

faced an invasion of commercial hunters and an assault on native game. General Matthew Arbuckle reported two thousand hunters systematically killing fur-bearing animals in order to sell their peltries.

The white challenge to the Indian way of thinking and living was a challenge to all Indian people. The great oneness of Oklahoma Indian tribes is spiritual. The unity — plains, woodland, prairie — is not so readily apparent in material life and culture but emerges clearly at a philosophical and spiritual level. Peoples as seemingly diverse as the Cheyennes and the Cherokees reflect Indian attitudes in their perception of the earth, the supernatural and the association of man's spirit and the spirits of animals.

The Cheyenne Wolf Soldiers, the last of the seven great Cheyenne soldier societies to be organized, served as a defensive and protective association. The Cheyenne soldier-society warrior, draped in the skin of a wolf, sought protective power and acquired strength from the animal. Richard West, the Cheyenne artist, has captured this animal warrior as a lawman in his paintings and sculptures of the Wolf Soldier. The Cherokees too had many wolf songs and medicine formulas as well as customs and legends about the wolf. Even after the Cherokees had adopted their highly acclaimed Anglo-based laws and constitution and established peace officers or light-horsemen modeled after frontier sheriffs, they turned to the animal powers of the spirit world. In the 1960s, Jack and Anna Kilpatrick came upon the following ritualistic formula calling upon the spirit of the wolves to aid and protect Cherokee peace officers:

Now! Little Wolves! Very quickly all of you bark
so that nothing can climb over.
They cross your Path at the treetops.
Now! Big Wolves! They just come trailing you.
Now! "They will corner you right now in the
Wolf places," I will be saying!

This spiritual man-animal relationship is described by Barry Holstun Lopez in his highly acclaimed study *Of Wolves and Men* (1978). "It is hard for the Western mind to grasp," he explains, "and take seriously the notion that an Indian at times could *be* wolf, could actually participate in the animal's spirit, but this is what happened. It wasn't being *like* a wolf it was having the mind set: Wolf."

Despite such shared values and perspectives Oklahoma's tribes were often hostile, either at war with each other or, at least, regularly engaged in skirmishes among themselves. For example, the Osages and the Cherokees fought intermittently for much of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Upon many occasions, such as the spring of 1829, large tribal groups of Oklahoma Indians united to raid hostile Indians from across the Texas border. Oklahoma tribes often attempted to unite and work together to resolve their mutual difficulties through "international councils" held in the Indian Territory. In June 1843 several thousand tribesmen from eighteen tribes met for four weeks to seek the common end of "improvement and security" and "better understanding of the changes taking place about them." Eight interpreters were required to translate the eloquent speeches and great debates which resulted in agreements such as a pact on extradition of prisoners from other tribal territories.

The continued military presence at Oklahoma forts provides evidence of frontier conflicts and of the threats to Indian safety from border ruffians, other tribes, and internal tribal wars. Warring elements in Plains tribes raided back and forth across the border areas, taking white and Mexican captives and pursuing what Indians called "war — the beloved occupation." The Kiowa calendar records dozens of skirmishes and raids. It noted in 1837, "Cheyennes massacred on upper Red River"; in 1838-39, "Battle with Arapahoes"; in 1841, "Pawnee massacred on the South Canadian"; in 1852, "Allied tribes defeated by Pawnees"; in 1855-56, "Raid into Mexico"; in 1856-57, "Tipis seized by Cheyennes"; and in 1858-59, "Expedition against the Utes."

No Indian war was more difficult for United States policy makers or more brutal for the participants than an Indian civil war such as the Cherokee conflict that followed the Trail of Tears. The brutal assassinations of Major Ridge, Elias Boudinot, and John Ridge emasculated the leadership of the anti-Ross Cherokees and launched a bloody guerrilla war that lasted from 1839 until at least 1846 and erupted again in the factionalism of the American Civil War. Oklahoma Indian tribes allied with both the North and the South, with some tribes such as the Creeks bitterly divided and at war among themselves. When the Cherokee leader Stand Watie became the last Confederate general to surrender, the Indian Territory lay in devastation. It was a burnt-over land, a minor battlefield in a white man's war, destined to become a major target for the white man's postwar expansionist dreams.