



**The Chickasaw Nation**  
**Secondary Student Curriculum**  
**Unit 2: Lesson 2**  
*The Civil War*

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# Lesson 2

## The Civil War

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#### Unit Overview

Chokma (Hello),

Thank you for your interest in the Chickasaw Nation Student Curriculum. We are pleased to offer this curriculum that explores our deep history, culture and traditions. Started in 2010 with the development of the Chickasaw Cultural Center, the curricula are designed to inform and educate individuals about the dynamic history of our Chickasaw leaders, monumental events and culture. Chickasaw historians, researchers, archaeologists and other educators, as well as tribal elders, have worked tirelessly to develop this curriculum to share our story.

We are excited to offer Unit 2. Each lesson focuses on a specific event and/or individual throughout the Chickasaw Nation's history and is complete with its own lesson plan, reading material, discussion questions, student activity and reference list for convenience. All provided materials have been reviewed and approved by the Chickasaw Nation Department of Culture & Humanities and the Chickasaw Nation Department of Communications & Community Development. To further assist, we have worked with Oklahoma educators to outline the Oklahoma Academic Standards\* each lesson addresses.

The Chickasaw Nation would like to thank you for your commitment and support. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Joe Thomas, special assistant to the secretary of the Department of Culture & Humanities, at (580) 436-7258 or [joe.thomas@chickasaw.net](mailto:joe.thomas@chickasaw.net).

*\*The following Oklahoma Academic Standards, as outlined in the Oklahoma State Department of Education's 2012 Social Studies guide, are to be used only as a basic guide. Other standards may be applicable that could be based on a teacher's own interpretation of the lesson material or ability/need to make a conceptual connection:*

#### Grade 9-12

- ✓ **OKLAHOMA HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT: *The Foundation, Formation, and Transformation of Oklahoma*, Content Standard 2, Item4:** Summarize the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction Treaties on Native American peoples, territories, and tribal sovereignty.

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#### Lesson Plan

#### BENCHMARKS

*The following Oklahoma Academic Standards listed for each lesson are to be used only as a basic guide. Other standards may be applicable that could be based on a teacher's own interpretation of the lesson material or ability/need to make a conceptual connection.*

- ✓ **OKLAHOMA HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT: *The Foundation, Formation, and Transformation of Oklahoma, Content Standard 2, Item4.***

Set (5 min.)

*Note: The following is a suggested script for you, the teacher, to reference while discussing this lesson plan. Based on a number of factors, such as your students' ages or maturity levels, you may choose to deviate from the script as you see fit.*

“How many of you have ever seen a movie or read a book about the Civil War? *(Take a couple of minutes to talk about what they may have seen or read.)* Did you ever think Oklahoma, which was Indian Territory during the time of the Civil War, played a part in the Civil War? Did you know that the Indian tribes here in Oklahoma were part of the Civil War? We don't hear too much about the Indian Territory during the Civil War, but it played a big role in the Civil War. *(Ask why it might have played a big part in the war and for our state.)*

“The Five Civilized Tribes here in Oklahoma each had large areas of land that had been granted to them to settle on when they were removed from their homelands. For the Chickasaws this was all part of the promises of the Treaty of Pontotoc and the Treaty of Doaksville. The Chickasaws purchased and paid for land and resources from the Choctaw Nation. The Chickasaw Nation chose to side with the Confederate cause and was later punished by the United States government for their participation in the war. A part of this punishment included the taking of some of the Chickasaw land and opening it up to white settlement.

“As we learn about the roll the Chickasaws had in the Civil War. I want each of you to think about the impact the war had on the tribe and our state. How might it have been different if the Chickasaws had sided with the Union? *(If they had sided with the*

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*Union the lands of the Chickasaw Nation wouldn't have been opened to white settlement.)”*

#### OBJECTIVES

1. The student will analyze the reading by answering discussion questions.
2. The student will defend his/her answers by answering follow-up questions.
3. The student will compose and submit a short paragraph.

#### READING PROCEDURE (20 min.)

1. The teacher will hand out the included text to students, and read the first two paragraphs aloud. The students will then read the rest of the text aloud.
2. The teacher will lead the students in a discussion of some or all of the included questions, asking the students follow-ups as appropriate. The students will answer the questions, and are encouraged to pose questions of their own.

*If the student is uncomfortable with reading aloud, the teacher may wish to consider reading the entire passage themselves to model good reading habits. For students who already display great comfort with oral reading, the teacher may wish to have the students read the entire passage. Teachers should feel free to stop the reading and pose knowledge questions about the text—e.g., asking students to define words or explain more. Similarly, the discussion questions may be answered in discussion, as intended, or the teacher may use them to make a free-response worksheet for the students.*

#### MATERIALS

1. Reading text (provided)
2. Discussion questions (provided)

#### EVALUATION

The teacher will grade students based on some combination of the following: their oral reading, their participation in discussion and any comments they make that the teacher considers being particularly insightful. These grades may be evaluative or for completion, at the teacher's discretion.

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#### ACTIVITY PROCEDURE (20 min.)

1. The teacher will introduce the activity to the students: “Imagine that you are a Chickasaw living during the Civil War. What thoughts might be going through your mind during that time? How do you think Chickasaws felt about the North fighting the South? Write a paragraph responding to these questions. Feel free to elaborate on your thoughts and opinions.”
2. The teacher will supervise the students as they complete a paragraph in response to the prompt.

#### MATERIALS

1. Pen/Pencil
2. Paper

#### EVALUATION

The teacher may grade the students’ paragraphs based on the following: their accuracy, their participation, their completeness and any comments they make that the teacher considers being particularly insightful. These grades may be evaluative or for completion, at the teacher’s discretion.

#### CLOSURE (5 min.)

“So, what have we learned today? What role did the Chickasaws play in the Civil War? How did their siding with the Confederacy cause impact them in the future? *(Pause for brief answers to questions.)* We see that the Chickasaw Nation, after feeling abandoned by the United States government, chose the side of the Confederate States of America during the Civil War. During the war, the Confederate States of America did little to fulfill their promises of protection and aid to the Chickasaw people. At the end of the war, the Chickasaw Nation was once again forced to ‘start over,’ and with fewer resources than they had before they were removed from their homelands, along with the new punishments that the United States was going to be forcing upon them.”

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#### Reference Material

#### ENTERING THE WAR



**Figure 1: U.S. Col. William Weer seated here swearing in Indian volunteers.**

The 1830s and the removal of the Chickasaws to their new lands in Indian Territory was a difficult time of transition for the tribe. Settling in a new land, building homes, working the land and building schools took many years. By 1860, the Chickasaws were beginning to see growth. When members of the Texas Secession Committee came to Indian Territory in April 1861 they saw the tribes “in a rapid state of improvement.”

Chickasaw homes were well built and comfortable, their farms were well cultivated, and they had schools and

churches (Bourland in North Texas & Indian Territory During the Civil War 112). The Chickasaws were later visited by Albert Pike of Arkansas to negotiate a treaty of alliance with the Southern cause. On May 25, 1861, the Chickasaw Nation made a declaration of independence from the United States government and pledged their support for the Confederate States. They were upset with the callous treatment shown to them by the United States government. They had withdrawn the protection of Federal Troops from Fort Washita and from other areas within their country, and by doing so, had left them unprotected from the marauding Plains tribes. They withheld the Chickasaw’s tribal money that was held in trust from the sale of their homelands and disregarded treaty obligations. These things, along with their geographical position, social and domestic institutions and the Chickasaw’s feelings and sympathies, all attached them to their Southern friends (The Chickasaws by Arrell M. Gibson). Little did the Chickasaws know then the toll it would take on their people and their nation. Many men were ready to enter service in the conflict that would come to be known as the Civil War.

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#### CAMP LIFE

Soon after declaring their support for the Confederacy, Chickasaw men volunteered for service. The Chickasaws and Choctaws stood firm in their convictions with the Southern cause, but the Creeks, Seminoles and Cherokees had division within the tribes. This caused many to be literally fighting “brother against brother” as the tribes were split and the men joined opposing sides. Those joining the North went to Kansas and joined the Union’s Colonel William A. Phillips 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Home Guards. The Chickasaws joined with Choctaws under the Confederate General Douglas Hancock Cooper to form the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Chickasaw and Choctaw as part of the cavalry. Additional Chickasaw units were, “the First Chickasaw Infantry Regiment Commanded by Colonel William Hunter, Shecoe’s Chickasaw Battalion of Mounted Volunteers, sometimes called the ‘Chickasaw Battalion,’ commanded by Colonel Martin Shecoe and the First Battalion of Chickasaw Cavalry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lemuel Reynolds” (The Chickasaws 265). Just months after joining the war, the Chickasaw and Choctaw Regiment of Mounted Rifles were involved in their first battle. In November 1861, at the Battle of Round Mountain, they fought Union forces that included a Creek and Seminole unit.

There were a few existing forts in Indian Territory prior to the beginning of the Civil War. These forts were used by the Federal Army to house the soldiers and protect the tribal members from marauding plains Indians. Shortly after the secession of Texas and Arkansas, the Federal Troops moved out and abandoned many of the forts, allowing the Confederates to take over. Fort Washita was the largest of the forts located in the Chickasaw Nation, and this was where many of the Confederate troops were housed. Chickasaw soldiers who served in the army lived in the now closed Chickasaw schools and camps scattered throughout Chickasaw territory. Camp life included living in tents and temporary shelters, which exposed the men to the blowing winds and extreme weather conditions of Oklahoma. The usual things that most men received when they enlisted with the Union or Confederate Armies in other states such as a uniform, rifle, horse, tents and camping supplies were sorely lacking in the Indian Territory. At the beginning of the conflict some supplies were available, but as time wore on a soldier had to furnish these things on his own. The soldiers of Indian Territory were often not seen

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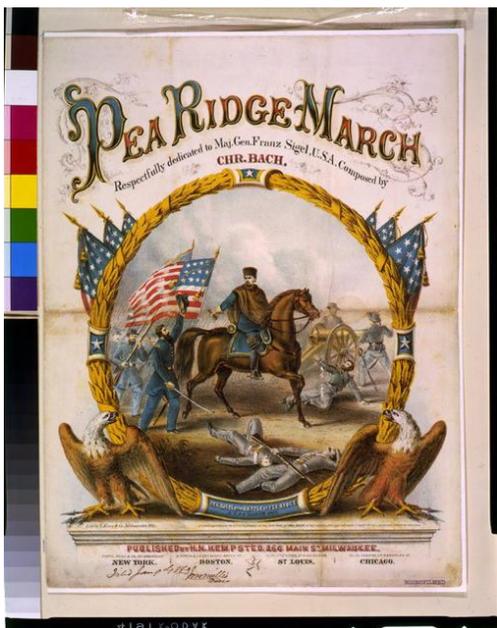
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as important by the Confederate War Department. As the war continued and the Confederates were running low on money, supplies became more difficult to obtain.

#### BATTLES AND SKIRMISHES

The Chickasaw and Choctaw soldiers serving in the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the Mounted Rifles saw numerous battles, including those in and out of Indian Territory. Union Colonel William A. Phillips with his Kansas Federal Troops and Indian Home Guards



**Figure 2: Cover of a Book about the Battle of Pea Ridge**

made many trips into Indian Territory to try and convince the Indian people loyal to the Union to move to Kansas for protection and to run the Confederates out of the territory. These troops were met many times with the forces of Confederate Indian troops. The Confederate Chickasaw and Choctaw Indian troops had shown they were willing and able in battle. They saw action at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, in which Union forces defeated the Confederate troops in a very bloody battle which included 16,000 Confederates and 10,250 Union soldiers. The Union had fewer soldiers, but was dug in and had superior artillery. The Regiment of

Mounted Rifles participated in other battles, such as the battle at Newtonia, Missouri, Honey Springs near present-day Rentiesville in Indian Territory, and the smaller battle at Middle Boggy, Indian Territory.

As the war raged on, the lack of rifles and ammunition in the Confederate Army began to take a toll on the effectiveness of the defense of the territory. The Chickasaw and Choctaw Mounted Rifles had inferior rifles and artillery which was evident in reports and correspondence of the military leaders asking for guns and supplies for their troops. In the early morning hours of February 13, 1864, at a place called Middle Boggy, more than 350 Union soldiers with plenty of rifles, ammunition and two howitzers surprised a camp of 90 men from the Chickasaw and Seminole Battalion under the leadership of

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Captain Adam Nail. The battle ended in about 30 minutes, with 47 of the 90 Confederate soldiers left dead on the field. The Union had no losses.

*“When accurately fired, however, mortars and howitzers were powerful weapons. One Union general recalled a battle near Richmond when the 1<sup>st</sup> Connecticut Artillery had no guns but had three howitzers, which they fired at the Confederate regiment. ‘So Rapid a canister fire was maintained,’ he wrote later, ‘as to repulse the column with severe loss....So demoralized was... (the) command that a lieutenant and 22 enlisted men surrendered rather than attempt to retreat under the fire.’”*

*--The Civil War: Weapons of War*

#### CONDITIONS AT HOME

The war dragged on, and under the constant threat of Union forces attacking them, the Chickasaw people at home began to suffer immensely. With their able-bodied men in the service of the Confederate Army, their women and families at home had to struggle to raise crops on their own. Many men asked for permission to leave for short periods to return home and help plant crops, or they deserted for a short period to go help out at home. This became a problem with the Native soldiers in the Confederate Army. The weather during the war years also proved disastrous to crops. When the crops came in they were often taken by the Union soldiers who constantly raided the area for food and supplies, as well as the Confederate soldiers in need of food for themselves and fodder for their horses. Horses were stolen and used in the service by both armies, leaving families without the ability to plow. In 1864 the Comanche made raids into the Chickasaw settlements and stole what horses and cattle they could find, making times harder for many Chickasaw families.

Game became scarce for families as fighting men also had to hunt game to provide food in the camps, and raiding parties in the territory by both armies stole the guns from the citizens thereby depriving them of a way to hunt. Bedding was taken and given to soldiers living in the tents. Blankets were used for warmth and sheets for bandages. Drought caused the cotton crops to fail and without being able to sell cotton the people had no money. Confederate money began to be worthless as currency causing the cost of supplies go up dramatically. Supply trains heading into the territory were

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often hijacked by Union forces before they arrived forcing the Confederate troops to return to families who had nothing to give. The invading raids of Colonel Phillips Kansas troops tried convincing the Chickasaw men to surrender and stay home and raise crops. When they refused to do so, they were captured or killed if they were met in battle. Men who chose not to enter the war were sometimes killed and their homes burned, leaving their women and children homeless.

Chickasaw Governor Winchester Colbert was barely able to escape capture by the advancing forces of Colonel Phillips after the battle of Middle Boggy. The Union forces rode straight to Governor Colbert's home in hopes of finding him there. When they found he had escaped to Texas just hours before, and that they were unable to catch him,



**Figure 3: Gov. Winchester Colbert**

they torched his home and fields leaving nothing for him to come back to. Colonel Phillips then sent letters written in red ink to each of the leaders of the Five Civilized Tribes in hopes of persuading them to surrender the Confederate cause. Governor Colbert stayed in Texas until the end of the war.

#### TIME TO SURRENDER

By the close of the Civil War, Indian Territory was a land of suffering and desolation. Many Chickasaws with slaves and personal property had to flee to Arkansas or Texas if they had sided with the Confederates, and those siding with the Union had fled to Kansas. Others had no choice but to stay and suffered the consequences of burned out homes, failed crops and near starvation. Those in Indian Territory were often worse off than they had been when they were originally removed. When they were removed from the homelands, many had cattle and a little help from the United States, but now they had nothing. The broke Confederacy had little to give in the way of help even if they chose to. Those lucky enough to still have cattle after the raids of the army often had their cattle stolen by Union Indians. These cattle were driven north and sold in Kansas. The property of the Chickasaws and Choctaws were seen by the Federals as legal contraband, but the private citizens acted as if they had as much a right

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to it as the government did (*The American Indian and the End of the Confederacy* 75). These depredations continued to demoralize the people sick of war and the empty promises made by governments through tribal treaties.

Though May 9, 1865 was officially declared the end of the war, it wasn't until Chickasaw Nation Governor Winchester Colbert, "in surrendering his troops, became the last 'civil authority' of the Confederacy to surrender on July 14, 1865, at Tishomingo Oklahoma" (Bourland A-441). With the end of the war the Chickasaws began the long task of once again rebuilding their lives and nation. The United States government, as penalty for siding with the Confederate States of America, took back some of the money held in trust and decided to open parts of Chickasaw tribal lands to non-native settlement, therefore changing the future of the Chickasaw Nation.

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#### Discussion Questions

1. How do you think the Chickasaw people felt when the United States didn't keep the treaty promises of protection, and support and pulled out of Chickasaw territory?

*Sample Answer: Abandoned, lied to, angry possibly. They were afraid for their future without the protection against the plains tribes and without financial support because the tribal money was held in trust by the government.*

2. How do you think the soldiers felt living in tents or inadequate housing during the winter months?

*Sample Answer: Miserable, cold, possibly wishing they were back at home.*

3. How do you think the soldiers felt without adequate guns and supplies?

*Sample Answer: Inadequate to meet the foe on the battlefield, and that the Confederate Army was lacking in funds, which would not be good for the soldiers and their families if they had put all their trust in the Confederate cause.*

4. What impact did the war have on the families at home?

*Sample Answer: The families had a tough time putting in crops and harvesting them without the men at home. There was also no protection against the Union or Confederate soldiers who came through and wiped them out of food and crops.*

5. Do you think the Chickasaws were happy or sad when the war came to an end, or both?

*Sample Answer: They were both happy and sad. They were happy to see their men back home, so families could be reunited again and crops could be planted, but sad they had lost the war and a way of life that some were used to.*

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#### Reference List

**For more information, see the following sources:**

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