



CONFEDERATE OCCANEECHI



Piedmont Indians in the Civil War



When North Carolina passed laws in 1833 to restrict the rights of free blacks; they also limited the rights of Indians. In old Orange (later Alamance) County, many Occaneechi Indians including Dixon Corn, Jesse Jeffries, Enoch Jones, and Andrew Jeffries were prosperous farmers and tradesmen. The law kept them from joining the militia, but during the war many volunteered as foragers, teamsters, hostlers, and paid body servants. In North Carolina's mountains, some Cherokee fought as soldiers in Thomas's Legion.

"Nick" Mebane, of Co. F, 6th North Carolina State Troops, employed William Haith as his body servant. Will Liggins was a servant to James E. Boyd in Co. E, 13th North Carolina State Troops. Marshall Jeffries performed similar service. His kinsman Bedford Jeffries "served as cook and servant ... never bore arms but ... was always with the troops near the front." When Lt. Bartlett Yancey Mebane was killed at Cold Harbor, Virginia, on June 7, 1864, Jeffries brought his remains home to the family.

Indians Buck Parker and James Wilson



Bedford Jeffries



Marshall Jeffries



Will Haith

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were paid servants with Co. K, 6th North Carolina State Troops. Wilson foraged for food and supplies, and it was reported that "[he] has foraged and stole enough during the war" to keep the company well fed. His brother, William Wilson, served Lt. George Bason in the Ordinance Department.

The motives of these men probably were the same as those of many young white men who enlisted: pay, excitement, and escape from the farm. Given the manpower shortages in the Confederate army by 1863, men like these helped keep it in the field until 1865.