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Mary Jane Warde, *When the Wolf Came: The Civil War and the Indian Territory*. Fayetteville: Univ. of Arkansas Press, 2013. Pp. xi, 404. ISBN 978-1-55728-642-0.

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The American Civil War virtually destroyed the existing Native American communities of the Indian Territory. The survivors of the diaspora (the “Trail of Tears”) from the southeastern United States, who had become successful farmers, merchants, and stock raisers, now watched as the bitter partisan struggle ravaged their lives and livelihoods from the Red River to the Kansas border. For most Americans, the Civil War was a regular military conflict waged by opposing armies, but, as Mary Jane Warde expertly reminds us, for far too many west of the Mississippi, it was only yet another relentless plague inflicted upon indigenous peoples and societies by the growing republic.

Warde’s work continues a resurgence of interest in the Civil War-era experiences of the “five civilized tribes,” but its pan-tribal focus makes it the most definitive work on the subject. It astutely combines accounts of many battles—Honey Springs, Cabin Creek, and Middle Boggy—unfamiliar to most Civil War historians with descriptions of the devastating effects of the war on the home front. *When the Wolf Came* draws on both the voluminous primary sources housed at the Oklahoma Historical Society, where Warde works as a historian, and the standard published accounts of the military campaigns in the Territory. But the author moves beyond the “battles and leaders” and “winners and losers” focus of earlier scholarship to expose the full range of the war’s havoc—the raids, robberies, and murders, as well as the aching hunger and stark terror that dominated everyday life in the Territory. She concludes with a long look at the war’s aftermath from Appomattox to Oklahoma statehood, which was facilitated by the weakening of Indian societies at the hands of railroad companies, rustlers, and “Sooners.”

Had the affected tribes in the Territory been able to align fully with either the North or the South, they might have escaped the worst consequences of living in a contested terrain. But the same cultural fissures that ran through American society as a whole afflicted Indian societies as well. Building on recent scholarship, Warde perceptively analyzes how the issue of slave ownership further divided assimilationist and traditionalist factions in several tribes and led Muscogees (Creeks), Cherokees, and Seminoles to provide soldiers for both armies.² Indian soldiers were as likely to face fellow Indians in combat as white Texans or Kansans, or even freed blacks wearing blue or border ruffians from Missouri or Arkansas in gray. Thus, the war became a rancorous, personal, and bloody internecine affair, as refugee families on both sides were forced into squalid camps where disease and starvation claimed many more lives than combat.

Given the author’s previous biography of a pro-Southern Muscogee³ and the persisting favorable view of Confederate Cherokees, especially Brig. Gen. Stand Watie, in present-day Oklahoma, one might expect a neo-Confederate bias in this book. But Warde carefully and impartially explains why factions chose their sides as they did and demonstrates that each group suffered depredations at the hands of the other. The bitterness of the fighting in the Territory makes it surprising on its face that most Indian nations successfully reconciled in the war’s aftermath. But Warde shows that this was simply another case of the Indian tribes’ triumph over tragedy, as well as of effective cooperation against assimilationist incursions from outside the Territory.

While its stress on the first-person accounts of both soldiers and civilians in the Territory is a novel and most welcome aspect of this study, Warde’s account of military actions is quite conventional and breaks no

1. See, e.g., Christine Schultz White and Benton White, *Now the Wolf Has Come: The Creek Nation in the Civil War* (College Station: Texas A&M U Pr, 1996), and Clarissa Confer, *The Cherokee Nation in the Civil War* (Norman: U Okla Pr, 2007).

2. See Gary Zellar, *African Creeks: Estelveste and the Creek Nation* (Norman: U Okla Pr, 2007).

3. *George Washington Grayson and the Creek Nation, 1843-1920* (Norman: U Okla Pr, 1999).

new ground. An exception is her narrative of the horrific massacre of black soldiers of the First Kansas Colored Infantry at Poison Springs, Arkansas, in 1864, where Confederate soldiers—including Indians—refused offers of surrender and murdered wounded men in cold blood. Warde contends that this outrage reflected not just racial hatred but a desire to avenge earlier atrocities by members of the First Kansas in the Indian Territory (202–3). But the racial argument is hard to dismiss, in view of a similar incident later that year in the Territory near Flat Rock Creek, where Confederate Creeks surprised a haying party protected by men of the First Kansas Colored:

Some black soldiers had hidden in the sluggish creek, its surface partially obscured by willows and lily pads. Only their noses were above water. Grayson wrote that they “were shot and dragged and thrown out on the bank. I confess this was sickening to me, but the men were like wild beasts and I was powerless to stop them from this unnecessary butchery.” The Indian troops found one young white man and asked Grayson if they should kill him, too. Grayson said no, that “it was negroes that we were killing now and not white men.” (210)

Confederate-allied Indians exhibited a remarkable ability to absorb the attitudes of Anglo-Americans in the years between their relocation westward and the Civil War. Sadly, racial animosity was among them.

Warde also clarifies the link between the Civil War and the conquest of the American West in a “Greater Reconstruction” that both bound the nation’s wounds and extended its empire.⁴ The war in the Indian Territory is a crucial episode in that story. While the eastern part of the region suffered under conditions like those in wartime Missouri, tribal entities in the west enjoyed a brief respite from American expansion. The Comanche in particular, whose hegemony had spanned several centuries in the interior of the continent even in the face of European colonization, were able to roll back the frontier hundreds of miles in places, as Federal forces abandoned frontier posts in Texas and Texans did their fighting on the banks of the Rappahannock rather than the Brazos⁵ (227). But, in the years that followed, the original Americans, whether Union-allied Cherokee or members of the Kwahadi band of the Comanche who knew little of the war raging in the east, all came to be confined on shrinking reservations in what was to be Oklahoma. Indeed, Warde’s chronicle of this process in her book’s last chapter shows her comprehensive expertise in Oklahoma history, underscoring how the war accelerated the final consolidation of the American empire west of the Mississippi. Indeed, Federal authorities carved out reservations for the “wild” plains tribes from the land of “civilized” tribes that had included pro-Southern factions. While the book concentrates on the war in what is today Oklahoma, it reveals the larger forces at work in the country in the second half of the nineteenth-century.

When the Wolf Came is a deeply researched and engagingly corrective addition to the sparse and dated existing studies⁶ of a critical period in the history of the Indian Territory; it is especially valuable for its extensive incorporation of the perspectives of those inside rather than outside the Territory. Occupying the intersection between the history of the Civil War and of the American West, it deserves careful reading by military historians interested in irregular warfare and students of the history of the United States generally and Oklahoma in particular.

4. See Elliot West, *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (NY: Oxford U Pr, 2009).

5. See Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale U Pr, 2008).

6. E.g., Angie Debo, *The Road to Disappearance* (Norman: U Okla Pr, 1941), and Steve Cottrell and Andy Thomas, *Civil War in Indian Territory* (Gretna, LA: Pelican, 1995).