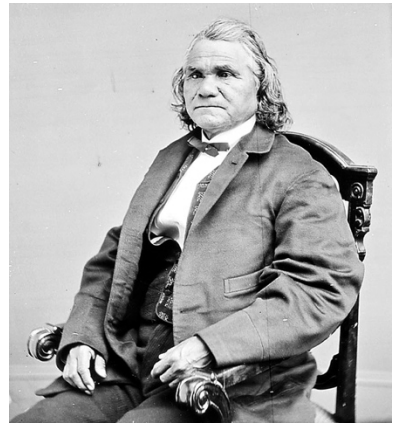
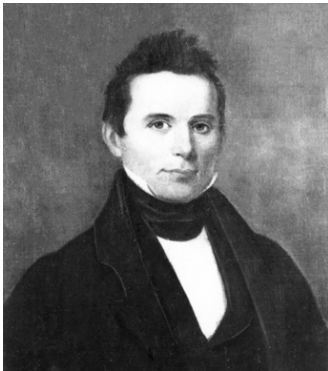


Stand Watie

Stand Watie is the only Native American to attain a general's rank in either army during the American Civil War. On June 23, 1865, two and a half months after General Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House, General Watie (Photo t right) became the last Confederate General to sign a cease fire agreement. In 1837, Watie relocated to the Indian Territory (eastern Oklahoma), before the infamous "Trail of Tears" of 1838. His Cherokee birth name was Degataga, meaning "Stand Firm," making his name, Stand Watie a combination of English and Cherokee. He was baptized into the Moravian Church as Isaac Uwatie. He was also known as Standhope Oowatie and Tawkertawker.



Watie was born in Oothcaloga, Cherokee Nation (near present-day Rome, Georgia) on December 12, 1806. The son of David Uwatie "the ancient one", a full-blooded Cherokee, and Susanna Reese, daughter of a white father and Cherokee mother. Before Stand Watie reached majority, his father was a wealthy planter and slave owner. His brothers were Gallagina "Buck" Uwatie, who changed his name to Elias Boudinot (Photo at left) and Thomas Watie. He also had two sisters, Nancy Pascal (Watie) Wheeler and Elizabeth (Watie) Candy. Watie and his siblings learned to read and write English at the Moravian mission school in Spring Place, Cherokee Nation (now Georgia).



His brother Elias served as editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* newspaper from 1828-1832. This was the first Native American newspaper and Stand Watie occasionally wrote articles.

Gold was discovered in northern Georgia on land owned by the Cherokees in 1828 which brought thousands of white settlers to encroach on Indian land. Federal treaties were meant to protect Indians from actions by the individual states. Georgia ignored the treaty and confiscated most of the Cherokee land. In 1830 Congress passed the Indian Removal Act which called for all the

Indians in the southeast to be relocated west of the Mississippi River. And in 1832 the Georgia militia destroyed the *Cherokee Phoenix* newspaper after it published articles against the removal of the Cherokees.

The Watie brothers realized that removal was inevitable and favored moving to the Indian Territory after they had secured Cherokee rights by treaty before relocating. The *Treaty of New Echota* was signed on December 29, 1835, in New Echota, Georgia by officials of the United States government and representatives of a minority Cherokee political faction, the Treaty Party.

The treaty established terms under which the entire Cherokee Nation traded its territory in the southeast for land in the Indian Territory. Although the treaty was not approved by the Cherokee National Council nor signed by Principal Chief John Ross, it was amended and ratified by the U.S. Senate in March 1836, and became the legal basis for the forcible removal known as the "Trail of Tears." The treaty gave the Indians a two-year grace period, until May of 1838, to make a voluntary move to their new home. As the May 23, 1838, deadline for voluntary removal approached, President Van Buren assigned General Winfield Scott to head the forcible removal operation. The forced removal of an estimated 15,000 Cherokees began and by the time they reached the Indian Territory an estimated 4,000 of them died. Watie made the voluntary move west in 1837, settling in the northeastern corner of the western Cherokee Nation, near Honey Creek

Under Cherokee law, anyone who alienated tribal lands was subject to the death penalty, and in 1839, Watie's co-signers of the New Echota treaty—his brother, Boudinot; his uncle, Major Ridge, and his cousin, John Ridge—were executed. Watie, who barely managed to escape the same fate, would become a prominent figure in Cherokee politics as the surviving member of the Ridge-Watie-Boudinot faction, and a lifelong enemy of principal Cherokee Chief John Ross. He was also a slaveholder and established a successful plantation in Indian Territory.

After moving to Indian Territory, Stand Watie married Sarah Bell on September 18, 1842. Their families had been long-time friends. They had three sons: Saladin, Solon and Cumiska and two daughters: Minnee and Jacqueline. Saladin died while the family was living at Bellvue, Texas (the home of his in-laws the Bells) in 1868, while Solon died during the following year. Both daughters died not long after their father, while Sarah survived until 1883. There were no grandchildren.

In 1842 Watie encountered James Foreman, one of his uncle's assassins and shot him dead. He was tried for murder in Arkansas and acquitted as acting in self-defense, even though Foreman was unarmed. Stand Watie's brother Thomas Watie was also murdered by Ross partisans in 1845. At least 34 politically related murders were committed among the Cherokee in 1845 and 1846.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Watie wasted no time in joining the Confederacy along with a majority of the Cherokee nation, viewing the federal government, not the South, as the Cherokees' principal enemy. In October 1861 he was commissioned as a colonel and raised the first Cherokee regiment of the Confederate Army, the First Cherokee Mounted Rifles, and helped secure control of Indian Territory for the rebels early in the conflict. In December 1861, he was engaged in a battle with some hostile Indians in the Battle of Chusto-Talasa in present day Tulsa County, Oklahoma.

In March 7-8, 1862 his Mounted Rifles would be a participant in the Battle of Pea Ridge aka Elkhorn Tavern near Leetown, northeast of Fayetteville, Arkansas. Watie's troops earned acclaim for capturing a Union battery in the middle of what turned out to be a Confederate defeat. General Albert Pike, in his report of this battle, said: *"My whole command consisted of about 1,000 men, all Indians except one squadron. The enemy opened fire into the woods where we were, the fence in front of us was thrown down, and the Indians charged full in front through the woods and into the open grounds with loud yells, took the battery, fired upon and pursued the enemy retreating through the fenced field on our right, and held the battery, which I afterward had drawn by the Cherokee into the woods."*

Even as he was serving the Confederacy in the Civil War, Watie was elected the principal chief of the Cherokee nation. John Ross, the previous principal chief, had fled to Washington by this time and his group of minority followers refused to recognize Watie.

He was promoted to brigadier general in May 1864. At the end of that year, General Watie's brigade of cavalry consisted of the First Cherokee regiment, a Cherokee battalion, First and Second Creek regiments, a squadron of Creeks, First Osage battalion, and First Seminole battalion.

In June of that year his troops captured the federal steamship J. R. Williams and seized 150 barrels of flour and 16,000 pounds of bacon, which Watie would later say was actually a disadvantage to the command, because a

great portion of the Creek and Seminole soldiers immediately broke off to carry their booty home.

They fought in a number of battles and skirmishes in the Indian Territory, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, and Texas. Watie's force reportedly fought in more battles west of the Mississippi River than any other unit. Watie took part in what is considered to be the greatest (and most famous) Confederate victory in Indian Territory, the Second Battle of Cabin Creek, which took place in what is now Mayes County, Oklahoma, on September 19, 1864. He and General Richard Montgomery Gano led a raid that captured a Federal wagon train and netted approximately \$1 million worth of wagons, mules, commissary supplies, and other needed items. Stand Watie's forces massacred black haycutters at Wagoner, Oklahoma during this raid. Union reports said that Watie's Indian cavalry "killed all the Negroes they could find", including wounded men.

By the end of the war the majority of the Cherokee Nation had abandoned their Confederate loyalty and embraced the Union. General Watie's family and other Confederate Cherokee took refuge in Rusk and Smith counties of east Texas.

On June 23, 1865, at Doaksville in the Choctaw Nation, Watie signed a cease-fire agreement with Union representatives for his command, the First Indian Brigade of the Army of the Trans-Mississippi. He was the last Confederate general in the field to stop fighting. In September 1865, after his demobilization, Watie went to Texas to see his wife Sarah

and to mourn the death of their son, Cumiska, who had died at age 15.

Watie returned to the nation. After the treaty signing, he had gone into exile in the Choctaw Nation. He tried to stay out of politics and rebuild his fortunes. He returned to Honey Creek, where he died on September 9, 1871. He was buried in the old Ridge Cemetery, later called Polson's Cemetery, in what is now Delaware County, Oklahoma, on September 9, 1871.^[3] He was a citizen of the Cherokee Nation.



Stand Watie's Grave and Historical Marker