

Deep Creek, Battle of ^[1]

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See also: [Civil War Battles](#) ^[2] from the Encyclopedia of North Carolina; [Civil War Battles](#) ^[3]



Photograph of a reunion of Cherokee confederates.
Sourced from the General Negatives Collection, North Carolina State Archives, #: n_56_3_52.

^[4]The Battle of Deep Creek, also called the Battle of Quallatown, was a [Civil War](#) engagement that occurred on February 2, 1864. Union troops from the 14th Illinois Cavalry under Major Francis M. Davidson attempted to destroy the forces of Colonel William Holland Thomas ^[5] (known as [Thomas's Legion](#) ^[6]) by surprising the Cherokee and Highlanders at Deep Creek, ten miles west of [Quallatown](#) ^[7].

After an hour of fighting, Davidson reported that he killed nearly 200 confederates, although southern records reported the loss of only 2. The northerners claimed that the Battle of Deep Creek was a great victory in which they had wiped out Thomas's companies. They escorted their Cherokee captives to Knoxville, where they flattered them and promised them substantial rewards if they would abandon the Confederacy. The Cherokee prisoners were also told that they would receive their freedom and \$5,000 in gold in return for Thomas's scalp. When the captured Cherokees agreed to that condition, the Union forces released them. On reaching their camp, the returning Cherokee joked about their promises and promptly returned to confederate service.

References:

Crow, Vernon H. *Storm in the Mountains: Thomas' Confederate Legion of Cherokee Indians and Mountaineers* (1982).

Godbold, E. Stanly Jr. and Mattie U. Russell. *Confederate Colonel and Cherokee Chief: the Life of William Holland Thomas* (1990).

Additional resources:

NC Museum of History, William Holland Thomas:
http://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/exhibits/civilwar/explore_section4m.html ^[5]

Subjects:

[American Indians](#) ^[8]

[Battles](#) ^[9]

[Cherokee Indians](#) ^[10]

[Civil War \(1861-1865\)](#) ^[11]

[War](#) ^[12]

Authors:

[Anderson, William L.](#) ^[13]

Origin - location:

[Mountains](#) ^[14]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[15]

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