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WILLIAM PENN ADAIR:
CHEROKEE WARRIOR,
DELEGATE FOR THE PEOPLE

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Walela: Hummingbird was quick and graceful. He made people catch their breath.

Nvdadikani: Crane was modest . . . of all the warriors, he endured the longest on marches (Starr 1988, 57).

With the persistence of Crane and the vitality of Hummingbird, William Penn Adair won the respect of the Cherokee people during a difficult period of transition and hardship. Born in the pre-removal Cherokee Nation in 1830, in what is now called Georgia, Adair's voice of reason wound its way through four decades of Cherokee politics and history.

Like Hummingbird, the handsome and dashing hero of Cherokee lore, Adair was a fine looking man whose "long black hair and handsome face attract(ed) attention in every crowd" (Tuggle 1973, 138). Cherokee historian Emmett Starr categorized Adair as "frankly agreeable--the ablest and most brilliant of all Cherokees" (Starr 1921, 264). At "six feet two in his stocking feet", Adair was a presence to be heard. Someone who was "kind, and a man of his word", Adair spoke with integrity (Moore 1951, 36).

Adair needed Crane's endurance to overcome intra-tribal obstacles in the way of his political goals. Despite his personal appeal, Adair's position was not always appreciated by the Cherokee majority. As a young senator of the Cherokee Nation in the 1850s, Adair was a proponent of

tribal factionalism, a position he held throughout the Civil War. By being related to members of the hated "Treaty Party", so called because its leaders signed the Treaty of New Echota in 1835 (which resulted in the infamous "Trail of Tears" as the tribe was removed to the west), Adair belonged to the mixed blood, pro-slavery faction that supported the Confederate cause. Opposition to the pro-Southern party was personified by Principal Chief John Ross, who with the support of the tribal majority had viciously fought the Treaty Party and its pro-removal position since the 1830s.

The pro-removal faction of the 1830s faced a difficult moral dilemma. Under pressure from white settlers to vacate their lands, and with all hope of protection from the United States government exhausted, relocation to a new land seemed the most prudent decision. Many of these mixed bloods had been exposed to the white man's way from birth; some had been educated in New England schools. These Cherokees knew the whites would not be deterred.

But the full bloods disagreed. "Stay and fight!" they protested. "We will find a way to overcome. By all that is right, the Creator will not allow this injustice to take place!" But the mixed bloods signed away their land, with their solemn names on the treaty being recognized by the United States government over the protests of the majority.

Relocation of the Cherokee Nation to Indian Territory widened the gulf between the factions. Death squads were

formed by members of the Ross party (reportedly without Ross's knowledge, a claim which Treaty Party members would continue to dispute) to assassinate those who had signed the treaty. Among those who escaped retaliation were George Washington Adair, William Penn's father, and Stand Watie, who would later play a prominent role in Cherokee affairs.

Prior to the onset of the Civil War, John Ross tried desperately to keep the Cherokees unified and neutral. When federal forces abandoned the Cherokee Nation in the spring of 1861, withholding annuities due them from eastern land sales in the process, the Confederates rushed to conclude a treaty with the disgruntled tribal leaders. Eager to exploit the manpower and cattle herds of the Indians, the Confederacy was able to secure treaties of alliance with the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, Creeks, and some of the area plains tribes. The Cherokee held out, however, with Ross issuing a proclamation of neutrality to the Cherokee people (United States Dept. of War 1885, 13: 489-490).

Adair and the Southern Rights Party (as the anti-Ross faction was sometimes called) saw this as an opportunity to treat with the Confederacy and have "our rights provided for and place us . . . on an honorable equity with this old Dominant party that has for years had its foot upon our necks" (Dale and Litton 1939, 109). Stand Watie was appointed chief of the Southern Rights Cherokees. To preserve both tribal unity and his position as chief, John

Ross was forced to capitulate. A treaty was signed by Ross with the Confederacy on October 7, 1861, and the Cherokees were at war with the United States.

Two regiments of Cherokee militia were recruited for the southern cause. One, commanded by Colonel John Drew, was composed of pro-Ross full bloods, members of the traditional Keetoowah society. The Keetoowahs were an ancient warrior organization that formed the First Regiment of Cherokee Mounted Rifles. Also known as "Pins", in reference to the crossed pins worn on the lapel to show their affiliation, the society was revived in 1859 by abolitionist missionaries as a means of both preserving traditional culture and strengthening the anti-slavery position among the tribe. The Pins' commitment to the southern cause was tenuous at best.

The other regiment was led by Colonel Stand Watie, who had become Ross's rival for the leadership of the Cherokee Nation. An uneasy truce existed between the two men, as Watie was well aware that Ross may have had some complicity in the deaths of his brother, cousin, and uncle, all signers of the Treaty of New Echota. William Penn Adair, related by cause if not by blood, enlisted with his father in Watie's regiment as Assistant Quartermaster. The elder Adair would serve briefly as Head Quartermaster for Watie (Dale and Litton 1939, 117).

For a few months the old enmities were submerged and the Cherokee Nation was united under the Confederate banner.

The tensions of war would soon tear the frail coalition apart, however, and with true feelings exposed the alliance was not to last.

Wohali: Eagle . . . figures prominently . . . in all things relating to war (Mooney 1900, 281).

Following the Union victory at Pea Ridge in March, 1862, federal forces entered Indian Territory in July, routing Stand Watie's outnumbered army and capturing about one hundred soldiers, including William Penn Adair. John Drew's regiment of full bloods, never comfortable on the Confederate side, defected en masse to the Union. George Washington Adair, William Penn's father, was killed. Adair's brother Brice Martin, who replaced their father as Quartermaster, also became a casualty of war.

Federal forces proceeded to Tahlequah, the capital of the Cherokee Nation, and arrested a "delighted" John Ross, who was escorted northward from the Nation in possession of the national treasury (Krehbiel 1991, 34). Without firm leadership, the Cherokees fell even further into factionalized chaos. With the retreat of Union forces, the Cherokees' own civil war began in earnest. The land was laid waste in a series of guerilla attacks that destroyed innocent lives, as well as livestock and property. To escape the violence, Cherokees loyal to the north fled to Kansas, while those with southern sympathies became refugees in

Texas. In a southern camp stalked by malaria, William Penn Adair lost his wife.

Ani-tsalagi: The Principal People.

April 15, 1830. The first child of George Washington and Martha Martin Adair, both of Cherokee and Scottish blood, is born to the people. He is named for William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, who is admired by Indians of all tribes for being a man of honor and integrity, an exception among the whites. It is widely known that Penn kept his solemn word with the Delawares, upholding their mutual treaty of good faith throughout his lifetime. This one, William Penn Adair, will have the power of this greatest of white men. This one, who with his white blood will live like them and think like them when necessary, will be a link between the two peoples. He will of course be an honorable man. He is a Cherokee.

In the old way, a boy's uncles, not his father, would be responsible for teaching him the ways of the people. This is because of their clan affiliation, a woman's brothers and her children being of the same clan. In turn, a father would give instruction to his sister's children, his nephews. But things have changed. William Penn Adair carries his father's surname, like the white man. And when he remembers the

stories, it is his father's voice that will reach his ears across time.

Saline Creek, Cherokee Nation, 1842. A man with his twelve year old son, telling stories by the fire.

"Dark, lonely places in the mountains are home to Uktena, the serpent monster who devours men. They say he was once a human being, changed by the Little People into a great snake to kill the Sun, who was angry at the people on earth. He failed, they had to get Rattlesnake to do the job, and they say he now hates human beings for his weakness. Sounds like a human being, blaming others for his own shortcomings. That's part of the lesson, what we learn from Uktena.

"Yet Uktena is also the darkness within us, that which must be conquered if we are to know our true path. Uktena is the predator of ignorance that makes the white man believe himself to be master of the world. Uktena is the arrogance that makes him presumptuous before the Creator.

"Embedded in his forehead is the blazing crystal of wisdom. Should one survive Uktena's temptation and possess the stone, he would have the greatest of power. But there is a contradiction. To gaze upon Uktena is a death sentence, as the crystal entrances one to walk toward it, into the serpent's mouth. How does one defeat what one cannot face? That is the dilemma. Uktena is overcome only in legend, so

the darkness continues.

"This ignorance is what allows the white man to push us from our ancestral homes. And this is why we have had to travel so many miles from our familiar mountains, to land he does not yet want. Do you remember the journey, the long, hot days, the great swollen rivers? And yet we, as signers of that hated treaty, were sent there in relative ease compared to those who followed. Ah, we paid dearly for the white man's greed, and our own disunity. We paid with the blood of those who were killed for signing the treaty, and with that of the four thousand Cherokees who died on the trail where they cried. Do you remember the songs they sang as they marched? "Amazing Grace" helped sustain them. And the strength of the Cherokee spirit.

We were forced to leave Elohi, our sacred land. The whites do not understand the concept, nor do they care to. They have no home, so how can they respect ours? But always know, and remember: we are Ani-tsalagi, the Principal People. We are Real People. One day, not in my lifetime or yours, perhaps seven generations ahead when the white man realizes what he has done, he will turn to the Real People for help. This is what the old men told me. It will be so."

Tsigili: Spirit, ghost.

The "most brilliant" Cherokee, former senator,

lawyer, and assistant to Stand Watie, too dangerous to northern interests, was coveted by the Union. Sarah Ann Adair, his wife, was dead. His father, whose voice still lived in his heart, just fallen. Brother Brice, recently lost. His power is low, his spirit weak. The regiment passes near the old home place, camps for the night. Too hard to resist, the mourning not yet over, he must visit. No one there but the Adair slaves; he is fed, fussed over. He stays the night, a respite from the madness of war.

From the darkness a face, a vision. "Brice, is that you?"

"Get up, Bill, Pin Indians comin'! Yankees!"

Automatically he rises, adrenaline helps him dress. Wait. "Brice?" A dream. Exhausted, he falls back into the old familiar bed, sleeps again.

"Bill!" The voice is more persistent this time. "Get up, Bill, they're almost here! Yankees!"

"Tired, Brice. Just too tired."

Sleep. Then a different voice. Rough hands. Awake. The face of his brother fades in the light of a dozen candles. The Pins are here. Dragged from bed, he is taken to Union headquarters in his stocking feet.

Atewehi: Shapechanger. Some warriors had medicine to change their shape as they pleased, so that they could escape from their enemies (Mooney 1900, 394).

Adair was not long a prisoner of war. With the skill

of Rabbit the Trickster, who could talk himself out of any situation, Adair was taken to Fort Leavenworth, given a trial, but "made them such a fine speech that they set him free". He returned to Stand Watie's army to continue the war (Foreman 1937, 106: 446).

As a result of John Ross's departure from the Cherokee capital, the Confederate Cherokees elected Stand Watie Principal Chief of the Nation in August, 1862. In addition, the Confederate army was reorganized following the defection of Drew's regiment, placing Watie in command of the reformed First Cherokee Regiment (Franks 1979, 133).

In early 1863, William Penn Adair was promoted to the rank of Colonel, and given command of the Second Cherokee Regiment. Federal reassertion in Indian Territory forced the Confederate Cherokees into defensive positions, however, and a lack of support by the Confederacy made retaliation impossible. Morale in the spring of 1863 was at its lowest since the war began.

In April, 1863, Major J. A. Scales wrote Adair that the Pins were "issuing a circular inviting us back again", which would no doubt cause "desertions, when the alternative of remaining in peace at home, well clothed, well fed . . . is presented to them (United States Dept. of War 1888, 22 Pt.2: 821-822). Scales went on to say that the Cherokee soldiers "have been very badly treated" by the Confederacy, "in withholding our pay as soldiers" (Ibid). Adair seconded

the writer's opinion when he forwarded the letter to General William Steele, commander of Indian Territory, by saying:

"The letter needs no comment. So far as I have learned, it breathes the sentiments of the great majority of our people" (Ibid). Stand Watie would add his voice of discontent toward the cause he fought so valiantly for by stating:

I am loth to believe that the Confederate authorities have entirely abandoned the Cherokee country, but I see in the future scarcely a ray of hope from them (United States Dept. of War 1888, 22 Pt.2: 961).

Federal victories at Old Fort Wayne and at the Battle of Prairie Grove left Indian Territory north of the Arkansas River in Union control, forcing Adair and Watie's troops farther south. A legislative session of the Confederate Cherokee government was needed, and planned. With Stand Watie and most of the other headmen in the army, collecting the participants was relatively easy. Pin Indians from occupied Fort Gibson made every effort to disrupt the proceedings, but in May, 1863, a convention was finally held to address the many problems that beset the Nation. Recruiting new troops and relief for the refugees were the two top items on the agenda (Wardell 1938, 161-162).

Major Elias Cornelius Boudinot, son of the famous Treaty Party leader Elias Boudinot who was assassinated upon reaching Indian Territory, was a shrewd politician with opportunistic goals. His proposal to offer 160 acre tracts of Cherokee land to whites who would enlist with the

Cherokees was the beginning of a lifelong obsession to open Indian land to settlement. Suspected of having a conflict of interest throughout his career, Boudinot would be accused by Adair and others of being in the pocket of special interest groups, most notably the railroads. Boudinot would eventually alienate himself from most Cherokees, becoming a symbol for what many felt were the worst qualities of the Treaty Party descendants. In their eyes he was unscrupulous and self serving, attributes particularly distasteful to the traditional full bloods; he was in short considered a traitor. Boudinot would insist that he was continually misunderstood, and that only by leading the Cherokees along the road of "progress" would they survive as a people.

The convention made positive steps toward the relief of expatriate Cherokees in the south. The position of commissioner for the supervision of refugee camps was created, in the hope that the many destitute families could be located in a safe place, with schools for the children (Wardell 1938, 163-164).

Aniyosgi: Soldiers. William Penn Adair, Watie's courageous Chief of Scouts (Cunningham 1959, 129).

Everyone was tired of fighting. After defeats at Cabin Creek and Honey Springs, after a summer of sickness and fatigue, tempers were short. Brigadier General William Steele, who assumed command of Indian Territory in 1863, was

disliked by the Cherokees for attempting to impose military discipline on the more casual Cherokee approach to army procedure. Adair was placed under arrest by Steele for "disrespect". Although Adair planned to file counter charges, Steele would resign by the year's end (Wardell 1938, 166).

Adair and Watie spent the winter of 1863-64 with their regiments south of the Cherokee Nation, in Choctaw country, where they referred to their headquarters as "Camp Starvation" for the hardships they were forced to endure. With their territory firmly under Union control, the army could do little more than retreat to the country of their allies.

Despite the unfavorable circumstances, Watie resumed his raids into federally-occupied Indian Territory. In the spring of 1864 he ordered Adair to lead a force of 325 men along the border of the Cherokee Nation and Arkansas, where they proceeded to attack federal camps and outposts, gaining valuable intelligence on troop positions and strengths in the process.

While Adair employed hit-and-run tactics along the border, the guerilla raider Charles Quantrill conducted independent forays in southwestern Missouri. The combined raids threw the Union forces into a state of apprehension, as a full scale invasion by Confederate forces was suspected (United States Dept. of War 1891, 34 Pt.3: 272-273).

Dividing his force into small scouting parties, Adair's troops produced confused federal reports as to their location:

Adair, as you see, moved east. He may come up toward Missouri or Arkansas . . . Who knows?
(United States Dept. of War 1891, 34 Pt.3: 301).

In only one instance did the "gray ghost" come near defeat. In camp at Spavinaw Creek, he and his men were surprised by a federal attack at dawn. Forced to leave behind a number of horses, clothing, and food, Adair quickly regrouped to attack the town of Lamar, Missouri. Reaching the heart of the city, Adair's fighters were forced to retreat after the militia received reinforcements (United States Dept. of War 1891, 34 Pt.1: 942).

By testing federal defenses and affecting enemy morale, Adair's month long scouting foray was a psychological victory for the Confederate Cherokees. In addition, his intelligence reports on troop locations aided Stand Watie in his offensives later in the year (Fischer 1968, 275-277).

During Adair's absence, Stand Watie was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General, in command of both the First and Second Cherokee Regiments. With Adair as his second, they would provide some of the last Confederate hurrahs Indian Territory would hear.

With Fort Smith and Fort Gibson under Union control, the Confederates desperately needed a victory. Roving bands

of desperadoes, allied to no one but themselves, continued to terrorize families trying desperately to maintain their farms. The Cherokees' own civil war continued unabated, with both sides seeking revenge against the other for the loss of property and loved ones.

Confederate policymakers determined that the South's last hope in Indian Territory was to attack the Union supply lines that allowed the forts to remain occupied. One of these supply routes was by boat, along the Arkansas River.

Tsisdu: Rabbit was the messenger (Mooney 1900, 231).

Through intelligence reports, Stand Watie learned that the steamboat J. R. Williams was moving up the Arkansas River, loaded with supplies for the Union troops of Fort Gibson. He promptly ordered Adair to the Arkansas both to scout for federal troops and to watch the height of the river. A high water mark would mean the steamboat was on its way.

Adair sent word on June 4, 1864 that the Arkansas was rising. Watie promptly established a three gun artillery position on a bluff overlooking the river, and with several hundred men, waited for the J. R. Williams to appear.

With an escort of only twenty-six soldiers, the federals were completely unprepared for an attack. On June 15, as the steamboat came in range of the cannon, Watie's

men scored direct hits on the smokestack, pilot house, and boiler, immediately disabling the ship. Both crew and escort promptly abandoned the crippled boat, leaving its supplies of \$120,000 worth of food, clothing, and dry goods to Watie's troops.

Many of the men loaded their horses with as much booty as they could carry, and abandoned their officers to take the cargo to their destitute families in refugee camps. In the meantime, the rising river swept away barrels of flour placed on shore, and the poor road conditions made it impossible to transport the large volume of goods without wagons. With Union reinforcements on the way, and Adair on the other side of the now unfordable river, Watie was forced to burn the J. R. Williams and destroy the much needed merchandise. The raid was considered a success, however, as the transportation of materials by water was halted following the incident.

Kalanu: The Raven, warrior. We would have charged straight into Ft. Smith if Col. W. P. Adair had told us to (Private Allmon Martin, Cherokee Mounted Rifles, in Knight 1988, 233).

Throughout the summer and fall of 1864, the raiding continued. Fort Smith was besieged by Adair and Watie's rebels, who fought the Union soldiers to a standoff. In what would be the last major raid of the war in Indian Territory, Watie's men captured a federal wagon train loaded with

supplies for Fort Gibson (Gaines 1991, 30-36).

Despite interludes of success, the Confederacy was falling. Abandoned by the government that had pledged to provide for them where the United States had failed, the Cherokees and their allies were forced to consider the route of diplomacy for relief from their desperate condition. Schooled by his years as a Cherokee senator, and a lawyer by profession, becoming a warrior of words would be a natural course for William Penn Adair to follow.

Walosi: Frog was the marshal and leader in the council (Mooney 1900, 231).

On June 23, 1865, Stand Watie became the last Confederate general to surrender. And though the white man's war had ended, the great rift between the Cherokee factions remained. While pro-Union families were able to return to their homes and farms following the war, southern Cherokee refugees continued to abide in their camps through the winter of 1865-66, fearful of retaliation should they return.

In November, 1865, John Ross led a delegation of northern Cherokees to Washington, with the intention of representing his party as the legitimate government with which the United States should conduct a peace treaty. Stand Watie, who was still considered the Principal Chief by the southern faction, responded by sending William Penn Adair to Washington as a commissioner for the south (Franks 1979,

185). By the spring of 1866, Adair was joined in Washington by a delegation of Cherokees composed of Elias C. Boudinot, Saladin Watie, Richard Fields, and the Cherokee writer John Rollin Ridge.

As negotiations continued, with each side drafting treaties in order to assert their authority as the true Cherokee government, John Ross became ill. From his sickbed, the 76 year-old statesman sidestepped the southern group's attempts to discredit him, pointing out that his contingent had left the Confederacy at their earliest opportunity. Ross's argument won the day, and the United States government agreed to treat with the Union Cherokees. Ross died as the final negotiations of the treaty were underway, but the old chief had won his last battle. The Cherokee Nation would remain united.

The decision by the United States to deal with the Ross party was a death blow to the southern Cherokee hopes for a separate nation. Denied a voice in existing Cherokee affairs as well, the delegates began to quarrel among themselves. John Rollin Ridge accused Boudinot of a misappropriation of funds. Boudinot responded by attacking both Ridge and Adair, thus initiating a feud with the latter that would continue until Adair's death. By clashing with Adair, Boudinot incurred "the lasting enmity of a man who was to become a powerful figure in the Cherokee Nation" (Forde 1951, 133). Their discord would place Boudinot in an

unpopular position among the Cherokee populace as well.

Terms of the Treaty of 1866 which were generally acceptable to the Cherokees included the emancipation of slaves, a general amnesty for those who had fought for the South, and the establishment of federal courts in their territory. An opportunity for the railroads to gain easy rights-of-way through Cherokee land, however, was a stipulation that caused widespread dissension. Adair, angered both at the Union delegation who signed the Ross treaty as well as with Elias C. Boudinot who supported the railroads, wrote:

We refused to accede to the Ross Treaty and fought it from 'h-1 to breakfast' . . . I think the 'pin' Cherokees themselves will kill their delegation for giving away their country . . . what will they do . . . to their Delegation for giving away 7 or 8,000,000 acres of our best country to our worst enemies for nothing . . . (Wardell 1938,205).

Igaluga: He is returning.

The death of John Ross opened a door to a healing within the Cherokee Nation. Ironically, though Ross worked for unity between the factions, it was in large part his position as leader of "this old Dominant party" that kept the Nation divided.

By assuming an anti-railroad, anti-land-allotment position, Adair became allied with the followers of Ross, thus gaining acceptance by the majority of Cherokee citizens. With the election of Lewis Downing to the

chieftancy in 1867, a new political party of mixed blood southern Cherokees and full blood Ross followers was formed.

These events marked the beginning of Adair's involvement with mainstream Cherokee politics as he began to serve as an official delegate to Washington. Appointed by Lewis Downing in a gesture that aided reunification, Adair would represent Cherokee interests in the United States capitol until his death by typhoid pneumonia in the year 1880.

In contrast to Adair's reconciliation with the tribal majority, Elias Cornelius Boudinot found himself at ever increasing odds with the Cherokees. By advocating individual land allotments and a territorial government, which would abolish the Cherokees' own system and open the Nation to white settlement, his arguments were perceived as amounting to little more than the loss of Cherokee self determination. A communal land base and tribal autonomy were tenets at the very core of Cherokee identity. For Boudinot to advocate these sacrifices, especially when he appeared to profit at the people's expense, was considered the work of an arch-traitor.

Adair accused all advocates of territorial government of pretending to be "the vice regents of God, in that they control the 'manifest destiny' of the Indians" (Forde 1951, 171). He opposed the frequent allotment bills that were introduced to the House, and which threatened to carve

Cherokee land into individual holdings ripe for the railroads to pick, on the grounds that: "they would of course ruin all the Indians for then the white people would take our whole country" (Holm 1974, 39). He saved his harshest invectives for Boudinot, who was by now widely accused of receiving payoffs by the railroad corporations. Adair claimed that he:

. . . uses the name of Cherokee for the purpose of robbing and crushing the Cherokee people. He prostitutes his Indian blood to these base purposes for the sake of money (Forde 1951, 174).

The two continually confronted each other in governmental hearings, and on at least one occasion came to blows when Boudinot struck Adair with his walking stick (Forde 1951, 145).

But as Boudinot's reputation for self interest weakened his standing among the Cherokees, Adair's image as a trustworthy leader working in the best interests of the Nation became secure. In numerous speeches during the 1870s, Adair championed the Cherokees' ability to adapt and prosper in the ways of the whites, to the end that self determination was the natural course for the tribe to follow. He advocated "civilization" for the Cherokees, since:

. . . no other course is left for us to pursue, because we . . . are surrounded or engulfed by states and territories of the United States and have no other country to which we may go should we lose (our land) (Adair 1926, 257).

Realizing that even if the Cherokees were interested

in returning to a traditional lifestyle, Adair concluded that "we could not live by the chase because the wild game is nearly all gone".

Taking an interest in the welfare of other tribes facing the onslaught of white expansion, Adair sought to prepare the plains tribes for the loss of their way of life as well. Milky Way, a Comanche leader, spoke of Adair's message of "civilization" among his people:

When I was on the plains . . . I saw nothing good, but Col. Adair, our Cherokee brother came out to see us . . . and gave us a good talk and we did not fling it away on the ground but kept it. He told us to stop on a piece of ground and to work corn and raise pig and cow and build house. White man had told us to do this before, but we would not listen to him, but when our Cherokee brother told us, we tried his advice and have found it true and good (Tuggle 1973, 139-140).

Unelanvhi Uwetsi: Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound.

William Penn Adair did not live to see the disbanding of the Cherokee government. Nor did he witness the passing of the Dawes Act in 1888, which allotted tribal land in severalty to individuals, many of whom quickly lost their holdings to unscrupulous developers and railroad men. The railroad representatives, in particular, were able to bribe, cheat, and steal their way into possession of millions of acres of land for the corporations, often with government sanction. These land swindles led to the creation of numerous towns and settlements like Vinita, founded by Elias C. Boudinot.

Yet Adair made his mark. By remaining true to the tenets taught him in those long ago mountain coves, to those lessons of honor passed through the generations, William Penn Adair excelled as a warrior and a diplomat.

Adair drew strength from his ethnic diversity. Unlike men such as Boudinot, who elected to forego their Indianness in favor of a Europeanized self-image, Adair found a balance between his indigenous and colonial heritage. Rather than see his Cherokee blood as a liability, Adair celebrated the rich foundations of his ancestry and demanded acceptance as both an Indian and a human being.

If Boudinot's quest for material wealth revealed a bankrupt soul in search of fulfillment, Adair's integrity was reflected in his relationship to the Cherokees. By assisting his people in the achievement of a peaceful coexistence with the United States government, Adair is remembered as an unselfish leader of his nation, a man content to forego individual rewards for the common good.

An example of Adair's altruistic nature occurred in 1879, a year before his death, as he was on the campaign trail for the position of Assistant Principal Chief. Dennis Bushyhead led the ticket for the chieftancy. Speaking to a group of ex-slaves, he advised his audience to vote for Huckleberry Downing, who was running in opposition to himself and Bushyhead. Downing, he explained, had fought for their freedom from slavery during the Civil War, while he

and Bushyhead had been members of the Confederate forces. Adair was nevertheless elected Assistant Principal Chief.

On another occasion, Adair revealed his opinion of politicians with the observation:

Well, it doesn't make much difference for whom you vote; when we are elected we all meet at the capitol, shake hands, and immediately vote all of the money out of the treasury (Ballenger 1952, 195).

Adair was honored in death by the Nation, as he honored the Cherokees in life. One could remember the old spiritual, as it echoed from the mountain slopes and valleys, and spread across the land like a thread along the Trail of Tears to comfort and sustain those on the death march. It was heard along the streets of Tahlequah as the funeral procession led William Penn Adair home. So did he live his life, and death, with Amazing Grace.

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