southern demographic of his audience. He is described by both Cunningham and his contemporaries as being "calm and gentle"¹⁰¹ while simultaneously possessing the ability to "go ever rushing on the enemy, and ever exposing himself to danger"¹⁰². While Cunningham heavily embellishes Ashby's exploits and offers incessant praise that is almost stifling at several junctions throughout the work, the qualities that he finds to be the most admirable are those that he asserts were present within nearly all troops belonging to the Confederacy. Drawing on medieval conceptions of chivalry, Cunningham claims that Ashby "possessed the spirit of the Cavalier with the chivalry of the crusader"¹⁰³ further adding that "the heroism and courage that characterized the knights of the tournament more ably represented in knight-errantry than they were in Virginia by Turner Ashby"¹⁰⁴. To say that Cunningham held Ashby in high regards is an understatement given the comments offered above. With that being said, this praise was not confined solely to Ashby in that Cunningham equally lauded the general Confederate soldier and assigned to them these same qualities. Relating to the response of these individuals following the tensions leading up to and eventually resulting in the war he states "when it became apparent that civil war was unavoidable, they rushed to arms with a courage

¹⁰¹ Cunningham, *Knight of the Confederacy*, 37.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 35.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 35.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 35.

and heroism that knew neither the limits of prudence nor practical wisdom... they were carried away by the spirit of chivalry and sentiment”¹⁰⁵. From these two statements it becomes apparent that Cunningham sees within Ashby a relatability and overall character consonant with the average Confederate soldier thus making him the faultless example for which he could use to relay his beliefs concerning the war. The message that Cunningham attempts to imprint on the reader is that as exceptional as a man that Ashby was, he was not unique in regards to his motivations for fighting, his beliefs and his conduct during the war. By choosing to support the conception of the Confederate soldier as a noble and gallant defender of the principles of the South, Cunningham implies that Ashby is nearly interchangeable with the common soldier in respects to the beliefs and doctrines that he outlines within the book. This enforces the idea that Cunningham undertook the construction of the book to upraise his own ancestors’ legacy through the mutually dependable elevation of Ashby and by effect, the Confederate soldier and the Confederacy in its entirety.

How then, can all of this additional information be used to formulate a more concise idea of Cunningham’s beliefs that would in turn, inevitably have been present within his mind as he was constructing the work on Watie? With authors, especially those who work in a relatively small or well-defined field, there tends to be similarities or easily identifiable connections in the work that they produce. Going back to Anderson and her publication history, the connection was quite obviously the profound interest in preserving and spreading Cherokee history. One can fault her for the limitations in her work but there is no denying that she was passionate about Cherokee figures and their history, even if the history was presented in a manner that favorably depicted her ancestors and villainized the opposing faction. In her work *Nowita The Sweet*

¹⁰⁵Cunningham, *Knight of the Confederacy*, 34.

Singer, Anderson's personal bias towards the "half-blood" faction of the Cherokee Nation is abundantly clear but attached to that bias is the inherent desire to elevate this particular party and spread their history which, when taken into a more general context, is fundamentally Cherokee history. For Cunningham, *Knight of the Confederacy* accomplishes the same goals for his personal beliefs and the history he was trying to preserve as *Nowita the Sweet Singer* does for Anderson, but instead of Cherokee history it is replaced by Confederate history and Lost Cause doctrine. The connections between Cunningham's other works like *Knight of the Confederacy* to his work on Watie are not tied to any particular indigenous component but rather by their relationship to the preservation of the memory of the Civil War as a whole. Whereas Anderson's previous works and her life as whole was structured around the Cherokee community thus making the production of a biography on Watie a conceivably logical progression in expanding her already pre-existing interest in Cherokee affairs, Cunningham's work on Watie is an outlier in regards to its indigenous components and is only connected to his other works in its relationship to the Civil War, but more specifically, the legacy of the Confederacy. His decision to engage in a work on Watie at this given point in history coupled with the fact that no aspect of his life either preceding or following the book indicated any level of interest in Cherokee history, strongly suggests that his motivations were tied to the realization that the history of Cherokee involvement in the Civil War could be manipulated to further serve his goals in memorializing and commemorating the legacy of the wider Confederacy. Furthermore, by comparing *Knight of the Confederacy* to *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians* it becomes clear that the viewpoints expressed in both writings relating to the Confederacy and the war as a whole remain unchanged and are in line with the rest of Cunningham's life (i.e., the organizations he was associated with and other aspects of his personal life).

Another tool that can be utilized to discern Cunningham's motivations for writing as well as the impression that he wanted to leave the reader with are the forewords presented in both editions of his book. Given the fact that forewords are typically not written by the author themselves, they are a widely overlooked and underemployed resource when trying to analyze an author's motivations for writing. If they are examined, they are often viewed with skepticism as the person providing the foreword must rely on their own assumptions about the author's work or is relaying information that they have gathered about the author and the work. In either case, the information provided in the foreword is not a direct statement from the author themselves and any information found in the foreword pertaining to the author's beliefs or opinions must be understood as another individual's perspective or inferences. Nonetheless, the forewords and more specifically who they are written by, can offer a more comprehensive picture of who the author was affiliated with and how the work was received by the target audience. With this clarification and cautionary outlook laid out, a transition can now be made to the forewords presented in both editions of Frank Cunningham's book and how they both offer some insight regarding his motives for writing and the type of work he wished to produce.

Two editions of Cunningham's *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians* have been released. The original edition was published in 1960 with the second being released nearly four decades later in 1998. The foreword that appears in the first edition of *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians* was written by William David McCain and the second by historian Brad Agnew. Moving chronologically in terms of release date, the first foreword to be deconstructed is the that of McCain's. It should be noted that McCain was one an avowed segregationist

dedicated to maintaining the “Southern way of life”¹⁰⁶ and played an instrumental role in reviving the Sons of the Confederate Veterans¹⁰⁷. Further cementing his legacy as an unabashed white supremacist, when McCain served as the president of Mississippi Southern College, he worked tirelessly to ensure that black Korean War veteran, Clyde Kennard, would not be permitted to attend, resulting in a nationally publicized affair that contributed to the rising Civil Rights Movement¹⁰⁸.

Moving onto the foreword itself, McCain’s work adhered to the conventional brief yet concise format typical of most forewords and is modest in its word count but leaves more than enough to unpack. From the first sentence, the reader is immediately introduced to the conflict as the “War for Southern Independence”, an alternative name for the war popular in Southern circles meant to parallel the Confederate cause with that of the original 13 colonies during the American Revolution. McCain follows this initial sentence with the accurate assertion that few Americans know the role that indigenous figures played in the Civil War but misconstrues the motives of said figures by suggesting that they “died heroically for the principles of the Confederate States of America” in response to their upheaval from their homelands in the South¹⁰⁹. These statements are exceedingly troublesome in that they are lined with contradictions that incorrectly portray Cherokee motives for entering the war but allow for opportunists like McCain to distort the narrative to elicit as much sympathy for the Confederacy as possible. He acknowledges that the Confederate Cherokee’s were driven to align themselves with the Confederacy in response to being driven out of their ancestral lands in Georgia, North Carolina

¹⁰⁶ Euan Hague, Heidi Beirich, Edward H. Sebesta, ed., *Neo-Confederacy: A Critical Introduction* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 284.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 285.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 285.

¹⁰⁹ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie’s Confederate Indians*, 6.

and Tennessee¹¹⁰ thereby affirming his recognition of their sovereignty. By making this assertion, he is indirectly in agreement with the notion that the individual interests of the Cherokee were separate, but not disassociated, to that of the Confederacy. He claims that the Cherokee chose to form an alliance with the Confederacy for reasons tied directly to their forced removal yet also presents the idea that “they fought valiantly and died heroically for the principles of the Confederate States of America”¹¹¹. As addressed in the previous chapter with Anderson’s work, the idea that one party’s motivations for war mirrors another party on the sole basis of them being in a pact of alliance is fallacious. While the two powers are bound to have mutual desires and interests, hence their reasoning for being in an alliance, their principles or motivations are not the same and cannot be treated as such. If the claim that the reason for Cherokee participation in the war stems from their abuse at the hands of the federal government and their forced removal, it is illogical to simultaneously argue that they died for the principles of the Confederacy. If one is to accept the first statement, that claim alone provides the reason for why these men fought and what principles they were dying for. They were fighting for the interests of the Cherokee nation and died for the Cherokee Nation, not the Confederacy. This misconception, popularized by Anderson’s work and repeated to varying degrees since, has led to the acceptance of a version of Cherokee wartime involvement that provides an entry for neo-Confederate Lost Cause ideology to manipulate and twist these motivations.

Complicating matters further, McCain ascribes the blame for this forced removal to “greedy white men”¹¹², attempting to artificially construct a distinction between the desires of the white men associated with the federal government and the common Southerner when in reality,

¹¹⁰ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie’s Confederate Indians*, 6.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 7.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 7.

most Southerners and the delegates they elected, supported federal policy to forcibly remove Native Americans from their tribal lands and relocate them to the west. While McCain does acknowledge the factional divide present within the Cherokee Nation between “mixed-bloods” and “full bloods”¹¹³, the inclusion of this type of information is to be expected of any individual performing research on the Cherokee and can be taken as a subtle attempt to reinforce the reputation of those who supposedly readily aligned themselves with the Confederacy and those who did not or did so hesitantly. Interestingly, McCain himself characterizes the Southern war effort by the term “Lost Cause” stating that Watie and his command “fought loyally and valiantly for the Lost Cause”¹¹⁴. While the term had been in usage at the time of the book’s publication by both proponents of the ideology and those against it, its inclusion in this particular work is notable given the fact that neither Cunningham’s nor Anderson’s work mentions the term directly. This departure suggests a strong degree of awareness on McCain’s behalf in terms of his own beliefs and the agenda he was working to push with this foreword in that it plainly articulates the exact doctrine he was committed to preserving and believed that the work Cunningham produced effectively conveyed and defended it. McCain’s confidence in directly addressing the Confederacy’s actions as “the Lost Cause” and praising Watie and his regiment for their supposed defense of it, forces one to consider the impression that Cunningham’s work left on its audience and what Cunningham was truly trying to argue since he allowed for this foreword to precede his writing.

Continuing through his foreword, one is then given an imagery laden description of the actions of the Confederate Cherokee soldiers and the hardships that they endured. Once again, McCain focuses on eliciting sympathy for indigenous troops followed by a small interjection

¹¹³ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie’s Confederate Indians*, 7.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 7.

wherein he equates their experiences to their Confederate allies. He states “the lack of weapons, of food, of uniforms, of ammunition, of blankets; cold, hunger, exhaustion; mistreatment, forced emigration and murder of their women and children- all these things the Confederate Indians endured for the love of the South... and in the end they suffered the same humiliations and poverty as the white people whom they befriended”¹¹⁵. McCain is by no means exaggerating the plight of the Cherokee and their checkered history within the United States. Every detail that he mentions in regards to their hardships is accurate and can be easily supported through the countless atrocities experienced by said individuals. However, while the validity of these experiences is accurate, the blame for them, at least according to McCain’s writing, falls solely on the federal government when the blame can and should be equally placed on the Confederate government, especially given McCain’s apparent desire to intertwine the Cherokee Nation with the greater Confederacy. McCain consistently focuses on making it seem as though the Confederacy and the Cherokee Nation were one entity tied together through the defense of one common cause yet he blames the lack of supplies, weapons and food experienced by the Cherokee on the Northern “invader”¹¹⁶. If the Cherokee and the Confederacy were as tightly knit as McCain depicts them to be, why is the Confederate government not held accountable for the lack of supplies within these indigenous regiments? As seen in the previous chapter, Watie himself expressed immense disappointment and frustration with the scarcity of supplies and the lack of protection given to Cherokee communities and soldiers given the stipulations present in the treaties of alliance signed between the two powers. Written directly within the clauses of these treaties was the guarantee that the Confederate government would provide the necessary provisions to upkeep and maintain these regiments and as Watie’s comments show, they clearly

¹¹⁵ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie’s Confederate Indians*, 8.

¹¹⁶ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie’s Confederate Indians*, 8.

did not stay true to their word. Moreover, by conflating the experiences of the Cherokee Confederates to white troops belonging to the general Confederate army, McCain indirectly weakens his attempts to villainize the North by drawing attention to the inadequate logistical and functional capabilities of the Confederate government in supplying its troops. It is blatantly apparent that McCain uses the phrase “white people whom they befriended” to assert that the racial component that every reputable scholar rightfully attaches to the Civil War and its causes did not exist but falls short due to his previous lambasting of the North which makes the work read as pure Lost Cause propaganda.

Lastly, and arguably the most bold and inflammatory of his statements, McCain offers that “the views of the Indian on segregation were the same then as the views of the white Southerner today. The fact might be added that the Indians have not changed their ideas on the subject of segregation”¹¹⁷. McCain introduces this claim following a remark commending Cunningham for providing insight into the fact that Cherokee Confederates had owned slaves prior to and during the war. Once again this is not inaccurate and is vital information to include but justifying the overtly racist attitudes of white southerners opposed to racial integration through the creation of a fabricated relationship between figures existing in the 1860’s and those nearly a century later, is nothing short of an academic travesty. Racial identities aside, it is futile to attempt to justify a current position or way of thinking by referencing how others in the past subscribed to the same principles, especially if said beliefs were as morally reprehensible as racial segregation. Arguing that the white Southerner’s beliefs on segregation were to any extent warranted by tying their beliefs to the that of the Cherokee a century prior, is a malignant restructuring of history intent on taking advantage of the stigma surrounding the criticism of

¹¹⁷ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie’s Confederate Indians*, 9.

the Indigenous community and the sympathy generated towards said population given their repeated abuse within the nation. He deliberately leaves what the exact views on segregation held by these two groups were ambiguous, allowing the reader to fill in the blanks without having to do so himself. He assumes the contemporary position of the Cherokee and boldly speaks on their behalf but fails to include who within the Cherokee nation expressed such sentiments regarding segregation and makes it seem as though their thoughts were and always have been the exact same as the starry-eyed Lost Cause Southerner.

To avoid derailing from the purpose of the chapter and engaging in an even more extensive critique of McCain's foreword, the foreword itself will be moved on from and the significance of analyzing its information and overall inclusion in Cunningham's work will be addressed. One could make the argument that while the foreword appears in Cunningham's work, because it was not written by Cunningham himself, the beliefs that are expressed in the work cannot be taken to reflect his own. This argument, while true in regards to the foreword not being written by Cunningham, is flawed to the extent that one would have to be exceedingly ingenuous to believe that Cunningham's views do not align directly with those of McCain's. By allowing McCain to compose the foreword that was to accompany this original edition of the biography, Cunningham was willingly entrusting an individual brazenly supportive of segregationist policies to provide the opening for his project. He understood completely who McCain was and the organizations that he was associated with and was even a member of some of these same groups. In spite of all of this (or one could argue because of all of this), Cunningham still had McCain author the foreword. Short of an outright declaration revealing his thoughts, this consent given on behalf of Cunningham to McCain to provide the introductory

comments on the book clearly indicates the shared beliefs between the two individuals and their support of the Southern interpretation of the war.

The second foreword to be examined is that written by Brad Agnew which accompanies the second edition of the work. Written in 1998, Agnew's foreword is separated by McCain's by over three decades, with the effects of this time differential not lost upon the reader. From the outset, Agnew's work reads much more like the work of a historian attempting to remain as objective as possible whilst providing his own impressions of the book rather than a glorification of some form of deluded narrative of the war. Like McCain, Agnew's foreword is rather short, spanning only four pages and also opens up with a statement addressing the inadequate research conducted on the Civil War in Indian territory. Apart from these initial commonalities, the forewords could not be more diametrically opposed. While Agnew gives credit to Cunningham for the additional research that he conducted regarding the wartime actions of Watie's regiment, he does not shy away pointing out the shortfalls of his work. He warns the reader that as a journalist, Cunningham writes "with more verve and less restraint" than a professional historian, and as such readily inserts his own beliefs and opinions into the writing. According to Agnew, this at times can lead to Cunningham getting too carried away in his own thoughts with Agnew even going as far as to say that his "tendencies to conjure certain details (the dialogue between J.E.B Stuart and the "Cherokee political leader" in Chapter 2 and the description of Douglas Cooper pouring himself a couple of stiff drinks should be left to novelists"¹¹⁸. Unlike McCain's foreword which takes the form of an encomium absent of any critique, Agnew expresses his thoughts on the work from the perspective of a historian viewing material designed for the purposes of historical research and as such is unafraid to criticize the work when necessary.

¹¹⁸ Frank Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, rev. ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 9.

He also makes sure to remind the reader that Cunningham's work was written at a time before "Americans became sensitive to the feelings of minorities and consequently used a few terms that are now considered pejorative"¹¹⁹. While I understand Agnew's reasoning behind including this statement, I do believe that he is a little too lenient towards Cunningham and the language found in his writing. Remaining cognizant of one's own moral relativity and being able to control those sentiments as to avoid clouding one's assessment of a given work is essential, especially when viewing material written in the past. However, in this specific case, being that Cunningham was writing on the Civil War, a conflict predicated on racial issues and released the book at a time when the Civil Rights Movement had begun to gain traction, it is impossible to separate his usage of such blatantly racist terms to his personal beliefs (which arguably fueled and to a degree tainted the rest of his writing). When looking broadly at the how to identify Cunningham's ulterior motives for producing the book, his readiness to use such phrases is not the proverbial nail in the coffin so to speak, but it certainly hints at a possible endorsement of racially charged beliefs.

Agnew concludes the foreword by expressing his desire to have the republication of Cunningham's work "spur increased interest in the conflict in Indian territory"¹²⁰. Based on this statement it can be surmised that at the time of the foreword's construction, Agnew firmly believed that Cunningham's work was material that should readily be released to the public to provide a holistic portrait of Watie and his regiment. This then causes one to consider that if a historian as reputable as Agnew endorsed such a work and believed it to be a valuable resource to teach the public about Cherokee Confederates, was the impression that Cunningham left with work really as problematic as I have made it out to be? It is one thing for a segregationist like

¹¹⁹ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, rev. ed., 9.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 9.

McCain to support his writing but it is another thing entirely for someone as respected in the field as Agnew to back his writing as well.

I do not disagree with Agnew's claim that Cunningham's work is a valuable resource. What I disagree with is his general argument that Cunningham's work should be read by the public as means of introducing and learning more about Watie's actions and the conflict in Indian territory. Agnew's argument is based on the fact that Cunningham's work "drew from official reports, letters and memoirs"¹²¹ ultimately producing a work that revealed "the conflict in Indian territory in greater scope and detail"¹²². He further insists that "the book's shortcomings do not diminish the author's attempts to focus public attention on an overlooked Cherokee warrior and the men who fought in Indian territory"¹²³. Agnew is correct in his assessment that the research Cunningham conducted is highly valuable but he fails to understand his own subject position in the matter. Agnew is a historian, a Civil War historian to be precise. For someone like him with such a breadth of knowledge on the Civil War, it is easy to look past Cunningham's overtly Southern sympathies and the language he uses to convey such leanings. He can easily extract the objective information that recounts the events outlined in the book because his prior knowledge on the war is strong enough to withstand Cunningham's bombardment of anti-Northern rhetoric. However, since Agnew expresses a hope that the republication and release of the book will generate more attention to Watie, the intended audience can be expected to know little if anything about either the Civil War or Cherokee Confederates. Therefore, when Cunningham calls "Pin Indians "devilish" and rails against "lunatic abolitionists"¹²⁴ the unassuming and highly impressionable reader is left with an extremely bitter perception of the

¹²¹ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, rev. ed., 10.

¹²² *Ibid*, 10.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 10.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 10.

North and an overly sympathetic attitude towards the Confederacy. In this respect, Cunningham's partisanship certainly interferes with any message that he is trying to make concerning Watie and his regiment's exploits because the reader is incessantly reminded of the villainy of the North and the tragic demise of the South. This error in Agnew's assessment is not the result of some form of malice on his behalf or even a means of appearing apologetic to Cunningham's Confederate leanings but demonstrates the disconnect between the type of biographic writing that promotes a clear and truthful narrative with limited subjectivity and one supplemented by easily detectable bias.

As the only other work to be constructed and distributed publicly following Anderson's work, Cunningham could follow the structure set up through Anderson's piece but expand upon it so that any further research could allow the book to be perceived well. He could, and did, offer his own opinions like Anderson, and since the field had been so understudied at the time of his writing, the additional information that he was able to gather on the exploits of Watie's regiment could be included to form a piece that took the appearance of being a solid historical work. If work conducted and presented in this manner had been released in another field with more attention placed on it, the reception and overall perception of the piece would potentially be much different. This is not meant to be a needless hypothetical back and forth but more so demonstrates how multiple factors, such as the influence of Anderson's work and the obscurity of the field, worked to Cunningham's advantage and produced a work that even historians could potentially misinterpret if caution was not heeded. Ultimately, the construction of such a biography reinforces the claim made earlier in the chapter relating to Anderson's influence in the model of the type of work that was to be done on Watie and his fellow Cherokee Confederates

and how both these forewords lend a better understanding of what compelled Cunningham to create the work.

Proceeding in a didactic analysis of Cunningham's book based on each individual chapter as they appear within the work would not only be an ineffectual way of deducing Cunningham's intended purposes with the biography but would also lend itself to the creation of a drawn out and insipid examination. To prevent this from occurring, the process of deconstructing Cunningham's work can be divided into the identifiable and repeated themes within his writing, focusing specifically on the details that he chooses to continually reinforce and those he excludes. The most palpable trends present throughout the work include his proclivity to praise or criticize Watie and the wider Confederacy depending on the circumstances and how they fit his overall goals with the work and the incessant appeals to Lost Cause principles and doctrine. As an extended subset attached to the latter of the two themes is his insistence that slaves were content with their position prior to the Civil War and that the horrors of slavery had been grossly exaggerated by abolitionists during the war and by the media following its commencement. While the work can be compartmentalized into far more specific themes, keeping to these two more broadly defined ones can initiate the process of beginning to investigate directly Cunningham's piece without straying too far-off course yet still maintaining enough flexibility to permit further discussion and explanation at necessary points.

The first theme, that being the inclusion of slightly critical segments concerning Watie and the Confederacy, is more subtle than the second but its presence within the work is noteworthy nonetheless and does not go unremarked by the reader. Cunningham's generous usage of racially charged terms or phrases meant to embellish the Confederacy (which will be covered more in the analyzation of the second theme) are so apparent that any material offering a

slight divergence from this is easily distinguishable. Unlike Anderson, who fails to include any information that could be taken as a critique of Watie or his regiment's actions, Cunningham provides the details of skirmishes or encounters from the battalion's experiences that do not always depict Watie in the most beneficial light. For example, when describing the raids conducted by Watie and his regiment throughout Indian territory in 1864, Cunningham states "Watie's men-whirling dust on the skyline- rode, continually raiding the Fort Scott- Fort Gibson road, killing Negro soldiers, burning mowing machines and Union hay stacks. General Watie's fame as the greatest of the Secesh Indian leaders became even more secure as his raiders scored with torch and bullet"¹²⁵. The stylistic writing tendencies that Cunningham adopted throughout his career as a journalist are certainly made apparent through this vivid and almost romantic portrayal of the regiment's exploits. While Cunningham himself is not providing critique of Watie with this description and is in fact applauding their actions, the information that he provides can certainly be seen as a departure from what Anderson presented in her writing and can be taken in a much different way than how Cunningham perceives it. Describing the "fire and torch" method employed by Watie's regiment as well as introducing the idea of violence, and in some cases excessive violence that defied conventions of warfare, against "Negro soldiers", is an aspect that is all together absent from Anderson's work and could have the potential effect of leaving the reader with a truthful but also negative perception of Watie and his battalion.

Interestingly, Cunningham's addition of a racialized component to the soldier's identities, that being his characterization of them as "Negroes", makes the subsequent actions of Watie's regiment initially appear worse because his phrasing makes it seem as if they targeted

¹²⁵ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 166.

said troops on account of their race and relished in the killing. Most individuals would see the killing and targeting of these troops as being an overly negative aspect and thus would be inclined to look less favorably on Watie's regiment as a whole. On paper, this would seem to be the exact opposite of what Cunningham intended to do with his work. While Cunningham himself may have condoned such actions, if his intentions were to have this work reach a wider and more diversified audience, there must have been some realization on his behalf that including such information could potentially have some detrimental effects. This is precisely where the previous uncovering of Cunningham's background and academic become especially insightful. By profession, Cunningham was a journalist, an individual who made a career not only covering events but writing about them in a way to support a given viewpoint or bias. Understanding and being able to manipulate different angles to ultimately produce a narrative that would generate an intended response was what he built his career upon. Taking this into consideration, it becomes more likely that the inclusion of this information was not an oversight on his behalf nor was it him being ambivalent to the feelings of his readers but rather a carefully planned addition that could be used to supplement his credibility. To be clear, I am not saying that it in any way mitigates or diminishes what actually happened or that by phrasing certain things differently that Cunningham could convince all of his audience to believe what he was saying. I am however, saying that there might be credence to the idea that by structuring the portrayal of information in this manner and by supplying his own opinions and personal justifications for the events, that the overall takeaways from the writing could be perhaps shifted in favor of a more neutral opinion. Moreover, by including what could be considered a telling of the incident that at least adhered to the historical record regardless of his own beliefs, Cunningham was able to potentially establish some buy-in with the reader.

Being a historian, or a reputable one at the very least, requires one to not only do the necessary research but to portray it in a manner that is as truthful to the historical record as possible. Certainly, a debate could be held on the inherent biases of historians and how feasible obtaining a truly objective historical narrative is but minutiae and pedanticism aside, it is evident that Cunningham's writing is far from objectivity and neutrality. Based on this, it then becomes a question of why does he specifically choose to include certain criticisms sporadically throughout his writing when he could have very well taken the exact approach laid out by Anderson wherein all possible detriments to Watie or the Confederacy are omitted. Given Cunningham's affiliations with Confederate advocacy and memorialization groups as well as the language that he employs within the writing, it seems likely that he offered these minor concessions as a way to convince the audience or even himself of the fact that he was in all but name, an actual historian who genuinely cared about promoting Cherokee history. This is not to say that the research he conducted itself was invalid but rather that his portrayal of it was exploitative of the circumstances of the era and subjects concerned. He is able to offer criticism of Watie when necessary, because it does not detract from his overall goal of emphasizing the heroism of the South and the defense of its principles. He strategically includes information that is accurate to the historical record and may not paint Watie in the best light but ensures that this information is material that can either be justified or twisted in a manner so that it can be portrayed as being justified. For example, using the no quarter example given above, its inclusion in the work makes the reader feel more comfortable with trusting Cunningham as a historian because he is willing to include details that, to the untrained eye, do not immediately align with his goals of promoting the Confederacy. He explicitly describes the brutality inflicted upon these Union troops which could be perceived as running counter to any claim made regarding the nobility and heroism of

the humble Confederate soldier. However, when the event is examined more intently, one can see how Cunningham could use it to further promote the idea of the daringness of Watie's regiment and the lengths at which they went to fight for or with the Confederacy.

Moreover, he emphasizes that the victims were former slaves and Unionists who "moments ago had been trying to kill their "good masters""¹²⁶, mitigating the overall perception of the massacre by justifying the use of excessive violence. Having the information there for the reader to take it as they will, gives Cunningham the benefit of being able to take on the appearance of a heavily biased yet ultimately respectable historian dedicated to giving a comprehensive detailing of the incident while strengthening his arguments surrounding the loyalism and tenacity of Watie's troops to the Confederate cause. Cunningham makes these minor concessions, fully aware of their implications yet understanding that their inclusion within his work builds upon his own reliability as a historian to his audience so that any negative conceptions surrounding the initial incident is negligible or overridden. From a personal standpoint, he is able to critique Watie because he does not have the same familial attachments to him as Anderson did. For most individuals, especially biographers engaging in a work meant to memorialize the figure in focus, it becomes increasingly difficult to criticize that person if a blood relationship exists between the two. Anderson, who could trace her lineage back to Watie, understandably does not offer criticism of him within her writing. In a perfect world under optimal conditions, this certainly would not occur. Accounting for the fact this is far from an ideal world and for the human aspect that exists even in a field that should be theoretically grounded in objectivity like history, it is almost always the case that the author who writes about their family members, especially if they hold them in high esteem, is going to be

¹²⁶ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 170.

unapologetically commendatory. For Cunningham, this same connection does not exist. Surely, even taking into consideration his ulterior motives, he must have held Watie in high regards as he wrote a well-researched biography on him. However, being that he was separated from Watie from a familial aspect, he could be slightly critical of him or his actions without his own personal morality arising to pester him.

The second theme present within the work and what constitutes the majority of his argument and writing is the reiteration that slavery had not been a cause of the war and that the federal government's harsh impositions on the South had in fact led to the outbreak of the conflict. Expanding deeper into the territory of historical revisionism, Cunningham insists that slaves had been content with their position and that their masters were benevolent, almost paternalistic, figures in their lives who cared deeply for their well-being. Tied to this farcical belief is the acceptance and acknowledgement of the South's relationship to the practice but the contention that those in the South neither desired its continuation nor expressed sadness at its abolishment and had simply accepted its presence. This claim attempts to argue that it was the North's aggression in aggravating the war and abruptly ending the practice that disrupted and shattered the agrarian South. The implementation of these beliefs is spread throughout the book and is talked about by Cunningham in both the context of slaveholding within the tribes aligned with the Cherokee and chattel slavery within the Confederacy as a whole.

Mentioned earlier in the chapter were the commendations given by both McCain and Agnew to Cunningham for his discussion of the significance of the slavery within the political and economic spheres of indigenous society. To his credit, Cunningham includes a sizeable portion of documentation relating to the slave holding tendencies of the "Five Civilized tribes". Taking the form of both official records such as the treaties of alliance between the Confederacy

and these nations as well as more personalized accounts, the breadth of research conducted by Cunningham admittedly creates a clear conception of the centrality of slavery to these tribes. These records, accounts and letters when situated alongside Cunningham's proficiency as a writer, work in tandem to produce an image of the era with its actors behaving as Cunningham inferred based on his research. When describing the aristocratic mixed-blood Cherokees to which Stand Watie belonged to, he states "chiefs of whom had lived as Southern gentlemen, with prosperous plantations, expensively furnished, with faithful white wives who dressed in fancy silks to match their husbands' frock coats and high hats, with slaves, many of whom remained true to their masters, and a passionate devotion to States Rights not exceeded by the most ardent South Carolinian"¹²⁷. With this description, Cunningham interweaves the identity of the Cherokee slave owner to that of the white plantation owner, playing on the notions of white civility and antebellum chivalric Southern behavior. More importantly, he emphasizes the loyalty of slaves to their masters asserting that their relationship was one formulated out of genuine endearment and not coerced servitude. To consolidate this position, he includes an anecdote in which he relays the story of the return of Albert Pike's personal slave, Brutus, following the Battle of Pea Ridge. He recounts the incident by claiming that "Pike was delighted to be reunited with Brutus, his slave and body guard, who came into camp after the battle. Before the struggle had commenced, Pike entrusted into Brutus' safe keeping \$63,000 in gold... Pike's orders to Brutus were that if the Confederates were defeated, Brutus was to go up to the creek and hide until he could escape. To reward Brutus for his honesty, Pike freed him, but the Negro elected to stay with his master"¹²⁸. The veracity of this highly suspicious and almost incredulous story cannot be confirmed as Cunningham left neither footnotes stating his sources nor could any

¹²⁷ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 15.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 77.

material be found relating to this incident. Even if the reader is to accept the truth behind Cunningham's story, his insistence that Brutus's return could be ascribed to his enduring loyalty to Pike is almost certainly pure fabrication. If this alleged bond had supposedly existed between the two what then can be made of Pike's statement concerning black suffrage in the post-war period that "the white race, and that race alone, shall govern this country. It is the only one fit to govern and it is the only one that shall"¹²⁹. Pike himself believed in the inferiority of the black race and as such could not fathom the possibility of being under the authority of a government that enabled their participation. Under no circumstances would this indicate that any bond other than one that was forcibly imposed existed between Pike and his slaves.

The derivative claim that slavery had been a "necessary evil" and that the federal government's approach to its abolition and not the abolition of the institution itself had been the issue, is another assertion that Cunningham inserts into his defense of the Confederacy. Using Richard Taylor's *Destruction and Reconstruction* to summarize his own views on the matter he cites the quote "Extinction of slavery was expected by all and regretted by none, although loss of slaves destroyed the value of land. Existing since the earliest colonization of Southern States, the institution was interwoven with the thoughts, habits, and daily lives of both races, and both suffered by the sudden disruption of the accustomed tie. Bank stocks, bonds, all personal property, all accumulated wealth had disappeared. Thousands of homes, farm buildings, work-animals, flocks and herds, had been wantonly burned, killed or carried off. The land was filled with widows and orphans crying for aid, which the universal destitution prevented them from receiving"¹³⁰. Painting the South in the aftermath of the war as a desolate and post-apocalyptic

¹²⁹ Walter Lee Brown, *A Life of Albert Pike* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1997), 440.

¹³⁰ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, 221.

wasteland, Taylor and Cunningham place sole responsibility of the conflict in the hands of the federal government. It was their harsh and unjustified policies that prompted the Southern states to secede and it was their uncivilized conduct during the war that crippled the South. In subscribing to the principles of this view, Cunningham gives credence to the belief that slavery had never been an issue of morality but of necessity; that it was mutually beneficial for both the slave and the master to be involved in this relationship and that its sudden and forced break shattered any possibility for either parties to succeed. This view attempts to look at slavery from a purely economic standpoint, ignoring the human cost of the practice and its entanglement with the excessive violation of basic human rights. Furthermore, it asserts that instead of slavery being the causation of the war, it was an inconsequential issue especially when other factors, namely the North's alleged aggression, was taken into consideration.

The argument for this utopian view of pre-war society juxtaposed to its absolute opposite in the ravaged Reconstruction era South rests on the notion that slaves were indeed content with their positions in the Antebellum era and were ruined by their emancipation. If one were to take this stance, how then can one reconcile the personal claims made by nearly every newly emancipated slave in regards to the shift in their condition following the enactment of the 13th amendment? Take for example former slave William Grose who exclaimed "I served twenty-five years in slavery, and about five I have been free. I feel now like a man, while before I felt more like a brute. I have the rights and privileges of any other man"¹³¹ or John Seward's statement that "The man that owned me was not fit to own a dog. I had been wanting to get away for the last twenty years. I grieved over my condition and groaned over it"¹³². If there were indeed any

¹³¹ "Slave to Free: Before General Emancipation," National Humanities Center, accessed March 28th, 2021, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/identity/text2/slavetofreenarr.pdf>.

¹³² National Humanities Center, "Slave to Free".

feelings of affection that existed in these relationships under chattel slavery, they must have been overwhelmingly one sided as these narratives as well as countless others from former slaves express nothing but immense elation at their newfound freedom. The point of this chapter is not to convince one of the horrors of slavery and the fallacies behind the Lost Cause principles that defend the Confederacy's defense of the practice. Reading any number of slave accounts could accomplish this more than any second hand writing could. Its inclusion in this chapter is to bring attention to Cunningham's ideas and to note their flaws but to situate these ideas into a broader context and to see what extenuating historical circumstances allowed for their proliferation and how these views shaped the narrative surrounding Watie and other Cherokee Confederates and the future research that was to be conducted on their exploits.

From his endorsement of and affiliation with Confederate advocacy groups to the language and ideology that pervades his work, it has been made sufficiently apparent that Cunningham was prompted to construct *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians* for the purposes of reinforcing the Lost Cause myth thereby solidifying the Confederate cause as one that was noble and just. Accomplishing this through the manipulation of Stand Watie and his Cherokee battalion, Cunningham was able to produce a work that at a surface level could be perceived in a manner that was not nearly as problematic as the ideas and narrative that he was actually promoting would imply. While deconstructing his work unveils the ulterior motives behind its creation, it does not explain Cunningham's willingness to speak about, and at times condone, the South's implementation of the practice when only a half a century prior, Anderson had been indisposed to even include the term within her writing. This sharp divergence in the field and subject matter would suggest that in between the release of Anderson's book and the publication of Cunningham's, that a momentous event or string of events must have occurred to

change the notions of what was accepted and what was not in regards to the national discourse over the memory of slavery.

In the previous chapter, the resurgence of the Klan in conjunction with the proliferation of Lost Cause advocacy groups and Confederate monuments, was noted as a strong determinant in pushing Anderson to release the biography when she did. These interrelated events and organizations would seem to suggest that the stigma surrounding the acknowledgment of slavery and the overall racial component connected to the war was minimal or at the very least not influential enough to warrant its absence within Anderson's writing. While the support of these racially charged organizations demonstrated the prominence of white supremacy, it did not entail that slavery had been any less taboo of a subject to acknowledge, much less discuss, in works dedicated to upholding the legacies of those who fought for its preservation. As represented by the overwhelmingly positive reception of *The Birth of a Nation*, the Ku Klux Klan and its influence unquestionably reached its way to mainstream American society. When audiences, primarily the white southern demographic, viewed the film they understood it as "a direct address to them, a spectacular vindication of their sectional pride and their sense of racial honor"¹³³ and found its appeals to a sense of racial triumph against the "black rule" generated through the policies of Reconstruction especially attractive. However, even in the film, slavery is treated as an afterthought as the focus is centered around the heroic exploits of the Klan in response to the federal government's obtrusions and the alleged detrimental effects of the Reconstruction amendments on the white populace. As an inextricable aspect tied to the history of the post-war South, slavery is a compulsory feature of the era but the actual experience and

¹³³ Amy Louise Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 148.

deleterious impact on the former slave population is left unaddressed. The aversion to talking about slavery, in any respect, was present and produced an uncomfortable atmosphere whenever it was mentioned because its inclusion in post-war media had not yet been sufficiently covered or warped in a way to depict the South's implementation of the practice as anything other than inhumane. Ridiculing black politicians and black suffrage, though undeniably immoral, was not particularly problematic as the public opinion on the issue was homogenous with white supremacist ideas quite literally being ingrained in the Southern states through Jim Crow law. Even on the national scale, a clearly structured racial hierarchy existed with African Americans being treated largely as second-class citizens. Despite these white supremacist undertones to society, there was still a universal consensus that slavery was a negative institution and as such was left out of the national discourse to prevent the tarnishing of America's otherwise "illustrious" history.

The previously alluded to "momentous event" that precipitated the shift in the nation's perception and portrayal of slavery was not so much one definitive incident but rather a series of interconnected happenings that amalgamated to create the national atmosphere in which Cunningham's work was produced and warmly received. Speaking to the immense influence of media and its ability to both shape and redefine public opinion, was the rapid transformation that the topic of slavery underwent in both its depiction and its discussion. The transition from slavery being an intentionally neglected and unaddressed matter to its frequent portrayal in works like that of Cunningham's can largely be attributed to literature and films sympathetic to the Southern Lost Cause like *Gone with the Wind* and Disney's *Song of the South*. Awarded the epithet "anti-tom" literature for its reverse effects to Stowe's abolitionist work *Uncle Tom's*

Cabin, these works reached a national audience and presented Lost Cause beliefs in an entertaining format that made the content both palatable and believable.

The unparalleled success of the film adaptation of Margaret Mitchell's 1936 novel *Gone with the Wind*, demonstrated that the public overwhelmingly embraced its content and the manner in which it was presented. In the film, protagonist and Southern belle Scarlett O'Hara grapples with her infatuation for married Confederate soldier and heir to the Twelve Oaks plantation Ashley Wilkes and her simultaneous interest in the enigmatic and charismatic Rhett Butler. Taking place in Georgia, the film begins on the eve of the Civil War and spans throughout the conflict, concluding with life in Georgia following the war's commencement and under Reconstruction. Life in the Antebellum South is depicted as an idyllic paradise devoid of any suffering or hardship. The relationships between master and slave are harmonious, the grandeur of plantation life is all encompassing and every individual, regardless of race or class position appears to be in high spirits and content with their standing in society. When Scarlett interacts with her house slave Mammy, the relationship is comparable to that of a mother and daughter and not that of a master and slave. Mammy acts as an authoritative figure towards Scarlett, suggesting that the power dynamic between the two is flipped in Mammy's favor, effectively erasing the racial components to their relationship. Further augmenting the idea of racial harmony and near equality in the Antebellum South is the visible joy present on the faces of the male slaves of Tara, Scarlett's father's plantation, when they are reunited with Scarlett in the later stages of the war. Contradicting the slave narratives discussed earlier in the chapter, the relations between Scarlett and her father's former slaves are endearing and not in the slightest sense oppressive. While they refer to her as "Ms. Scarlett"¹³⁴, thus accepting a position of

¹³⁴ *Gone with the Wind*, directed by Victor Fleming, (1939; Hollywood, CA: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, DVD).

submission, their allegiance to her never wavers and it is clear from their expressions that they would still be in her service had it not been for the circumstances of the war and their mobilization for the building of defensive works for the Confederate war effort. Slavery, as it appears in *Gone with the Wind*, is an unobtrusive practice that while vital to the southern economy, was neither inherently evil in theory or in practice. Its practitioners, namely the southern men bound by codes of knightly behavior and chivalric honor, were so invested in their adherence to these characteristics that their cordiality and goodwill extended to all members of society regardless of class or race. This utopian view of southern society actively worked to transform the public's conception of the practice by taking its primary criticisms, that being its immorality and the abuse faced by slaves at the hands of their masters, and replacing that image with that of the happy and content slave, eliminating the pre-existing qualms one might have initially harbored towards the institution.

While *Gone with the Wind* is perhaps the most widely known piece of anti-Tom media to emerge in the period spanning from the creation of Anderson's work to Cunningham's, it was certainly not the only film to reach the mainstream American audience. Capitalizing on the film's success in the box office, Walt Disney sought to reproduce that same reaction through the construction of the film adaptation of Joel Chandler Harris's *Uncle Remus* folktales¹³⁵. Taking the format of a live-action-cartoon hybrid, the film centers around the tales told by the "quaint" former slave Uncle Remus about the exploits of Brer Rabbit to Johnny, a young white child¹³⁶. Deviating from the initial intentions of Harris's literary works, Disney's film adaptation "reduced many of Uncle Remus's complexities, curbed the aggressive subtexts of the animal

¹³⁵ Daniel Stein, "From "Uncle Remus" to "Song of the South": Adapting American Plantation Fictions," *The Southern Literary Journal* 47, no. 2 (2015), 25.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 24.

tales and culminated in what has been described as “Disney’s most notorious film”¹³⁷. While the original folktales had used the animal characters and their behavior as allegories for the slave experience and their symbolic revenge on their cruel masters¹³⁸, the film erased this critique of slavery that underlay the original work, instead presenting “an interracial utopia” that conformed to the very standards that Harris was trying to dismantle¹³⁹. Included within the film are four tales handpicked from the 180 that Harris created, with each of the four tales working to reinforce the plantation myth and the tropes attached to members of the black community. The authority of white figures over submissive black characters like Uncle Remus and mammy Aunt Tempy and their situation in an environment reminiscent of the idyllic plantations depicted in *Gone with the Wind*, coalesce to form a narrative that entirely neglects the brutality of slavery. The lessons that supplement Harris’s work such as the amorality of the animals that trump the false morality of the slaveholder and that life on the plantation is one of terror rather than racial harmony¹⁴⁰, are disregarded completely in the film. Apart from being a gross misrepresentation of the black experience in America, *Song of the South* was especially problematic in that its target demographic was young and impressionable children. Unlike *Gone with the Wind* whose audience was almost exclusively adolescents and adults, *Song of the South* was created with the intention that children would watch and be entertained by it. While the impressionability of adults is debatable, it is a widely accepted fact that a child’s formative years shape their life and to a large extent, their beliefs. After the success of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* as well as their work in producing propaganda for the United States military during the Second

¹³⁷ Stein, “Adapting American Plantation Fictions”, 24.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 24.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 24.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 25.

World War¹⁴¹, Disney had cemented itself as entertainment conglomerate with a firm foothold in the category of children's entertainment. Taking into account this immense influence, it would be reasonable to assume that many children during that era had been exposed to *Song of the South* and as such drew their knowledge of slavery and the post-war South from this film thus creating an entire generation of individuals indoctrinated into believing in Lost Cause and plantation myths.

Children were not only led into believing these false portrayals of the slave experience via media and entertainment but through other, virtually inescapable avenues as well. As part of the curriculum, school systems in various southern states began to commission textbooks that promoted Lost Cause ideology and myths related to the southern plantation. In 1957, Virginia ordered the production and distribution of the textbook *Virginia: History, Government, Geography* infamous today for its blatant misrepresentation of slavery in the pre-war South. Lined with a plentitude of fallacious claims, the textbook imprinted the impression of the antebellum South as a blissful utopia coexisting with the halcyon days of slavery into the minds of an entire generation of children who were deceived into believing that “Enslaved people were happy to be in Virginia and were better off than they would have been in Africa”¹⁴² and that “abolitionists lied about slavery in the South”¹⁴³. By supplying the conditions in an academic setting that prevented slavery from being viewed as the abhorrent institution that it was, state departments of education ensured that the generation being reared would be indoctrinated in the Lost Cause myth from all facets of life. If children had not yet been exposed to Lost Cause

¹⁴¹ “Twisted Sources: How Confederate Propaganda Ended up in the South’s Schoolbooks,” Institute for Southern Studies, accessed March 18th, 2021, <https://www.facingsouth.org/2019/04/twisted-sources-how-confederate-propaganda-ended-souths-schoolbooks>.

¹⁴² Institute for Southern Studies, “Twisted Sources”.

¹⁴³ Institute for Southern Studies, “Twisted Sources”.

ideology through home entertainment, they would have almost been guaranteed to have been introduced to it at schools and other academic institutions.

The goal with outlining this momentous shift in the way slavery was talked about and perceived by the American populace between the years of Anderson's work and Cunningham's is not to emphasize the flaws in the plantation myth and other connected Lost Cause beliefs. These delusions have been addressed in both this thesis and a plentitude of other related works. The purpose behind locating where this divergence in the discourse surrounding slavery occurs in the historical record and how this transformation developed is to ultimately gain a better understanding of the progression in the portrayal of *Stand Watie* and *Cherokee Confederates* in literature. Tying directly into the question of how their memory can be situated into the wider context of the eras in which these works were published in, allows for one to observe how other historical happenings indirectly shaped the field and how all of these seemingly disjointed factors consolidate into the way in which the subject matter is depicted and remembered in modern times. In this respect, the changing conceptions of what could be defined as acceptable and open for discussion in regards to slavery and the conflict as a whole within general society should not and cannot be considered isolated events attributable to one cause or incident. The cinematic appeal that the two aforementioned films brought to the topic of the plantation myth garnered an unparalleled degree of publicity to the topic that opened the discussion of slavery in such a way that its perception was positively flipped in favor of the Lost Cause. Without their influence, the reach of these beliefs would have been severely limited and would not have been nearly as prominent in modern society as it stands today. Relating more specifically to the focus of this chapter, Cunningham's work owes much of its success to these films which introduced an entirely new demographic to the field and provided the external demand necessary for a work

like his to be produced. With that being said, the warm reception of these films and Cunningham's work by audiences across America point to the existence of an even deeper, rapidly progressing and racially charged atmosphere that was developing in response to perhaps the most pivotal campaign in the nation's history towards racial equality: The Civil Rights Movement.

The growth of white supremacist organizations and the increased push by the white southern demographic¹⁴⁴ to preserve the legacy of the Confederacy in the midst of the rising Civil Rights Movement, is not mere coincidence and the exploration of that relationship can further unveil the relevance of Cunningham's work during this racially sensitive period. The Southern Poverty Law Center, a non-profit legal organization, compiled a chart that aggregated all of the data pertaining to the existence of Confederate monuments and the years of their construction. Over the last century, there have been two major spikes in the construction of Confederate monuments. The first took place during the early 1900's, coinciding directly with the growth of organizations like the UDC and the resurgence of white supremacist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan¹⁴⁵. As noted in the previous chapter, this wave of Confederate preservation was utilized by Anderson who put forth her work on Watie in an attempt to use Lost Cause and pro-Confederate material to elevate the status of Watie to the national level. The second wave took place in the 1950's and 60's, coinciding with the rise of the Civil Rights Movement and with the publication of Cunningham's work. In this second revival, monuments glorifying the Confederate cause were being erected at an unprecedented rate and displayed in town centers and

¹⁴⁴ When I use this phrasing, I acknowledge that I am generalizing this group of individuals and I realize that there were individuals who existed within this description who were by no means advocates of this way of thinking but on a macro scale this generalized term is applicable.

¹⁴⁵ "Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed April 1st, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/20190201/whose-heritage-public-symbols-confederacy>.

other public settings. These monuments differed from those previously constructed in that a majority of them were not dedicated to the memory of the average Confederate soldier but rather figures tied directly to the Lost Cause myth like generals Lee and Jackson¹⁴⁶. Acting as the physical embodiment of this second wave emphasis on Lost Cause principles is the Stone Mountain carving located in Georgia. While plans for its construction were proposed in 1915 by members of the UDC¹⁴⁷, the monument was abandoned mid-development and remained unfinished until 1972¹⁴⁸. The monument is a carving etched into the wall of Stone Mountain that displays Confederate generals Lee and Jackson as well as president Jefferson Davis, each atop their most beloved horse. What makes this monument the pinnacle of the Lost Cause movement and the summation of white supremacist backlash to racial equality is not only its subject matter but also its utilization by political organizations as a means of unified resistance to the changes brought along through the Civil Rights Movement. By choosing these three figures, the three individuals most frequently associated with Lost Cause conceptions of the war, both the original architects of the monument and the parties responsible for resuming and completing its construction were making it explicitly known that white society, both past and present, were to remain entrenched in the South. Southern Dixiecrats, who ran on the platform of preserving Jim Crow in their respective states, understood the power behind the public display of these monuments and the statements that their presence in public centers would make. Whereas the monuments constructed previously may have stood to solely honor the legacy of the fallen

¹⁴⁶ State Senate Research Office, *The State Flag of Georgia: The 1956 Change in its Historical Context*, prepared by Alexander J. Azarian and Eden Fesshazion (Atlanta: State Senate Research Office, 2000) <E:\linda\Senate\STATEFLA.PDF> (ga.gov).

¹⁴⁷ Sarah E. Gardner, "What We Talk About When We Talk About Confederate Monuments," accessed March 3rd, 2021, [What We Talk About When We Talk About Confederate Monuments | Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective \(osu.edu\)](#).

¹⁴⁸ Atlanta History Center, *A Condensed History of the Stone Mountain Carving* (Atlanta: Atlanta Historical Society, 2017), [Condensed-history-of-Stone-Mountain.pdf \(atlantahistorycenter.com\)](#), 3.

soldiers who fought for the Confederacy (which itself is a contentious issue reserved for another setting), these monuments constructed in the latter half of the century almost unequivocally stood as a physical representation of the defense of white America.

When announcing his candidacy for governor of Georgia in the 1954 elections, Democrat Marvin Griffin promised to complete the carving, connecting its completion to the triumph of southern traditions and serving as the hallmark of white supremacy in its resistance to desegregation¹⁴⁹. Georgia's fortification of white supremacist ideology extended beyond its preservation through monuments and statues and into the design of the state flag itself. Changing its flag to incorporate the standardized Confederate battle flag of the Stars and Bars, Georgia's state legislature approved of the new design in 1956, approximately two years after the landmark ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*¹⁵⁰. Emphasizing the proximity and relationship between the redesigning of the flag and the case that declared the racial segregation of schools unconstitutional, highlights the politically and racially charged component attached to the flag's creation. The proposal to redesign Georgia's flag to include Confederate memorabilia was issued during the increased push for racial equality through the Civil Rights Movement, revealing the intentions of those who advocated for its construction to be directly tied to reinforcing racial domination. The adoption of the battle flag by Dixiecrats, segregationists and the Klan solidified the white supremacist notions attached to its employment and its raising over state capitols was read by all as a clear effort to intimidate those who tried to enforce integration¹⁵¹.

¹⁴⁹ Atlanta History Center, *A Condensed History of the Stone Mountain Carving*, 3.

¹⁵⁰ State Senate Research Office, *The State Flag of Georgia: The 1956 Change in its Historical Context*, prepared by Alexander J. Azarian and Eden Fesshazion (Atlanta: State Senate Research Office, 2000), <E:\linda\Senate\STATEFLA.PDF> (ga.gov), 8.

¹⁵¹ State Senate Research Office, *The State Flag of Georgia*, 8.

When Georgia's general assembly convened in 1956 to discuss the racial integration of schools, Speaker of the House Marvin Moate referred back to the state's history in the post-war years stating "Not since the days of the carpetbagger and the days of Reconstruction have problems more vital to the welfare of all our people confronted the General Assembly"¹⁵² insisting that the South had become "the whipping boy for other sections of the nation"¹⁵³ whose goal was to "decry our (Southern) traditions and way of life, and who thereby become as a vulture that befouls its own nest"¹⁵⁴. Viewing the declaration of racial segregation within schools unconstitutional as an overreach by the federal government, politicians of the state equated what they were currently experiencing with the same issues that they believed caused the Civil War, namely the federal government's excessive impositions on their ways of life. Lost Cause beliefs espoused by Cunningham align with the same rhetoric adopted by these state government officials, revealing the affirmation of this ideology within all levels of Southern society. While Georgia has been singled out, its actions in regards to racial integration were not unique and the drive to preserve white supremacy existed in both southern and northern states. Extrapolating the response by the white demographic in Georgia during this era to the overall response by the white demographic across all states (with an increased emphasis on those of the Jim Crow South) is admittedly a generalization but one that can provide an accurate enough portrayal of the political and social climate of the era to understand how and why a work like Cunningham's would be produced and received so favorably.

Despite the depiction of racial tensions present throughout the era being portrayed as a dichotomous struggle between white and black, it is important to remain aware of the Indigenous

¹⁵² State Senate Research Office, *The State Flag of Georgia*, 13.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 13.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 13.

response to these same events. How were Indigenous actors responding to these attempts to reinforce white supremacy? Occupying unique subject positions as minorities who were neither black or white, how did Native Americans see themselves within this political and social battle and where do these drives for racial equality that were occurring at the macro level of American politics converge with the battles being fought specific to Indigenous communities? These questions will be examined in the following chapter but should be consistently reevaluated and thought of during these broader periods of national change.

While the Civil Rights Movement acted as a catalyst for the outward expressions of white supremacy vocalized through the development and displaying of Confederate monuments and memorabilia, its role as a driving force to produce reactions within a specific crowd was not limited to Lost Cause advocacy groups or those promoting white racial superiority. Examined more intently in the next chapter were the Indigenous responses to the changes occurring within the nation on a social and political scale. The general domestic response has been sufficiently covered in both this chapter and other works relating to racial tensions in the 1900's but its specific effects on the Indigenous population has yet to be explored within this thesis. Employing the works of prominent members from within the Indigenous community to serve as the gateway into the experiences, feelings and overall lives of the Native American demographic, Chapter Three, "Past and Present Collide: Impact of Indigenous Responses to Policies of Federal Oversight and Broader National Happenings to the Contemporary Position and Memory of Stand Watie" will work to fill in the gaps created by the historical narrative that has survived which notably neglects the Indigenous component that is innately fundamental to its construction. Approaching this topic through the progression exhibited within the historiography of Stand Watie, Kenny Arthur Frank's *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation* serves as both the product of these

interconnected social and political happenings and as an indication of how Indigenous history and its preservation would proceed in the years moving forward and into the modern era.

Chapter Three

Past and Present Collide: Impact of Indigenous Responses to Policies of Federal Oversight and Broader National Happenings to the Contemporary Position and Memory of Stand Watie

The preceding trends of white authorship and the exploitation of the victimhood identity thrust onto the Indigenous community in works like Cunningham's, characterized the public's perception of the Native American experience in the first half of the 20th century. Even works like Anderson's *The Life of General Stand Watie* though revolutionary, were interconnected with Lost Cause ideology and organizations disinterested in promoting Cherokee history apart from its relation to benefitting the wider legacy of the Confederacy. While Anderson was herself part Cherokee and likely constructed the biography out of a genuine desire to promote Cherokee history, her work nonetheless subscribes to these same parameters and limitations that appear in most of the literature to reach national levels of recognition in the early 20th century. Elucidated within the preceding chapter on Cunningham's *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*, the concept of utilizing Indigenous identity to bolster support for one's own beliefs and agenda was common amongst non-Indigenous writers of the early and mid-20th century. Consequently, the works on Native American subjects to achieve national recognition were confined to these forms of literature that either misrepresented Indigenous history or attached it as an extraneous subset to topics deemed more appealing to the general masses.

The inherently oppressive stipulations tied to these themes in conjunction with the similarly repressive assimilationist policies implemented by the federal government during the first half of the 20th century, gave rise to movements that saw an increased push by Indigenous communities towards reclaiming their sovereignty and their history. Culminating in the birth of campaigns like the Red Power Movement and the Native American Literary Renaissance, these

collective drives to reassert the power of these Indigenous tribes were reactionary responses to the oppressive measures placed on these groups over the course of several centuries by the federal government. With these proactive measures came the desire to retell Native American history in ways that accurately depicted tribal actions and granted historical Indigenous actors the agency that had been denied to them in previous works. As the final project within the historiographical timeline for material on Stand Watie, Kenny Arthur Frank's *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation* acts as a medium in which the effects of these efforts can be explored revealing the progression that occurred within the field of Confederate Cherokee involvement during the Civil War as a result. Moreover, the type of narrative that Franks puts forth in his work can be examined for its relationship to the discourse surrounding Indigenous history during the period of the book's publication and its lasting influence on the legacy of Stand Watie.

While the material that was produced during and after these heightened periods of Indigenous activity fundamentally altered the literary landscape regarding Native American history, its creation and the circumstances that led to its production are coequally significant. Identifying the reasons behind the demand that led to Kenny Arthur Frank's work uncovers the answers to the interconnected questions of why the work was so markedly different from its predecessors and what this transition from a glaringly subjective telling of history to a more objective form indicates about the status of Cherokees from the time of the work's construction into the modern era. When approaching these topics, it is important to remain cognizant of the fact that a lack of public awareness or knowledge on a given topic does not equate to works on the matter being non-existent. Speaking more specifically, the popularity and accessibility of non-Indigenous authored material (on Indigenous subjects) should not be read as an absence of

works on Native American topics written by those who belonged to that community. Although their writing would not receive the same attention as works authored by non-Indigenous writers and often did not reach national audiences, Indigenous authors were active decades prior to the Native American Literary Renaissance and addressed the same issues that their successors in the 70's and beyond would focus on. Acknowledging the existence of these individuals and their role in initiating the beginnings of the push towards reclaiming Indigenous identity through literature and political action is essential to understanding the current position that Native Americans, and specifically the Cherokee Nation, hold in contemporary society. Moreover, by covering earlier works authored by Indigenous authors and following the progression of this form of material throughout the course of the century and within the context of broader Native American relations both politically and socially, the historiography centered around Watie can be further examined.

Within the process of tracing the development of the historiography on Watie, it can be of use to view *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation* as the apotheosis of projects within the field. While other works, like Wilfred Knight's *Red Fox: Stand Watie and the Confederate Indian Nations During the Civil War Years in Indian Territory*, would be produced after its publication, the detail in which Franks engages with the historical material on Watie and his expert handling of the topic has yet to be exceeded in another biography on Stand Watie. To date, the only edition to be released of *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation* is the original published by Memphis State University Press in 1979¹⁵⁵. Accompanying this original edition is a cover page that features a photograph of the bust of Stand Watie found in the

¹⁵⁵ Kenny Arthur Franks, *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation* (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1979), 1.

National Hall of Fame for Famous American Indians located in Anadarko, OK¹⁵⁶. The photograph of the bust is angled in such a way as to present Watie pensively looking into distance; an expression of overwhelming melancholy cast upon his face. Frank's decision to use this specific photograph to epitomize Watie's character is a rather transparent reinforcement of his beliefs surrounding the oppression of the Cherokee Nation at the hands of the federal government and the burden that he believed Watie was forced to shoulder due to the exploitation of his people. Addressed in depth later within the chapter, Frank's depiction of Watie in this manner acts as the first element within his broader attempt to portray Watie and the Cherokee Nation as the targets of intrusion and ill-treatment from both federal government and Confederacy.

Accepting that the demand for a work to be produced like Frank's did not occur independently, identifying where and how the actions of Native Americans throughout the 20th century contributed to this process is necessary if a complete chronicle of their experience is to be documented. Whether consciously or inadvertently, members of the Indigenous community precipitated the shift in the national discourse surrounding their history. Utilizing various channels like that of literature and civil protest to voice their discontent and concerns, these individuals laid the foundation for their successors to elevate their cause to the national level.

Aware of the vast and acutely distinct histories attached to each of the sovereign Indigenous tribes, I would like to first make note of the limitations within my own writing and give a rationale for the presence of compressed summaries in regards to Native American history before engaging with the historical material itself. As I have outlined in the preceding

¹⁵⁶ "Photo Gallery," National Hall of Fame for Famous American Indians, accessed April 13th, 2021, [National Hall of Fame for Famous American Indians \(americanindianhof.com\)](http://americanindianhof.com).

paragraphs, the first section of this chapter will involve the tracing of the Indigenous responses to federal policies of assimilation and national events through the Indigenous perspective. The purpose of locating these various points of resistance is to show that individuals within this community had already been conceptualizing the complexities of their identity and were formulating ways to resist the policies of the federal government from the outset of these impositions. It was the underlying buildup and collection of these responses working in tandem with the broader national happenings like World War Two and the Civil Rights Movement that spawned the Indigenous focused movements appearing in the 70's and 80's and prompted the production of a work like Frank's *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation*.

Displeasure and organized resistance to the actions of non-Indigenous powers has origins spanning several centuries prior to the founding of the nation. Limiting the scope of these reactions to the post-Civil War era, the Indigenous history that follows is reduced from its original range covering several centuries into just over a century and half. Although the time period in focus is shortened, the events that occurred and the diversified reactions from the Indigenous community within this period are far too intricate to address individually within one project. To the best of my capabilities, I attempt to provide as detailed a description of these policies, tribal responses and their subsequent effects on the Indigenous community. However, I also acknowledge that at times I sacrifice specificity in exchange for a more holistic depiction and that the historical events addressed could be expanded upon much more comprehensively.

Balancing between providing enough background information to elucidate the relationship between repeated federal attempts to dictate the development of tribes socially, economically and politically to the eventual production of Frank's book, I have attempted to analyze all relevant events that occurred in between and highlight their contributions to inducing this progression.

Another limitation that I have encountered with this subject is how to properly phrase the experiences of the Native American community in a way that encapsulates the general trends and attitudes of this demographic without being excessively simplistic. While these tribes share elements of similarities in their customs, culture and histories, to suggest that there exists one “Native American experience” within the context of the history of the United States, is to disregard the specificities that define these unique and separate communities. Remaining cognizant of this fact, at times throughout the chapter I hesitantly imply the existence of such a concept, particularly when reflecting on the experiences of individuals belonging to different tribes and framing their responses to their circumstances within the context of wider American society. Conceding that this approach and use of language consolidates the individual histories of these tribes into a succinct and mutually uniform narrative, I accept these restrictions and sparingly appeal to this broad idea because it is the best approach available to convey the collective Indigenous reactions and responses to national policies of integration and assimilation. Moreover, with the rise of pan-Indian movements in the latter half of the 20th century, the political rhetoric surrounding Indigenous subjects has created a fluid definition of what constitutes the Indian community. The efforts to present an image of solidarity amongst the various tribes through the reclamation of what had previously been considered an ignorant American homogenization, the idea of there being one “Indian” has led to the embracement of this concept in certain circles and within certain contexts. Given that the focus of the thesis is primarily on Stand Watie and his fellow Cherokee Confederates, the response to these federal policies is predominantly examined within members of the Cherokee community. However, as suggested above, isolating the Cherokee response is impossible when taking into consideration the collaboration that occurred intertribally that gave rise to the Red Power Movement and the

Native American Literary Renaissance. Therefore, when I use terminology that is suggestive of this unified and at times homogenous Indigenous response, I do not dismiss the individuality of these tribes but am using the best language available to capture the general attitudes of this demographic identifiable in their writings and other expressions of thought (within this specific context).

With these preconditions laid out, the development of an Indigenous-backed resistance to federal policies and the corresponding response from this community to broader national events can be explored. While these processes were set in motion from the first stages of contact between Indigenous communities and European colonists, this chapter looks at the post-Civil War effects of these policies and the tribal responses to their implementation. As such, beginning this examination with the consequences of Cherokee Confederate involvement in the immediate aftermath of the war is a logical place to start. Following the war's conclusion, the federal government convened with the various delegations comprised of tribal officials to negotiate the new relationships that these Indigenous nations would have with the rest of the United States. Termed the "Reconstruction Treaties of 1866", the treaties were designed to allow the federal government the ability to revise the previously established conditions of Indigenous tribes who had been in alliance with the Confederacy on matters that had been determined in pre-war agreements. Claiming that the tribes forfeited their rights, annuities and land claims under the old treaties when they entered agreements with the Confederacy, the federal government proposed new terms that were considerably more favorable on their end¹⁵⁷. Finalized in July and August of 1866, the new treaties declared that all the tribes who signed in agreement were required to

¹⁵⁷ "Reconstruction Treaties," Oklahoma Historical Society, accessed April 2nd, 2021, <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=RE001>.

abolish slavery, grant freedmen (former slaves belonging to Indigenous individuals) tribal rights and concede sizable portions of land to be put forth for sale¹⁵⁸.

Within the context of this chapter, the Reconstruction Treaties of 1866 are important for two main reasons. The first is that the treaties granted the federal government unprecedented authority over intratribal affairs. The political autonomy of Indigenous tribes had always been an issue of contention, with pre-war court rulings being split indecisively on the matter. In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, the Supreme Court ruled that the Cherokees did not constitute a separate nation and therefore lacked jurisdiction to hear the claims of an Indian nation against the state in which it resided¹⁵⁹. Four years later in *Worcester v. Georgia*, the Court took a different stance on the issue ruling that the Cherokee Nation was indeed a separate political entity that could not be regulated by the state and that only the federal government had authority to regulate the use of Indian land¹⁶⁰. The oscillating judicial understanding of tribal sovereignty within the United States in the pre-war era is reflective of the complexities surrounding the issue and attest to the fact that these political boundaries were constantly being negotiated and revised. Overall, this judicial back and forth points to the idea that Indigenous nations exercised the ability to discuss the terms of their existence within the wider American nation and indicates that they retained strong, if not complete, autonomy at times prior to the Civil War. The Reconstruction Treaties of 1866 are considered to be some of the most detrimental concessions ever to be signed with the federal government because it forced tribes to recognize the authority of the president of the United States over issues that were previously considered within the jurisdiction of individual

¹⁵⁸ Oklahoma Historical Society, "Reconstruction Treaties".

¹⁵⁹ "Cherokee Nation v. Georgia," Federal Judicial Center, accessed March 14th, 2021, <https://www.fjc.gov/history/timeline/cherokee-nation-v-georgia>.

Under Article III of the Constitution, the judicial power of the United States is extended to cases between a state and foreign nations.

¹⁶⁰ Federal Judicial Center, "Cherokee Nation v. Georgia".

tribes; marking a period of increased governmental effort to end tribal sovereignty and bring these populations under complete congressional control¹⁶¹. For example, Article 5 of the treaty signed between the federal government and the Cherokee Nation stated “the Cherokees residing in such district shall enjoy all the rights and privileges of other Cherokees who may elect to settle in said districts... and shall hold the same rights and privileges... and if such police regulations or rules be adopted which, in the opinion of the President, bear oppressively on any citizen of the nation, he may suspend the same”¹⁶². Under this article, the President’s authority is explicitly declared to supersede that of the Cherokee over the tribal issues of citizenship which were managed within the tribe before the war. Other articles relevant to this discussion over the ramifications of Cherokee involvement in the war include Article 7, which created a federal court in Indian territory with jurisdiction over any disputes involving the aforementioned individuals outlined in Article 5¹⁶³, and Articles 17 and 20 which conceded land and dictated that land could be made available for surveying and allotment when the Cherokee National Council requested it. The latter of these three articles is especially pertinent to the process of tracing the Indigenous responses to policies of assimilation in that it acted as the entry point by which the federal government could introduce legislature targeting land allotment, like the Dawes Act, which simultaneously served as measures of protracted integration.

The second reason behind the significance of these treaties is a byproduct of the first, that being the continued relevance of the issues addressed in the stipulations of the treaty, namely the status of freedmen as citizens within the Cherokee Nation. Article 9 of the treaty asserted that “all freedmen who have been liberated by voluntary act of their former owners or by law, as well

¹⁶¹ Christopher B. Bean, “Who Defines a Nation? Reconstruction in Indian Territory” in *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory*, ed. Bradley Clampitt (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 110.

¹⁶² Robert Conley, *Cherokee Thoughts Honest and Uncensored* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 30.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 31.

as all free colored persons who were in the country at the commencement of the rebellion, and are now residents therein, or who may return within six months, and their descendants, shall have all the rights of native Cherokees: Provided, That owners of slaves so emancipated in the Cherokee Nation shall never receive any compensation or pay for the slaves so emancipated”¹⁶⁴ with Article 4 adding that “All Cherokees and freed persons who were formerly slaves to any Cherokee, and all free negroes not having been such slaves, who resided in the Cherokee Nation prior to June first, eighteen hundred and sixty-one... shall have the right to settle in and occupy the Canadian district southwest of the Arkansas River... which will include a quantity of land equal to one hundred and sixty acres for each person”¹⁶⁵. Arguments of morality aside, with these conditions, the Cherokee Nation was forced to grant former slaves’ citizenship and give tribal land to them for their personal usage. This oversight by the federal government did not exist to this extent before the war but given the Cherokee Nation’s position in its aftermath as a defeated opponent, it no longer exercised the same capability to negotiate and was compelled to comply. As the leader of the Cherokee faction that actively advocated for involvement in the war alongside the Confederacy, Stand Watie is inevitably an individual whose name is entered into the discussion around the lasting repercussions of the conflict on the Cherokee Nation. Considering the Freedmen Controversy to be more appropriate to this lasting debate concerning the legacy of Watie, I reserve further discussion of the topic for the end of the chapter where the issues of memory and the modern position of the Cherokee nation are given more attention.

Fueling the initiative behind legislation designed to impose policies of assimilation was the desire to resume the expansion of white society and by extension, definitively resolve the

¹⁶⁴ “Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties,” Oklahoma State Government Printing Office, accessed April 10th, 2021, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100630013134/http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/VOL2/treaties/che0942.htm#mn18>.

¹⁶⁵ Oklahoma State Government Printing Office, “Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties”.

“Indian Problem”. The most notorious of these policies, the General Allotment Act, known better by its alternative name the Dawes Act, is remembered today for its assimilationist aims, with some scholars considering it to be a modified form of cultural genocide. Passed in 1887, the Dawes Act regulated land rights on tribal territories within the United States also conceding more authority to the president on matters previously managed intra-tribally¹⁶⁶. Through a policy of forced assimilation via the restructuring of tribal conceptions of land ownership and the direct targeting of agrarian principles central to Indigenous communities, the act ensured that the issues attributed to the presence of the Indigenous communities in regions considered to be white spaces was resolved regardless of the reaction by the targeted demographic. Under the guise of promoting “civility” and property-related prosperity within the Indigenous community, the Dawes Act allowed the federal government to allot community lands to individual households thus forcibly imposing the concept of individual land ownership onto these communities. Accompanying the act was the clause that any of the land that remained after the individual allotments were assigned to each household would be made available for sale¹⁶⁷. Legislators in support of the act contended that by forcing individual ownership of land onto Indigenous individuals through allotment that in time they would acquire the habits and tendencies needed for assimilation into white culture.¹⁶⁸

The Dawes Act had not been the first act passed by Congress to incorporate the concept of allotment but it was the first to include the Indigenous nations referred to as the Five Civilized tribes. As one of the tribes to exist within this denomination, the Cherokee were exempt from previous federal acts to impose allotment like the Peoria-Miami bill and the Coke bill but were

¹⁶⁶ Conley, *Cherokee Thoughts Honest and Uncensored*, 29.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 193.

¹⁶⁸ Leonard A. Carlson, “The Dawes Act and the Decline of Indian Farming” *The Journal of Economic History* 38, no.1, (March, 1978): 274-276, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2119331.pdf>.

one of the primary tribes to be targeted when the Dawes Act was being created by legislators¹⁶⁹. From the outset of the federal government's plans to enact legislature designed to force the Cherokee to accept allotment, members of the Cherokee Nation displayed strong resistance. Aware that the federal government understood the factional strife between the "mixed-bloods" and "full-bloods" and attempted to instigate these pre-existing divisions by offering favorable conditions to individuals in accordance to blood-quantum laws¹⁷⁰, delegates and leaders within the Cherokee actively worked to reassure its members that the position of the Cherokee in meetings with the federal government firmly remained against allotment. Leaders of the Cherokee understood that if any form of productive opposition to policies of assimilation and allotment were to be organized, it would take a collective and unified effort from the entire Nation and could not afford to be torn apart by the same racial issues that threatened to destroy the tribe in years past. To put an end to claims that "mixed-bloods" opposed allotment to keep the "full-blood" community in conditions of poverty and acted out of their own self-interest, delegates (who were predominantly of mixed descent) persuaded the National Council to enact a joint resolution with the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs at the Cherokee Nation's capital in Tahlequah¹⁷¹. While the Dawes Act would eventually be passed despite these efforts, the measures of solidarity displayed across the Cherokee community illustrates the willingness amongst members of the tribe to temporarily cast aside differences to present an image of resistance to the federal government's impositions.

¹⁶⁹ Tom Holm, "Indian Lobbyists: Cherokee Opposition to the Allotment of Tribal Lands," *American Indian Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (1979): 115-34, accessed April 23, 2021. doi:10.2307/1183752.

¹⁷⁰ Sandy Grande, *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought*, (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 142.

¹⁷¹ Holm, "Indian Lobbyists," 120.

Although the Dawes Act resulted in the loss of millions of acres of ancestral lands held by various tribes across the nation, the cultures of these Indigenous communities remained intact. The preservation of a strong Indigenous identity in spite of the societal pressure to assimilate can be attributed to several outstanding factors, the most influential of which being the conscious efforts taken by members of these tribes to protect their customs. While the actions of Cherokee leaders highlighted in the previous paragraph are consequential to locating the various forms of resistance that occurred throughout the historical timeline, it approaches the topic from a top-down view. Consequently, the effects of these policies and how they were imagined within the community in regards to identity, are strictly interpreted through the words and actions of delegates. Responses from individuals of various social rank that belonged to the Cherokee community and not just the delegates elected to speak on their behalf are equally significant and aid in the process by giving clear accounts of how these policies played out at the base level and the reactions from the civilian population. Primarily expressed within writing, the general themes evinced from the works of Cherokee individuals exposed to policies of assimilation during these periods of federal oversight are the desires to preserve tribal culture and reclaim full political sovereignty.

One example of such a work is the book *Historical Sketches of the Cherokee: Together with some of their Customs, Traditions and Superstitions* by female author Wahnenuhi. Published in 1889, Wahnenuhi undoubtedly recognized the threat to Cherokee culture that the Dawes Act (which had been passed two years prior) posed and her work can be viewed as an act of resistance to these measures of assimilation. Including myths of creation, legends surrounding evil spirits and brief histories of various points throughout Cherokee history, *Historical Sketches of the Cherokee* introduces stories significant to the traditions of the tribe. Wahnenuhi's project

is important within the context of tracing the Cherokee response to policies of assimilation for a multitude of reasons. The first is that as a third generation Cherokee of mixed descent¹⁷², Wahnenuhi's racial lineage had already dictated that her identity and life experiences would be influenced substantially by the generational effects of policies of assimilation. Thinking broadly of the Indigenous populations impacted by the Dawes Act, it is typical to assign to these individuals characteristics that mirror the tropes dominant within the national discourse surrounding Native Americans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Associated with this demographic are conceptions of primitiveness that evoke images supporting an absence of civility: the painted face Indian donning traditional headdresses or the primordial villages of teepees scattered throughout the vast countryside. These depictions of the Indigenous communities impacted by assimilationist policies dominate the public imagination, creating a severely limited scope that consigns the entirety of the Native American population to these stereotypical portrayals. The populations of Indigenous individuals who conformed to these generalizations existed and were undeniably affected by federal policies but conceptualizing the entirety of the population in this way disregards the centuries of intermixing between the Indigenous tribes and white society, treating Native Americans as an isolated group instead of acknowledging their interconnectedness to the rest of the nation. Where Wahnenuhi's work becomes increasingly helpful is in providing the historical evidence to demonstrate the proactive drive to preserve Cherokee culture and history from a figure who was part of the Cherokee community but existed outside the archetypal picture assigned to the Indigenous individual.

¹⁷² Wahnenuhi, "Together with Some of their Customs, Traditions, and Superstitions," in *The Wahnenuhi Manuscript: Historical Sketches of the Cherokees*, ed. Jack Federick Kilpatrick (Smithsonian Institution, 1889), [Bulletin \(si.edu\)](#), 179.

Born into the planter class of racially mixed Cherokee society, Wahnenuhi was raised under similar conditions to affluent members of white society. Baptized in the Evangelical faith and speaking English as her first language¹⁷³, her background would seem to indicate that the customs of the Cherokee had been lost upon her and others with similar familial histories. Therefore, the amount of knowledge that she would have needed to possess to compile such an extensive project as well as the decision to even begin its construction, suggests that the desire to preserve Cherokee traditions was to an extent mutual amongst both the racially homogenous and multi-racial factions of the Cherokee. Contrary to the idea that racially-mixed Indigenous individuals would accept assimilation given the presence and adoption of “white” customs within their own lives, Wahnenuhi’s work demonstrates that Indigenous identity at times superseded the aspiration to ingratiate oneself with the rest of mainstream society through assimilation. By recording these traditions and histories in writing, Wahnenuhi ensured that the customs that she considered to be culturally significant would be preserved for future generations who would be exposed for longer durations to the assimilationist policies being enacted. While some individuals both racially mixed or not would inevitably abandon traditional Indigenous culture in favor of more nationally acceptable customs that could potentially improve economic, social or political status, the effort to minimize the deleterious influence of assimilation on Indigenous culture was present and acted as a means of expressing resistance to the erasure of tribal history, customs and sovereignty.

Another early 20th century Cherokee author whose work can be used as an avenue to explore the various forms that Indigenous responses to federal policies took is that of John Oskison. Born during the Reconstruction Era in Oklahoma to a white father and one-quarter

¹⁷³ Wahnenuhi, “Together with Some of their Customs, Traditions and Superstitions,” 180.

Cherokee mother¹⁷⁴, Oskison's life fell in line with what some historians have dubbed "the new Indian"; that being the generation of Indigenous individuals to arise during federal periods of imposed assimilation who welcomed the policies and used the benefits tied to their adoption to obtain higher education, financial wealth and elevated social standing.¹⁷⁵ Graduating from Stanford University in 1898 and pursuing graduate work at Harvard shortly thereafter, Oskison's pursuits in higher education coupled with his unorthodox writing that fell outside the realm of typical Indigenous material being produced by his contemporaries, has led to critics marking him as an assimilationist. Claiming that Oskison rarely wrote on Indigenous subjects and that when he did, he promoted the belief that the "Indian problem" ¹⁷⁶would disappear according to the natural laws of social evolution, these individuals contest that his writing ran counter to the ongoing struggle over the preservation of Indigenous identity and history. Owing the interpretation of his writing in this way to the direct reading of his work, Oskison's projects are much more nuanced than they are given credit for and in fact defends tribal sovereignty albeit in a less detectable manner than other Indigenous authors at the time.

The main criticism of Oskison's writing is that he aided in attempts to replace the Indigenous identity with one that was Euro-American, rejecting his own Cherokee heritage in the process. Historian Lionel Larre argues against reading Oskison's work in this straightforward manner, contending that he advocated for Indigenous individuals to live alongside other Americans and engage in a mutual exchange and absorption of culture rather than the complete

¹⁷⁴ "John Milton Oskison," Oklahoma Historical Society, accessed April 3rd, 2021, <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=OS008>.

¹⁷⁵ Lionel Larre, "John Milton Oskison and Assimilation," *American Indian Quarterly* 37, no.2 (Spring 2013), 4, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.5250/amerindiquar.37.1-2.0003.pdf?ab_segments=0%252Fbasic_search_gsv2%252Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3A532a90353c198812f2ff4d6b24e4b120.

¹⁷⁶Ibid, 4.

renunciation of Indigenous customs¹⁷⁷. Making note of the distinction between “wanting to make the Indians *like* the European Americans” versus “*transforming* them into the *same*”¹⁷⁸, Larre insists that Oskison’s writing has been unjustly misrepresented by scholars who reject his work because it does not fit within the “assimilate-or-become-extinct narrative”¹⁷⁹. Rather than writing about an idealized past prior to the introduction of federal assimilationist policies, which he never knew, Oskison wrote about what was familiar to him and interpreted the influences of these policies in accordance to this relationship. In his report “A Carlisle Commencement” submitted to *Collier’s Weekly*, Oskison labeled higher education as the gateway by which Native Americans could “take their future into their hands and speak for themselves as Indian individuals and Indian peoples”¹⁸⁰. Larre summarizes the common driving point reiterated in Oskison’s work as his wish to depict how successful Indigenous individuals were at adapting to the social, political and economic circumstances granted that they were given the adequate resources and time frame to adjust¹⁸¹. This adjustment he asserts, was far from a rejection of who they were as Indians and instead maintained that Indigenous individuals should distinguish themselves through their success and not have their ‘Indian identity’ be a factor in how people interacted with them¹⁸².

Oskison’s essay “The New Indian Leadership” also explicitly denounced an approach that rejected Indigenous values, instead calling for the guidance of traditional tribal leaders to help facilitate the process of formulating a balanced system that fused the practices of old and new together. He criticized the intrusive policies of the federal government, arguing that tribal

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 6.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 7.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 4.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 11.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 13.

¹⁸² Larre, “Oskison and Assimilation,” 14.

sovereignty had been unjustly replaced by a paternalistic superintendent who “Was the voice of Washington- one who must be obeyed”¹⁸³ and responsible for “determining what ninety million whites want done with 300,000 Indians”¹⁸⁴. Clearly disproved in the sentiments expressed by Oskison within this essay and his other works, is the erroneous assumption that because his work did not yearn for a pre-assimilationist past that he was in favor of eradicating the Indigenous identity. Oskison pushed strongly for the younger generation of Native Americans to pursue higher education so that they would have the means to reassert their political sovereignty which by extension would enable tribes to determine their own future and preservation. In this regard, Oskison’s “new Indian” was not the same “new Indian” with whom scholars identify with the abandonment of tribal identity and the complete osmosis of Western customs. Oskison’s “new Indian” was an Indigenous individual who actively navigated between the fluid dynamics of identity generated from the intermixing of traditional tribal culture to that of the American mainstream; paying homage to and remaining cognizant of the contributions of their Indigenous forefathers while simultaneously adapting to the realities of living in the modern world and finding ways to preserve Indigeneity via these new circumstances.

The purpose in highlighting Oskison’s work in tandem with Wahnenuhi’s *Historical Sketches of the Cherokee* is to convey the variability in how Indigenous individuals conceptualized and responded to policies of assimilation. There was not one cohesive and uniform response to these federal policies nor did every individual conceptualize their impact and threat to tribal sovereignty and customs in the same way. Whereas Wahnenuhi used her writing to take a defensive stance against what she perceived to be an expungement of Cherokee

¹⁸³ Ibid, 16.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 16.

culture, Oskison considered these policies to be more threatening to the political sovereignty of tribal nations. While different, the stances taken by both individuals were not in conflict with one another and rather should be thought of as existing within the same umbrella of Indigenous resistance and responses to federal policies of assimilation. Moreover, the works of these two authors who explored and reinforced Indigenous identity using markedly different rhetoric, laid the foundation for the types of political writing and activism that was to arise later in the century. Drawing inspiration from both Wahnenuhi's culturally based tactics of preservation and Oskison's politically centered modes of thought, future Indigenous writers would come to understand the issue of reclaiming Indigenous identity and sovereignty as an inseparable task requiring a multi-faceted approach.

Following the Dawes Act, federal policy pertaining to the assimilation of Indigenous populations fluctuated between periods dedicated to the enhancement of tribal autonomy and other periods designed to have the federal government completely subsume tribal nations under their legislative control. In the 1930's under the Roosevelt administration, the federal government attempted to restore elements of tribal sovereignty and Indigenous culture lost under assimilationist policies like that of the Dawes Act. Termed the "Indian New Deal", the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 reversed allotment and provided provisions to help bolster the Indigenous economy¹⁸⁵. While the commissioner of the act, John Collier, envisioned the act as providing a means to remove the federal government completely from Indigenous affairs apart from receiving minor funds to establish tribal governments, when the final version of the act was passed it was barely recognizable from Collier's initial draft¹⁸⁶. The efficacy of the act is a topic

¹⁸⁵ "Indian Reorganization Act," Colorado Encyclopedia, accessed April 23rd, 2021, [Indian Reorganization Act \(Indian New Deal\) | Articles | Colorado Encyclopedia](#).

¹⁸⁶ Colorado Encyclopedia, "Indian Reorganization Act".

of contention amongst scholars today but at the very least, it reflected a desire within the government to slow the processes of assimilation which dominated federal policy concerning Indigenous populations just a decade prior. Conversely, the 1940's and 50's saw a reversal in federal aims, instead pursuing a policy of termination. Under House Resolution No. 108, Congress announced its intentions to free tribes from federal supervision and control, allowing tribal lands to be opened for sale and having Indigenous individuals be subject to the same laws as the rest of the American populace¹⁸⁷. On paper, this act appeared to be beneficial to the cause of tribal sovereignty but in practice served as another channel through which the federal government could exert its control over Indigenous populations.

This "termination period" was met with considerable backlash from the Indigenous community. Motivated by the activism and change brought on through the Civil Rights Movement and anti-war protests over American involvement in Vietnam, Indigenous individuals from across the nation began to organize to voice their desire for change. Rallying under the banner of the phrase "Red Power", Indigenous activist organizations, largely comprised of individuals belonging to the younger generation, sought to reverse the effects of termination and reclaim tribal self-governance. The most notable incidents to occur during this period include the Occupation of Alcatraz, The Trail of Broken Treaties, the Occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Building and the Occupation of Wounded Knee. Signifying a nationwide awareness amongst Indigenous peoples that collective resistance was imperative to inducing change, these events demonstrate the emergence of a pan-Indian identity and the desire amongst this community to be able to determine the parameters surrounding their Indigenous position within

¹⁸⁷ Dean J Kotlowski, "Alcatraz, Wounded Knee, and Beyond: The Nixon and Ford Administrations Respond to Native American Protest." *Pacific Historical Review* 72, no. 2, 2003, doi:10.1525/phr.2003.72.2.201, 208.

the country. Furthermore, these efforts pushed Native American issues to the forefront of American politics and demanded that Indigenous voices be heard and recognized.

The influence of the Red Power Movement manifests itself in the motivations behind the creation of Kenny Arthur Frank's work in multiple ways with one of the more discernable aspects being the choice of subject matter. It does not seem to be a coincidence that Frank chose to write a biography on Watie, a figure belonging to a historically oppressed minority who was unquestionably problematic yet simultaneously captivating, during an era characterized by its prominence of leaders who fit this same description. While I could only hypothesize as to exactly how individuals living during this period who read *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation* or Franks himself conceptualized the parallels between contemporary figures dominant in the political realm and Stand Watie, I would not consider it to be too far of a reach to assume that these comparisons were being considered. Figures like Ho Chi Minh or Ronald Reagan, who themselves were tied to controversial incidents like the Vietnam War or Watergate Scandal respectively, were so prevalent in the American consciousness that finding their historical parallels must have been something worth exploring during this period.

Moreover, the core principles behind Red Power and the sentiments displayed by its supporters would have likely been etched into the mind of Franks while he was constructing the book, leading to the writing found within it to be more or less in line with some of these beliefs. The Red Power attitudes of a general mistrust of government officials and elected tribal leaders¹⁸⁸ would have resonated with Franks who depicts Watie as the 19th century embodiment of Red Power doctrine. Portraying Watie as an individual who brought the Cherokee Nation into

¹⁸⁸ Kotlowski, "Wounded Knee and Beyond", 208.

the conflict because of the repeated ill-treatment of his people under federal government control, Franks appeals to these beliefs by espousing the same criticisms in his assessment of the United States government and Confederacy's handling of the Cherokee Nation. The drive to bring attention to a figure who he considered to be one of the key figures in the push to retain tribal sovereignty is clear in Franks writing and attests the influence of these Native American activist campaigns on the production of his work. It should not be forgotten that these issues, and the activism that arose in response to them, existed for decades and that the efforts of early Native American activists helped facilitate this process towards change. These collective and pan-Indian campaigns, the creation of Kenny Arthur Franks work, the resurgence in the interest in Indigenous history; all of these owe their existence to the efforts of Indigenous individuals who came before and had provided the opportunity for these types of avenues to be explored.

Throughout this thesis, the idea that Mabel Anderson's work solidified the type of research and presentation of material on Watie that future historians would adopt has been soundly reinforced. Deconstructed in the preceding chapter, Cunningham's work serves as the optimal example of Anderson's influence on the field as his book contains the similar degrees of subjectivity and identifiable bias. This inclination by Anderson, Cunningham and other authors within the field in the pre-Renaissance era to insert their personal beliefs into their writing led to the creation of projects that were severely limited by the overwhelming omnipresence of the author's ideologies. Regardless of how accurate to the historical record the information presented in these works were, the stylistic tendencies of these authors act as a detriment to the overall reception of the work. Transitioning over to Kenny Arthur Frank's *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation*, what differentiates it from its predecessors and justifies its standing as the most comprehensive biography constructed on Watie, is not only the material included but the

presentation of said material. Absent from Frank's work is the domineering voice of the author that is attached to Anderson's and Cunningham's books and the influence of their personal sentiments on the writing. This is not to say that the book does not put forth a constructed narrative, which is certainly does, but that relative to every other biography to be dedicated solely to Watie it is the least partisan and is noticeably detached from the Lost Cause myth that contaminated the works of Anderson and Cunningham. Expanding on the research conducted by both of these authors, Franks dives further into Watie's life and into uncharted territory within his work, discussing the consequences of Watie's actions on the Cherokee Nation and their fragile position following the end of the war.

Unlike Anderson or Cunningham who included within their projects forewords that provided personal information regarding their upbringing and racial identity, Franks did not appear to have considered it necessary to do the same in this specific work or any of his other projects for that matter. Consequently, there is limited information that exists in regards to Franks personal background such as his racial identity or whether he belonged to the Indigenous community. What can be gleaned from the material that exists is that Franks was an established writer, publishing an extensive number of books and journal articles covering various topics scattered throughout American history¹⁸⁹. Obtaining his undergraduate degree at Central State University (renamed the University of Central Oklahoma in 1971) and his masters at Oklahoma State University¹⁹⁰, Franks went on to write his dissertation to obtain his doctorate of philosophy at Oklahoma State University¹⁹¹. Interestingly, *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee*

¹⁸⁹ Some of Kenny Franks other works include *Citizen Soldiers: Oklahoma's National Guard*, *Pawnee Pride: A History of Pawnee County*, *Early Louisiana and Arkansas Oil*, *A Passion for Equality: The Life of Jimmy Stewart* to name a few

¹⁹⁰ Kenny Arthur Franks, "Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation," (PhD diss., Oklahoma State University, 1973), 1.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 1.

Nation, is a revised version of Franks dissertation with slight modifications made to the language as well as the removal of the “Formative Years” chapter. Conforming to the standard blueprint of a well-researched work conducted by a reputable historian, Frank’s book marks a sharp contrast in the presentation of material on Watie that is made evident in his tone and language.

Attributable to the impact of the previously covered efforts to reclaim Indigeneity by Native American activists, this momentous shift in the literature produced on Watie signifies the ongoing change occurring within the field of Cherokee Confederate history and the discourse surrounding its memory.

If Frank’s work is in fact a departure from the subjective style of writing that defined previous books centered on Watie, where do these differences appear in the writing and the overall design of the book? The first deviation, that being the language and the way that the book is written, is glaringly apparent when compared to Anderson’s or Cunningham’s work. Without the context of having read either Anderson’s or Cunningham’s work, the presentation of material in Frank’s book would seem unremarkable as the structure of the book conforms to the conventions of a typical historical work. From the language being used to the information that is included, there is nothing within the work that stands out as being overtly conjectural or opinionated. It is the absence of these markers that were so abundant within the preceding works that communicates the profound change that occurred in the national discourse surrounding Native American history in the two decades between Cunningham’s book and Frank’s.

The dissimilarities between Frank’s work to that of Cunningham’s and Anderson’s is evident throughout the book but the most tangible source of evidence attesting to this appears in the way the topic of slavery is approached and discussed. Whereas Cunningham berates the actions of Northern abolitionists and ascribes to them the characteristics of lunacy and fanaticism

and Anderson omits the practice from her work entirely, Franks appropriately depicts the political, economic and social components affixed to slavery and its interrelation with the outbreak of the war. Describing the causes of the conflict, Franks states “Controversy over sectionalism and slavery had divided the United States by the late 1850’s”¹⁹². Compared to Cunningham’s claim that the war had been the result of “the frenzied abolitionists whipping up an emotional malice against the Southerners supporting States Rights and refusing to bow before the outcries of fanatics”¹⁹³ or Anderson’s indirect and intentionally terse insistence that men fighting for the Confederacy “were firm believers in States’ Rights”¹⁹⁴, it becomes increasingly clear how disparate the three works are despite existing under the same banner of portraying Cherokee Confederate involvement during the Civil War. From Cunningham’s statements, it is unmistakable which side he holds accountable for the conflict as his pro-Confederate leanings seep into his writing through the language he uses and his failure to explicitly name slavery as the foremost cause of the war. Moreover, his inclusion of the words “frenzied” and “emotional malice” when paired with his other aspersions of those in the North found throughout his book creates an overwhelmingly anti-Union narrative that distracts from material on Watie. Although much milder in tone, Anderson’s statements serve a similar purpose in promoting Southern conceptions of the war by neglecting to address the indispensability of slavery to the Confederacy and its direct hand in precipitating the start of the war.

Franks distances himself from this Lost Cause rhetoric by directly addressing the historical significance of slavery to both the Cherokee Nation and the Confederacy, sparing no details in the process. He covers the rising influence of the organization the Knights of the

¹⁹² Franks, *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation*, 115.

¹⁹³ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie’s Confederate Indians*, 42.

¹⁹⁴ Anderson, *The Life of General Stand Watie*, 14.

Golden Circle, comprised primarily of Watie's followers and racially mixed Cherokees who opposed abolitionism¹⁹⁵, on pushing the Cherokee nation out of a position of neutrality and towards the side of the Confederacy. Moreover, he gives the Cherokee Nation's decision to align itself with the Confederacy a degree of complexity that while accurate to the historical record, had not been present in the works of Anderson and Cunningham. Franks explains the conflicting attitudes surrounding involvement in the war amongst the leaders of the Cherokee by offering the viewpoints of both Chief Ross and Stand Watie alongside the Confederacy's reasons for pursuing an alliance. Communicating Ross's inhibitions, he states "aware that the Cherokees were slaveholders, the leaders of the Confederate States recognized the importance of the Indian Territory as a buffer zone on their Western border. Accordingly, Southern officials openly urged Chief Ross to commit the tribe to an alliance with the South. However, Ross adamantly refused to involve the Cherokees in what he viewed as a white man's war"¹⁹⁶. In contrast to Ross's reluctance to enter the war, Franks describes Watie's proactive approach to the prospect of war as being a means to preserve the practice of slavery and to prevent the increasing intra-tribal power of Ross's faction¹⁹⁷. Organizing the historical material in this manner and displaying it without the heavy influence of personal sentiments, Franks puts forth a narrative that gives a straightforward chronicle of the circumstances related to alliances at the outset of the war.

He differs sharply from his predecessors in that he does not equate the motivations of the Cherokee Nation to that of the Confederacy nor he does not attempt to construct a mutually indistinguishable identity that could be assigned to both groups. Franks reasserts the agency of the Cherokee Nation by displaying the motivations on behalf of the Confederacy in securing an

¹⁹⁵ Franks, *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation*, 114.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 115.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 117.

alliance with Native American tribes as being entirely pragmatic. Compared to Anderson who insisted that the two powers were intertwined in their fates and that the “Cherokee were imbued with the same idea of local government that other Southerner’s possessed”¹⁹⁸ and were “Southerner’s by birth and breeding”¹⁹⁹ or Cunningham who claimed an alliance with the South was sought after by Watie because it offered “freedom for the South from the oppressive threats of the Black Republicans and Kansan abolitionist cut-throats”²⁰⁰, it is evident that Franks was disinterested in using the historical material to create a false uniformity between the ideologies and motivations of both powers. These previous appeals to a similitude existing between the Confederacy and Cherokee acted as a way to reproduce the idea that like the Cherokee, the Confederacy was appropriately responding to aggressions from the North intent on destroying Southern culture and the Southern economy. Franks does not allow this Lost Cause tenet to seep into his work and eliminates any opportunity for its possible entry by using historical documents and writings to show that the leaders of the Confederacy were driven by self-serving factors and that the Cherokee nation possessed its own agency to make the decisions concerning involvement in the war.

Furthermore, Franks gives the impression that both the Confederacy and the Union were responsible for the calamities that befell the Cherokee. For instance, when summarizing the treaty signed between the Cherokee Nation and the Confederacy on October 1st, 1861, Franks comments “In general, the agreement merely replaced the authority of the United States with that of the Confederacy”²⁰¹. Franks subtle interjection is easily overlooked but his words speak volumes as to the type of narrative that he is attempting to portray with his work. By suggesting

¹⁹⁸ Anderson, *The Life of General Stand Watie*, 14.

¹⁹⁹ Anderson, *The Life of General Stand Watie*, 14.

²⁰⁰ Cunningham, *General Stand Watie’s Confederate Indians*, 40.

²⁰¹ Franks, *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation*, 119.

that the Confederacy took over the position previously occupied by the United States government within the relationship between these powers and the Cherokee, Franks is stating that like the federal government, the Confederacy sought to exploit their Cherokee allies. Repeatedly referring the conflict as a “white man’s war”, Franks considers both the Confederacy and the Union to be aggressors attempting to coerce the surrounding Indigenous actors to their own benefit. Throughout his work there is a detectable attempt to showcase the wrongdoings inflicted upon the Cherokee from both sides. He mentions the lack of provisions given to the Cherokee and unlike Cunningham does not try to relate the issue back to the villainy of the North, instead using historical material to show that Confederate officials were responsible for seizing supplies designated for Watie’s battalion²⁰². Similarly, he justifiably blames the federal government for the suffering endured by the Cherokee following the signing of the Treaty of New Echota. Describing their plight, he states that the Cherokee “were uprooted from their homes at gun point, herded into stockades, and forced to endure the Trail of Tears”²⁰³. Dedicating an entire chapter to the interactions between the federal government and the Treaty Party leading up to the signing of the Treaty of New Echota, Franks does not attempt to hide who is at fault for these hardships. Portraying the Watie and his fellow Treaty Party signees as being essentially coerced into agreeing to the concessions to prevent further loss of tribal land, Franks is as critical of the federal government as he is of the Confederacy. This is a welcomed change of pace within the field as his writing does not contain any appeals to the myth of the Lost Cause.

Speaking from the viewpoint of historical accuracy, the acknowledgement of slavery as being a principal cause of the war and its discussion within this context is fundamental to

²⁰² Ibid, 158.

²⁰³ Ibid, 212.

producing a comprehensive narrative but what is its immediate relevance to the field of research concerning Watie and Cherokee Confederates? In more precise terms, what does the presence of this kind of information within a work on Watie indicate about the growth within the subject and the increased attention placed on Indigenous history? One of the most important revelations ascertained from this shift in thematic trends is the exponential growth and interest within academia in the subject of Stand Watie and Cherokee involvement during the Civil War. Attracting more than just amateur researchers or those with familial attachments to the subjects involved, the field expanded to include reputable historians and well-established scholars of American and Indigenous history. Taken for granted in most fields of historical research is the idea that the leading scholars, those whose works are regarded as being the pinnacle of material gathered on the topic, are historians by profession and have the academic resume to support their elevated status. While this holds true in topics that receive ample attention, it is not a liberty afforded to overlooked subjects like Stand Watie. In contrast to both Anderson and Cunningham who were not historians by profession and engaged with Watie to advance detectable agendas, Franks was a prolific researcher who authored and coauthored dozens of books and journal articles on Indigenous subjects and worked extensively alongside respected historians and professors in the field. Therefore, it is of note when the work of a historian like Franks is inserted into the discourse centered around Stand Watie and his contributions to the field validate the idea of advancement in the study of Cherokee history.

Like Cunningham, Franks discusses the prevalence of slavery within the Cherokee Nation and Stand Watie's personal affiliations to the practice. Where the two works differ is in Frank's objective stance on the issue and his adherence to the historical record when discussing the influence of slavery on the Cherokee Nation and on the outbreak of the war itself. Slavery in

Cunningham's work is treated as an afterthought; as an inconsequential product of the considerably larger issue of states' rights and uncontrolled Northern aggression. Frank's work is clear of these Lost Cause beliefs, thoroughly addressing the magnitude of slavery's influence in effectuating hostilities. He writes as a historian and comprehensively covers the issue of slavery and its relation to the subjects in his work because unlike his predecessors he is in fact a historian. In contradistinction to Cunningham who incorporated information on slavery solely to establish credibility or Anderson who wholly excluded any mention of the institution to prevent the possible tarnishing of Watie's legacy, Franks is able to position the practice within its historical relevance to the subjects in focus in a clear and impartial manner. Apart from the fact that as a historian Franks would be unwilling to sacrifice academic integrity and accuracy to promote his own work, his writing can engage with slavery with this unprecedented transparency because its success and reception was not contingent on trying to please the Southern audiences indoctrinated in Lost Cause ideology. The audience that he was writing for and would be releasing his work to would have been well aware of the Indigenous efforts to reclaim tribal sovereignty and reassert themselves into the national spotlight that had been occurring at the time of the book's publication. As a result of this nationwide exposure to Native American affairs, the market that Franks distributed his work to in 1973 was fundamentally different than Anderson's consumers in 1915 or even Cunningham's targeted demographic just a decade prior. Believing there to be a demand for a work like this to be produced on Frank's behalf reasonably suggests that previously neglected facets of Indigenous history were being rediscovered by wider society and that there was no longer a need to cater to the interests of a white, predominantly Southern audience, that only cared for these subjects in relation to their benefit to upholding the legacy of the Confederacy.

I offer generous praise of Franks work within my writing and believe that his unprecedented approach to the topic merits such acclamation. With that being said, I do not wish for my approval of his work to be misconstrued as me implying that his book is by any means perfect or that it does not contain Franks own subdued biases. One of the main criticisms amongst scholars when reviewing the book is that Franks is too sympathetic to Watie and that he presents a narrative that largely favors the Treaty Party. Professor Emerita at the University of North Carolina and leading scholar on Cherokee history Theda Purdue finds fault with Frank's work in that "he would have us see Ross as the villain and Watie as the hero"²⁰⁴ but ultimately states that "this biography is far superior to its predecessors, Mabel Washbourne Anderson's *Life of General Stand Watie* and Frank Cunningham's *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians*. It is broader in scope and more thoroughly researched than either and consequently should be welcomed by students of Cherokee history"²⁰⁵. In a similar vein, historian Jack Campisi states that "the author provides a straightforward account of the agony of the Cherokee Nation from the perspective of the pro-removal faction"²⁰⁶ but reaching the same conclusion as Purdue offering "for all of this, Franks has provided a valuable addition to the literature of the Oklahoma Cherokee"²⁰⁷. These reviews are both fair assessments of Franks book and two that I largely agree with. Franks is noticeably biased towards Watie and while he does include Watie's shortcomings, the overall impression left upon the reader is one that holds him in high regard. Additionally, he could have placed more attention on the actions of John Ross in his chapter

²⁰⁴ Theda Purdue, "Untitled" review of *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation*, by Kenny Arthur Franks, *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 59, no. 2, 1980, 237.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 237.

²⁰⁶ Jack Campisi, "Untitled" review of *Stand Watie and the Agony of the Cherokee Nation*, by Kenny Arthur Franks, *American Indian Quarterly* 8, no. 2, 1984, 159.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 159.

focusing on the Treaty of New Echota, leaving substantial room for improvement in his depiction of the Ross faction.

Admittedly, it is therefore understandable how my usage of the word “objective” as it pertains to Frank’s work can be misleading. I argue that his work was the most objective biography to be constructed on Watie to date while simultaneously agreeing with the claim that he was partial to Watie. This is a valid criticism of my analysis and I acknowledge that my phrasing of the style of work that Franks produced has room for improvement. However, capturing the complexities of where his work stands in the study of a topic as complicated as Stand Watie using one neatly defined and agreeable definition of what it means to be “subjective” or “objective” is infeasible given the underlying relationships attached to these subjects and the political associations that come along with these connections. For Watie, his memory is interconnected with the wider legacies of the Treaty Party, the Confederacy, the myth of the Lost Cause and the Cherokee Nation; all of which one must remain cognizant of when undertaking a project dedicated to his life. While some of these connections overlap in ways that are conducive to the creation of a historically accurate and inclusive narrative, like his Treaty Party background and position as a Cherokee leader, others come in conflict with one another, creating skewed depictions of his identity. All of these markers that can be used to characterize Watie create a space wherein bias is inescapable and personal sentiments operate strongly. Therefore, when I use the term “objective” to classify the general style of writing that Franks work falls under, I make the claim based on the biography’s existence within a highly subjective field. Franks was objective in his portrayal of Watie and Cherokee involvement during the Civil War within the context of broader national ideologies, like that of the Lost Cause, which could have tainted his writing as it did with his predecessors (but did not). Where he becomes

subjective is in his portrayal of Watie's character, revealing his personal admiration for the man and his attempt to elevate him as Anderson did sans Lost Cause rhetoric. Franks demonstrates a transparent desire to remain more objective than predecessors and while his work is not "objective" in the sense that it is not entirely without prejudice, it is appreciably less subjective than other similar works and thus can be considered the *most* objective biography on Watie.

Whether a separation from Lost Cause ideology can serve as a qualification for the classification of a biography on Watie being generally "objective" is dependent on how stringently one defines the term. Given the extreme subjectivity displayed in the works of his peers and the implicit biases embedded into the field, it is reasonable to characterize his work in such a way.

Completing the analytical examination of Franks work and identifying both its improvements and room for growth within the field of research surrounding biographical material on Watie, the question of where to go from here surfaces. Specifically, how has the field progressed since the publication of this work and what else can be done to ensure that Watie is positioned within the proper historical context and given adequate recognition? Addressing the latter question first, an appropriate start would be to avoid the reiteration of the victimhood narrative that is cast upon the history of Native Americans. While Frank's work abandoned the myth of the Lost Cause and should be commended for doing so, he essentially traded one problematic narrative for another. With his victimization-centered portrayal of Watie, Franks lends credence to the erroneous depiction of Indigenous tribes as being mere victims of circumstance; unable to determine their own course of action and unable to prevent the elimination of their ancestral lands, people and culture. In her book *Reconstructing the Native American South*, Melanie Benson Taylor speaks to the prevalence of this characterization of Indigenous peoples stating "the misuses of Native archetypes actually increase in frequency

among late-twentieth-century writers, partly in keeping with the New Age popularity of such images and stereotypes sweeping the nation in the 1970's and after"²⁰⁸. Drawing on the work of Ojibwe author David Treuer, Benson also discusses the concept of "exoticized foreknowledge" explaining it as the "phenomena by which Native American tropes and culture have become ready signifiers instantly legible to readers already fully loaded with ideas, images, and notions about Indian experience" which ultimately leads to audiences "simply getting the stereotype, dutifully acknowledging the national tragedy and guilt, and assuming no further interpretation can be necessary or useful"²⁰⁹. The thematic trend outlined by Benson in these quotes is representative of the type of thinking that underlies Frank's work and is precisely the issue that can be addressed to further the material on Watie.

In order to advance the field and work towards the construction of a truly comprehensive, inclusive, objective and historically accurate biography dedicated solely to Watie, the reinforcement of these nationally entrenched conceptions of the Native American experience must be adjusted to reassert agency and sovereignty while simultaneously giving appropriate attention to the historical ill-treatment of Indigenous tribes. While I would not consider this to be an uphill battle, it is by no means an easy undertaking as it involves reverting tropes consistently reproduced in popular media and entertainment. Not to distract from the scholastic discussion of these narratives by offering a personal anecdote, I will abstain from engaging in a full telling of my own encounters with this concept. I will however, mention that my parents have told me about the lasting impressions that the "crying Indian" commercial had on them during their youth. Airing on Earth Day in 1971 as part of the "Keep America Beautiful" campaign,²¹⁰ the

²⁰⁸ Melanie Benson Taylor, *Reconstructing the Native South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 35.

²⁰⁹ Taylor, *Reconstructing the Native South*, 35.

²¹⁰ Jennifer K. Ladino, *Reclaiming Nostalgia: Longing for Nature in American Literature* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 119.

PSA featured actor Iron Eyes Cody²¹¹ in traditional Native American garb paddling downstream a river as the water around him slowly becomes filled with garbage and other debris from human pollution²¹². After looking down at the trash, Cody's eyes slowly look back to meet the camera, as a single tear runs down his cheek²¹³. Playing on the stereotype of Native Americans as "uber-environmentalists" conjoined with nature²¹⁴ and appealing to the victimhood narrative of loss thrust upon this demographic, the PSA was designed to evoke feelings of guilt amongst audiences who were expected to understand their role in furthering the suffering of Indigenous peoples by polluting the land that they had protected for so long. My father, who immigrated to the United States from Hong Kong when he was four and my mother, who was born and raised in Brooklyn's Chinatown, were the individuals who were telling me about the profound impacts of this PSA on themselves and their surrounding community. As first generation Chinese-Americans (my father was technically not a first-generation but pedanticism aside) growing up in predominantly Asian communities in the 80's, the initial presumption would not be that they were well versed in Indigenous history or culture. However, as their responses indicate, the tropes surrounding Native Americans and their victimhood status seeped into the national discourse pertaining to their portrayal and thus became cemented into the minds of people existing far outside the realm of tribal affairs. My point in bringing this up is to emphasize Benson's assertion that Native American tropes, namely those that eliminate Indigenous agency and confine Native identity to preset boundaries, are so ingrained into the mainstream American consciousness that modifying these preconceptions will require tremendous effort and time.

²¹¹ The son of Italian American immigrants, Iron Eyes Cody adopted an Indigenous identity claiming to be of Cherokee and Cree descent.

²¹² Ladino, *Reclaiming Nostalgia*, 119.

²¹³ *Ibid*, 119.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*, 122.

This of course, is not to detract from the work that has been published following Frank's project and the research that continues to be conducted today. Mentioned briefly in a preceding paragraph within this chapter, Wilfred Knight's *Red Fox: Stand Watie and Confederate Indian Nations during the Civil War Years in Indian Territory* was another biography published on Watie. Released in 1988, Knight's work is chronologically the last piece within the historiography of biographies focusing exclusively on Watie and his regiment. However, given its lack of research and the fact that unlike Franks, Knight was a former businessman who began the work as a side project²¹⁵, it is useful to acknowledge its existence while still viewing Frank's work as the highest quality source of biographies on Watie. While using this work as a scholarly source might not be advised on account of its limited historical citations, its very construction is significant in that it shows an increased interest of Watie amongst varied audiences. Another work that demonstrates this revival in interest is Keith Harold's *Rifles for Watie*. Taking the format of a historical fiction novel, *Rifles for Watie* offers a different style of material on Stand Watie than the works discussed thus far. Published in 1958 and winning the Newbery Award for distinguished contribution to children's literature, the novel introduces Watie as a heroic side character with whom the main character, young Jefferson Davis Busey, finds himself serving under²¹⁶. While the work was published over twenty years prior to Frank's book, it did not experience nearly the same national exposure until after the release of the second edition in 1987. The popularity of the novel and its structure as a piece of children's literature, points in the direction of a slow but sure growth in the interest of Indigenous subjects within the nation. Other works to include sections focused on Watie but not dedicated solely to his life include Gregory

²¹⁵ Alwyn, Barr, "Untitled" review of *Red Fox: Stand Watie and the Confederate Indian Nations during the Civil War Years in Indian Territory* by Wilfred Knight, *The Journal of Southern History* 56, no. 1, 1990: 126.

²¹⁶ Helen W. Painter, "Rifles for Watie--A Novel of the Civil War," review of *Rifles for Watie* by Harold Keith, *Elementary English* 38, no. 5, 1961, 288.

Smither's *The Cherokee Diaspora: An Indigenous History of Migration, Resettlement and Identity*²¹⁷, Brad Agnew's article *Our Doom as a Nation is Sealed: The Five Nations in the Civil War*²¹⁸ and Tiya Miles *Ties that Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom*²¹⁹ to list a few. Showing how much the field of research around Watie has developed, these works connect Watie and his actions to broader national happenings and concepts surrounding race and the politics of memory. As such, it is important to ensure that the time is taken to compile narratives that position Stand Watie within his proper historical context to provide future generations with the most accurate and inclusive information possible and judging from the work of these authors, the field is trending in this direction.

²¹⁷ Gregory Smithers, *The Cherokee Diaspora: An Indigenous History of Migration, Resettlement, and Identity* (Yale University Press, 2015).

²¹⁸ Brad Agnew, "Our Doom as a Nation Is Sealed: The Five Nations in the Civil War," In *the Civil War and Reconstruction in Indian Territory*, ed. by Clappitt Bradley, 64-87. Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 2015.

²¹⁹ Tiya Miles, *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (University of California Press, 2015).

Conclusion

Stand Watie's influence, both on the Cherokee Nation and the United States in its entirety, has carried over into the modern day with the effects of his actions and legacy manifesting itself in within elements of the current political maelstrom. Of all the prominent figures, Indigenous or other, to appear within the historical record, why Watie? What was it about this Cherokee individual that has allowed his memory and legacy to be transformed into a battleground over political thought? Where do we see the reverberations stemming from his actions or the incessant manipulations of his legacy in the modern era? Given what seems to be an unmendable divide between individuals belonging to the political left or right, is it futile to pursue efforts to produce a nationally inclusive and historically accurate record not just in regards to Watie but concerning all of American history?

Tackling the first question, the cause for Watie's perpetual relevancy can be traced to the two fundamental elements that characterize his legacy: his status as the last Confederate general to surrender and his role in bringing the Cherokee Nation into the Civil War. Purposefully used as a headline in Anderson's *The Life of General Stand Watie: The Only Brigadier General of the Confederate Army and the Last General to Surrender*, from the very outset of publications on Watie, there was a realization from author's that his unique reputation could be marketed as a selling point. For those indoctrinated in the myth of the Lost Cause, Watie's appeal is in his potential to reinforce the reader with the idea that the Southern war effort had been one of heroism and valor, with Watie's supposed staunch defense of these principles being directed to as evidence in support of these claims. As a result, those on the moderate to far right of the American political spectrum have clung to his memory, or more accurately put, *their* version of

his memory, using his legacy to uphold their beliefs surrounding the politics of memory, specifically in regards to the preservation of Confederate monuments.

Far from fading into the backdrop of national politics, these issues have reached mainstream attention due in large part to their extensive coverage by news outlets. Most notably, the removal of the monument dedicated to Stand Watie and other Confederate soldiers that once stood in the center of the Cherokee Capitol Square in the Nation's capital of Tahlequah, OK in 2020, garnered substantial press coverage. The monument, which was the same monument that Mabel Anderson commended in her work, was constructed by the Daughters of the Confederacy and placed on Cherokee grounds in 1915. Like any other Confederate monument that has been removed or relocated in recent years, the claim that "history is being erased" surfaced immediately. Supporters of this belief are quick to denounce the actions taken to remove Confederate monuments and consider it to be a crusade against the preservation of history: ironically claiming that history is being erased in favor of a more socially acceptable narrative. The irony underlying this way of thinking and the issue with this rhetoric is that the history being promoted through these monuments is precisely what its supporters are fighting against; a revision of history. The myths of the Lost Cause that spurred the construction of these monuments *are* a revision of history, and blatant ones at that. The problem is in the willingness of individuals to willfully ignore the historical circumstances behind the creation of these monuments when it is convenient to them and the narrative they are attempting to reproduce. Chalking the desire behind wanting to remove Confederate monuments from public spaces to conformist attitudes deriving from "political correctness" culture, those fighting to keep these physical reminders of the Confederacy on public grounds seem to be disinterested in learning about the historical connotations behind not only the construction of these monuments but their

purpose in being publicly displayed. There is an acute sense of longing for a recent past, where one could say or do what they wished in a society where “not everything was offensive to everyone”. This of course presumes that these monuments had not always been a source of contention; that it was only the “softness” of the recent generation that produced such a strong opposition to their public display.

Furthermore, in this specific case, the appeals to the preservation of history fail to take into consideration how Cherokee individuals conceptualize the presence of the monument on their grounds and why they advocated for its removal in the first place. Summarizing the general sentiments of the Cherokee community, Principal Chief Chuck Hoskins Jr. said of the monument “It’s difficult to tell our story when we have non-Indian-driven monuments talking about the Confederacy, when they greet people as they come into our Cherokee Nation museum. It was time for a change”²²⁰ further adding “there are some painful references on these monuments, and I think we live in a time when we need to be mindful of the unity, we have here on the courthouse in Capitol Square”²²¹. Hoskins words communicate the historical tendency for non-Indigenous individuals to tell the Indigenous “story as they see fit”²²², creating a version of Cherokee history that misconstrues the motives, goals and desires of the historical subjects involved. Understanding how this misrepresentation of their history is directly attributable to the workings of non-Indigenous groups, the Cherokee community has taken an active role in reclaiming the ability to present their own history in a manner that they believe appropriately preserves their Nation’s identity and culture.

²²⁰ “Cherokee Nation Removes Two Confederate Monuments from Capitol Square,” Cherokee Phoenix, accessed April 20th, 2021, https://www.cherokeephoenix.org/news/cherokee-nation-removes-2-confederate-monuments-from-capitol-square/article_dec30c2c-52c2-5ff1-a837-c56158ff2f96.html.

²²¹ Cherokee Phoenix, “Cherokee Nation Removes Two Confederate Monuments from Capitol Square”.

²²² Cherokee Phoenix, “Cherokee Nation Removes Two Confederate Monuments from Capitol Square”.

The second element related to Watie's legacy that places him directly at the center of both tribal and national politics is his role as the leader of the pro-Confederate faction of the Cherokee. Due to his distinction in this regard, Watie is held responsible, particularly by those affiliated with the Ross party, for the devastation experienced by the Cherokee under the Reconstruction Treaties. Claiming that if Watie had not agitated for war, the position of the Cherokee would have remained neutral and thus the disastrous consequences of the Reconstruction Treaties would never have occurred²²³. While opinions on Watie's role in causing the suffering of the Cherokee Nation in the aftermath of the Civil War varies significantly, the fact remains that Cherokee participation in the war directly led to the passage of the Reconstruction Treaties, the effects of which are still present today. Especially pertinent to current politics is the controversy surrounding the Cherokee freedmen. Mentioned earlier in Chapter Three, Article 9 of the Reconstruction Treaty granted citizenship status to all former slaves and their descendants of the Cherokee so long that they were "now residents therein" or returned to Cherokee lands "within six months from the 19th day of July, 1866"²²⁴. The Cherokee adopted a strict interpretation of this policy, denying citizenship to those who did not return to Cherokee lands before the listed date. While the issue has resurfaced numerous times over the last century and a half, it appeared to reach a resolution in 2007 when, after the urging of freedman activist groups, the Cherokee Nation called for a vote of Cherokee citizens over who could be a Cherokee citizen²²⁵. The result of the vote was to restrict tribal citizenship to descendants of Indians listed by blood on the Dawes Roll. Therefore, black individuals with Cherokee blood who could identify an ancestor within the Dawes Roll could be classified as a

²²³ Robert Conley, *Cherokee Thoughts Honest and Uncensored*, 29.

²²⁴ Conley, *Cherokee Thoughts Honest and Uncensored*, 138.

²²⁵ Conley, *Cherokee Thoughts Honest and Uncensored*, 141.

citizen but those who descended from former slaves who did not appear on the roll as freedmen could not. Declaring the issue not to be a question of race but of self-governance, prominent leaders of the Cherokee Nation hailed the results of the 2007 vote to be a victory for tribal sovereignty with former Chief Chad Smith asserting “It has everything to do with who can be an Indian in an Indian tribe. The right to define tribal membership lies at the core of tribal identity and self-governance”²²⁶. The results of this vote would be overruled in 2017 however, as after undergoing another judicial review, the court declared that “the Cherokee Nation can continue to define itself as it sees fit... but must do so equally and evenhandedly with respect to native Cherokees and the descendants of Cherokee Freedmen”²²⁷.

While a discussion centered around the ramifications of the ruling is necessary and is fundamental to the narrative of Cherokee history, I will leave its examination for another, much more qualified individual to elaborate on. What the freedmen controversy shows however, and why it is especially relevant to the memory of Stand Watie, is that these types of issues, ones that seem to be part of a distant and unrelated past, are still present in modern society and are continually being negotiated even if they remain hidden from the public eye. Often times, the mainstream consciousness is directed away from issues that do not reach national attention and only when they are covered by media are they given any thoughtful consideration. As seen with the efforts of Indigenous individuals throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the actions required to produce change go largely unrecognized but are there nonetheless. Furthermore, the freedmen controversy demonstrates that rarely are issues neatly defined or clear cut and that the

²²⁶ “The Cherokee Freedmen Debate,” Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, accessed April 5th, 2021, https://americanindian.si.edu/exhibitions/indivisible/chokeee_freedmen.html.

²²⁷ Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, “The Cherokee Freedmen Debate”.

entanglement of these complex, and at times conflicting, identities do not create clear sides of right or wrong.

Answering the last of the questions proposed earlier, I cannot say that I am entirely sure if common ground in regards to the construction of an accurate and inclusive national narrative can ever be achieved or what this chronicle would look like. What I can say and what I have learned from writing this thesis, is that progress and change all begin somewhere and it takes a conscious effort by a group of individuals to create the spark that precipitates any considerable change. When Mabel Anderson produced her biography in 1915, there was no guarantee that another biography on Watie would ever follow. While she hoped that her book would reach wider audiences and inspire others to conduct further research on Watie and Cherokee history, she could not guarantee that her work would generate such a response. In spite of the potential for the book to fade into obscurity and the memory of Stand Watie to die with it, Anderson published the work and the rest, as the saying goes, is history. The point in noting this is to highlight the fact that if Anderson had simply accepted that Stand Watie too far removed from the public's interest and believed it to be pointless to attempt to elevate his position, the current field of research surrounding his memory and the history of Cherokee Confederates would be considerably different or possibly non-existent. Starting the reexamination and discussion of misrepresented Indigenous history provides at the very least the opportunity for the revisal of the current historical narrative and the reintroduction of Indigenous actors who were instrumental to the development of this nation. With the publications of books utilizing the proper rhetoric to discuss Indigenous subjects, this process seems to be well underway and hopefully continues to advance for years to come.

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