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Review of A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy: The Autobiography of Chief G. W Grayson

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A Creek Warrior for the Confederacy: The Autobiography of Chief G. W. Grayson. Edited and with an introduction by W. David Baird. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988. Maps, illustrations, footnotes, bibliography, index. xvii + 181 pp. \$16.95.

Without question this memoir by a mixed-blood Creek dignitary who fought with Indian units attached to the armies of the Confederacy is the most informative and carefully edited account of the Civil War in Indian Territory after 1862. But it is more than that, for it provides a lucid and candid commentary on important aspects of Creek history from forced removal in the early national period to formal tribal dissolution in 1906.

Chief George Washington Grayson was born in Eufaula, Oklahoma, in 1843, and following his Civil War experiences held numerous influential posts in the Creek Nation. He was a champion of constitutional tribal government and often served as a delegate to intertribal councils in Indian Territory. As a mixed-blood he was especially observant (and critical) of the full-blood Creek leadership as it sought to dominate the minority mixed-blood elite of which Grayson was a part. Because this memoir was written for his family and close circle of friends—and not for the public—Grayson's comments regarding the Indian response to the Civil War, full-blood family life and economy, and the wonders of a changing world under pressure of assimilation constitute a treasure of information that cannot be matched by any other known document for such an extended period of time.

Professor Baird's editorial strategy and technique are superb. Building on earlier but abortive efforts at preparing the manuscript for

publication, Baird utilized both the typewritten version prepared by the late Edward Everett Dale and the original in custody of the Western History Collections at the University of Oklahoma. Few paragraphs, no chapter breaks, and Grayson's heavy Germanic style have been molded into a clear and unobtrusive narrative that does not violate the substantive intent of Grayson. No less important, surely, for both general and professional readers, are the exhaustive footnotes that identify virtually every person, place, or major event in the original manuscript.

Not only is this a major work for students of Creek history to contemplate, it is a model for would-be editors of challenging manuscripts to emulate.

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