



Oklahoma Historical Society

Founded May 27, 1893

2100 NORTH LINCOLN BLVD. • OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73105 • (405) 521-2491

received
5.23.94

Thank you
to
Council

May 20, 1994

Wilma Mankiller, Chief
The Cherokee Nation
PO Box 948
Tahlequah, OK 74465-0948

Dear Chief Mankiller:

The Oklahoma Historical Society needs your help in preserving an important chapter in the history of the Cherokee Nation. This project is the Battle of Honey Springs.

In June Congress will be asked to authorize the National Park Service to take the Battle of Honey Springs as a facility of the National Park System. Hopefully, Senators Nickles and Boren along with Oklahoma's entire congressional delegation will begin a lobbying effort to seek congressional approval for this authorization. We anticipate that one of the first questions at the hearings will be, "Is this supported by the Indian tribes of Oklahoma?" We would like to have the question answered before we appear before those congressional committees. If possible, we would like to get a letter of support from the Cherokee Council expressing support in our effort to seek federal involvement in the preservation and operation of a national park at the Battle of Honey Springs. Please make your statement in the form of a resolution that we can cite at the congressional hearings.

If you need more information on the Battle of Honey Springs, we can provide a packet or even send a representative to the Council meeting. In short, the Battle of Honey Springs was fought on July 17, 1863, just north of Elk Creek in the Creek Nation. This battle was the largest fought in the Indian Territory and was the turning point of the Civil War in the Territory. The battle is significant to each of the Five Civilized Tribes for several reasons: (1) 80 percent of all the troops who fought that fateful day were American Indians, (2) the fact that the Union forces won the battle affected the safety and lives of all Indians in the Territory for the next two years, and (3) for their role in the Civil War, each of the Five Civilized Tribes were punished after the war and forced to sign the Reconstruction Treaties of 1866, which set the stage for general allotment of tribal lands, allowed the first railroads through the territory, and dispossessed the tribes of their western most lands.