

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: Fort Wallace: The Last Post West and Its Role in
the Defense of the Kansas Frontier, 1865-1880

Abstract approved: *William A. Seiler*

The primary subject of this thesis is a description of the military post of Fort Wallace, Kansas and its association with the Smoky Hill Trail. This begins with a basic summary which helps to explain how and why this military installation became a reality. The first three chapters focus on events that are indirectly related to the subject of Fort Wallace. The objective of these chapters is to establish how the theory of the Great American Desert developed and how the discovery of gold in the Pikes Peak area and other mineral deposits in the western regions of the United States began to erode this concept. There was a demand for a shorter route to the new gold fields. Closely related to this was the rapid developing idea of establishing a transcontinental railroad.

As public demand grew for the development of new transportation systems, a need for their protection was also

evident. With the establishment of this background, the narration of this work then begins to focus specifically on the topic of Fort Wallace, describing how the site of the post was established, problems in constructing post facilities, and the role of the fort in defending the western portion of the Smoky Hill Trail. With the completion of this mission, the work concludes with a description of the decision to close the post and to dispose of the property.

FORT WALLACE:
THE LAST POST WEST
AND
ITS ROLE IN THE DEFENSE OF THE KANSAS FRONTIER,
1865-1880

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INTRODUCTION

The settlement of the American West was a long and difficult task. Before this task could be completed it was necessary to remove the native American Indian, as he stood in the way of the white man's progress. It was only a matter of time before the advanced technology of the white man and his superiority of numbers eliminated the Indian from his path. The complete story of the westward expansion involves many different areas and subjects. The main objective of this paper is to focus attention upon one particular area and subject, the military post of Fort Wallace, Kansas.

The existence of Fort Wallace was not of major importance to the entire scope of western expansion. Its location, however, in relation to other military posts, gave it prime importance to the settlement of Western Kansas and Eastern Colorado. The primary effort of this paper is to describe events in and around the military post of Fort Wallace.

In order to understand the necessity for, and the mission of, this fort, it is necessary to give a general summary and description of events contributing to the need for a military post in this region. The content of the first portion of this paper is a brief narrative of the

Great Plains and the impression Americans had about the plains. An effort is made to show how this attitude began to change and how a new interest was stimulated in this region as a result of the discovery of gold.

Gold discovery created a new interest in the Great Plains, an interest which eventually resulted in the extermination of the Indian domain. Also, travel and trade across the plains became a high priority, resulting in the establishment of the Smoky Hill Trail. This trail was to become one of the main routes of travel between Colorado and Eastern Kansas, beginning as a road for stage and freight lines, and eventually becoming one of the main routes for the new transcontinental railroad. The course of this trail went through the heart of the country belonging to the Plains Indians. It was only natural for the Indian to vigorously resist encroachment upon his territory. In turn, the government authorized the U.S. Army to establish a series of forts along the Smoky Hill Trail. The primary mission of these forts was to protect travelers and traders who used the Smoky Hill route, and later the protection of railroad construction workers.

With the establishment of this background, the paper will begin a detailed description of the military post of Fort Wallace. Content will be concerned with such items as the geographical location of the post and problems encountered in construction of the buildings. Also included in this section will be a description of the major engagements

against hostile Indians by the troops stationed at the fort. Rather than attempt to cover all hostile Indian engagements, as a good share of these involve only a small number of troops and Indians, an attempt will be made to describe events of major importance. The main emphasis on Indian affairs will cover the years 1867-1869. Specific examples will include General Hancock's expedition and its effect upon Fort Wallace, the rescue of Col. George Forsyth's scouts at Beecher's Island, and the Dull Knife raid of 1878.

After describing these events, the paper concludes with a brief description of the decision to close the fort and the disposal of the property.

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT AMERICAN DESERT

From the time the first white man set foot on the eastern coast of North America, there began a continual movement to the west which was not ended until they had finally reached the opposite shore on the Pacific Ocean. So relentless were the white settlers in this movement that they would not allow anything to stop the advancement of their civilization. This attitude created a major struggle between the white man and the American Indian, which would not end until one was to dominate the other. History has recorded that the white man with his advanced knowledge in technical skills and eventual superiority in numbers was to become the dominant force.

This conflict between the white settlers and the American Indian was not a continual day-by-day, year-after-year struggle. There were times when the two opposing sides waged a bloody and violent war, followed by a period of relative calm and peaceful coexistence. This situation existed from the time of the establishment of the first English colonies until the Indian resistance was broken in the late 1800's. When the United States became independent, the new government acquired a vast amount of land, consisting

of what is commonly referred to as the old Northwest Territory and the Ohio and Mississippi Valley regions. Pioneers and land speculators had long desired to occupy these areas, but were stopped by British restrictions. Independence removed this barrier and a new westward movement began. This new surge to the west was to create another chapter in the struggle between the white man and the Indian.

In the early 1800's an apparent solution to this problem had been found. With the acquisition of the Louisiana Purchase, the territory of the United States doubled in size. At first impression, this new area offered numerous potentials. Early exploration of the Louisiana Territory, however, gave birth to the idea that most of the area between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains was a large uninhabitable desert and would be of no use to the white settlers. This theory

. . . was a reality in the minds of the people of that time. To them the region was actually a desert wholly uninhabitable with the methods and the implements and instruments of pioneering which had been previously used . . .¹

in the eastern portion of the United States. The basis of this idea has numerous origins, but it was left to several American explorers in the early 1800's to implant the idea firmly in the American mind.

This theory did not originate with these American explorers. The Spanish Conquistador, Francisco Coronado, was the first to suggest the idea which was eventually to label this area as the Great American Desert. Writing a descrip-

tion of his journey into the Great Plains for the King of Spain, Coronado stated that he was reluctant to continue because he felt that "the way was through such uninhabitable deserts, and from the lack of water . . . we and our horses would die of hunger."² A contemporary of Coronado, Hernando DeSoto, also helped contribute to this theory. It is probable that DeSoto's exploration never reached the Great Plains. However, his description of why he turned back helped to establish the desert theory. In his report describing his expedition, DeSoto relates that they gave up their exploration and: ". . . returned eastward because they thought they were approaching a country 'where the Indians wandered like Arabs'."³ Although Coronado and DeSoto wrote their descriptions in the early 1500's, knowledge of this area was extremely limited until there were further explorations by American explorers in the early nineteenth century.

The explorations of Lewis and Clark, Zebulon Pike, and Major Stephen H. Long added much new knowledge about the Great Plains region. The information revealed by these explorations contributed a tremendous influence in establishing the myth of the Great American Desert. In his description of the Great Plains, Zebulon Pike stated that:

These vast plains of the western hemisphere may become in time as celebrated as the sandy deserts of Africa; for I saw in my route, in various places, tracts of many leagues where the wind had thrown up the sand in all the fanciful form of the oceans rolling wave and which not a speck of vegetable matter existed.⁴

A later expedition in 1819-1820, under Major Stephen H. Long, provided an opinion which was no more lenient in its description of the plains than was Pike's. Following the example of his predecessor Pike, Stephen H. Long was of the opinion that

. . . this extensive section of country, I do not hesitate in giving the opinion, that it is wholly unfit for human cultivation, and of course uninhabitable by a people depending upon agriculture for their subsistence.⁵

The information from these reports created an opinion in the American public that firmly established the tradition of the Great Plains as the Great American Desert. This impression of the Great Plains would be prominent in the American attitude for the first half of the nineteenth century and in some quarters until after the Civil War. In 1859, Horace Greely traveled across the Great Plains and published his observations in his newspaper, the New York Tribune. Greely's description mimics the position of most Americans in their belief about the Great Plains, and is a good example of the idea of the Great American Desert existing among the most enlightened people down to the Civil War.⁶

Although the area was condemned as a limitless wasteland, it did offer an advantage to the American settlers in their desire to expand westward. The main contributors to the desert theory, Zebulon Pike and Stephen H. Long, suggested that the Great Plains could serve as a barrier and thus limit westward expansion. Long expressed the idea

that the Great Plains would protect the settled area of the United States and protect against an enemy that might be disposed to annoy us in that part of our frontier. In the same line of thought, Pike proposed the idea that the plains would limit western expansion because settlers would limit their extent on the west to the borders of the Missouri and Mississippi. Pike also offered another suggestion, which was to become an established government policy. He suggested that the American pioneer would leave the prairies which are incapable of cultivation to the wandering and uncivilized Indians of the country. Expounding upon this idea, government officials soon found another use for the Great Plains which would offer an apparent solution to the Indian problem.⁷

As geographic knowledge of the Great Plains spread, and the belief became established that the area would be useless for the white man's civilization, the suggestion by Zebulon Pike was picked up by government officials and eventually became an established government program. Thus, what was offered as a simple answer to a complex problem became a reality. It appeared that

. . . the solution of the problem of the Indian appeared obvious and easy. West of the Mississippi lay millions of acres of wild land which everyone felt sure would never be desired for white settlement In view of the apparent unavailability of the far west for white settlement it seemed reasonable to send the Indian to that part of the country.⁸

This reasoning led to "the concept of a permanent Indian

Frontier. . . ."9 This policy became established shortly after the United States acquired the Louisiana Purchase and gained momentum after the War of 1812.

The idea of a permanent Indian Frontier became an official government doctrine that lasted until the mid-1850's at which time the area was organized into territories, which would later become states. From its origins, the plan, in outward appearance, offered a reasonable solution, because this vast Indian reserve offered a place "where red men would be forever removed from the path of advancing white settlements."¹⁰ By 1825, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun had the plan formulated and put into operation. By 1840, the permanent Indian Frontier was planted along the ninety-fifth meridian, from the Red River to the Great Bend of the Missouri. Along this established line was a series of military posts. The purpose of the forts was to keep a close watch on this vast Indian reserve and provide security whereby "the immigrant and resident Indians would forever enjoy security from white encroachment."¹¹ What appeared to be a permanent situation proved to be only a temporary expedience. As logical as it seemed, the plan was doomed to eventual collapse and failure.

The basis for the failure of this concept can be traced to two main sources. First "was the inability of eastern natives to adapt to the strange environment of the plains."¹² The planners failed to realize that they were taking the eastern Indian, whose life style was basically

sedentary and agricultural, and placing him in an alien situation which was the complete opposite of his natural life style. Under these circumstances, the eastern Indian was unable to adapt to the nomadic conditions which were necessary for survival on the plains. One can only imagine how the government expected the eastern Indian to survive in a region which they considered unfit for white settlers.

Another fact not taken into consideration was that the Plains Indians did not welcome the eastern Indians as a brother, but looked upon them as intruders upon their ancestral homeland. The Plains Indian could not accept the fact that he was to share his homeland with an Indian of a different culture and life style. The two different Indian cultures could possibly have learned to cope with one another and live in peaceful co-existence, if they were left unmolested and allowed to develop in their own way. However, the restless spirit of the American people to expand farther west was beginning to revive again. This renewed spirit, to push westward, brought on the second, and no doubt the most important reason, why the permanent Indian Frontier was doomed to failure.

This new spirit, which became known as America's Manifest Destiny, achieved a high degree of popularity during the 1840's. During the decade from 1840 to 1850, the United States achieved its dream and goal by spanning the continent from ocean to ocean. As a result of the war with Mexico, the United States annexed Texas and gained control of the

New Mexico, Utah, and California territories. The Oregon Country was acquired by the more prudent method of diplomacy. As a result of the territorial acquisitions of the 1840's, which added new land west of the Indian country, the concept of the permanent Indian Frontier was doomed.¹³ This new surge to the west was, at first, a slow and gradual process, but once it gained momentum there was no stopping it. At first appearance, it seemed that the relocated Indians, and those who were native to the Great Plains, would live without being disturbed by the white man. As time passed, gradual inroads were made. The first settlers were content to use the Indian land as a means to an end. The Indian reserve was utilized as an expedient way to reach bigger and better things on the other side. As travel continued to these new regions, a larger interest began to grow and develop and events would soon change the status of the Indians' permanent frontier.

The first of these events was the discovery of gold in California. This discovery touched off a mass emigration across the travel routes through the Indian country. The Forty-Niners did not pose a major threat to the Indian domain, as their main concern was to reach the gold fields as quickly as possible. At this time, a conflict between the white man and the Indian over the Great Plains seemed remote, but the basis for a major confrontation was a live and viable reality and was soon to start.

The spark which ignited the flames on the Great Plains,

and which marked the beginning of the end for Indian domain, was the discovery of gold in the Pike's Peak region of what was then Kansas Territory, and later became part of the new territory of Colorado. The discovery at Pike's Peak brought thousands of miners surging across the very heart of the Indians' hunting ground. A result of the Pike's Peak Gold Rush was ". . . the demand for opening the central portion of the Indian country--the lands of Kansas and Nebraska where most of the transportation routes were concentrated . . ."14 With this demand came ". . . the development of freighting and express lines, the plans for transcontinental railroads, all demonstrated during the 1850's that the policy of 'one Big Reservation' was destined to speedy extinction."15

As public pressure mounted, the government eventually relinquished the idea of a permanent Indian Frontier and replaced it with a system of concentration on well defined reservations. This new policy created a violent and bloody war which raged over the entire region of the Great Plains and into the mountain and desert regions as well. This renewed conflict, which lasted the better part of thirty years, would be the last stand for the American Indian. The white settlers would be relentless in their pursuit and excessive in their demands upon the Federal Government and Army, until the Indian was all but annihilated.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

¹Walter Prescott Webb, The Great Plains (New York: Grossett & Dunlap, 1931), p. 152.

²Ibid., p. 153.

³Ibid., p. 153.

⁴Ibid., p. 155.

⁵Ibid., pp. 156-57.

⁶Ibid., pp. 152, 158-59.

⁷Ibid., pp. 156-57.

⁸Robert E. Reigel, America Moves West (New York: Henry Holt & co., 1955), pp. 304-05.

⁹Ray Allen Billington; Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier (3rd ed.; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967), p. 470.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Robert M. Utley, Frontiersmen in Blue: The United States Army and the Indian 1848-1865 (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967), p. 4.

¹²Billington, Westward Expansion, p. 472.

¹³Utley, Frontiersmen in Blue, p. 4.

¹⁴Billington, Westward Expansion, pp. 644-45.

¹⁵Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE PIKE'S PEAK GOLD RUSH AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SMOKY HILL TRAIL

The discovery of gold at Pike's Peak created revolutionary changes for the Great Plains. As this discovery was much closer to the Indian reserve, it would have a direct effect upon the relationship between the white man and the Indian. Various events developed as a result of the Pike's Peak gold rush and sounded the death knell for the life style and the very existence of the Indians on the Great Plains.

The initial discovery of gold did not create much excitement at first, as rumors of gold in this area had existed for quite some time. In the spring of 1850, these rumors became an established fact, although the discovery was small and rather insignificant when compared to the California gold fields. As the California gold rush was in the height of its glory, very little attention was given to the gold in the Pike's Peak area. By the end of the decade, however, new deposits were discovered and the gold rush to Pike's Peak caused almost as much hysteria as the earlier discovery in California.¹

As news of the strike spread eastward, it reached avalanche proportions and stirred the imagination of those who believed in the pot of gold at the end of every rainbow. As reports of the strike passed from one person to another ". . . the magnitude of the discovery had kept steadily increasing."² At the time of the discovery, the country was in the grips of a severe economic depression. There were many evicted farmers and unemployed laborers who were taken in by these stories and appeared to lose all contact with reality and rational thinking.

The mass hysteria created by the gold rush was assisted by newspaper journalists who wrote exaggerated stories about the wealth of the strike. When it started, no one had the slightest inclination of what would result from this new discovery of gold. The gold rush was the forerunner of a series of events which would alter the life style of the Great Plains and contributed much to expel the belief that the Great Plains was an uninhabitable desert.³

As the economic potential of the gold rush began to grow and develop, there arose with it a desire for a shorter route to the new gold fields. Logical reasoning showed the geographical location of the Kansas territory could fulfill this need. It did not take long for the merchants of eastern Kansas to recognize this fact and they began to promote the idea of a new and shorter route. The fact that there were already two established routes did not deter them from their goal. These two routes, the Santa Fe and North Platte,

which had been in existence for a number of years, were not conveniently located for travel to the gold fields, as they were north and south of the gold region. This meant that they took travelers several hundred miles out of their way before they reached their destinations. It was this fact that encouraged the merchants of eastern Kansas to promote the idea of a new route, one leading to the establishment of the Smoky Hill Trail.

Although the merchants eventually succeeded in their task, they did not reap the immediate economic benefit they expected. In the end they were rewarded indirectly, as the Smoky Hill Trail allowed numerous settlers to move into and develop the interior of Kansas.

The task in establishing a new trail was by no means an easy one. Because of the hardships suffered by some of the early travelers over this route, the Smoky Hill received a large amount of adverse publicity. A good share of the problems encountered by the users of this new route was the result of their own ignorance. Many of those who chose to use the Smoky Hill embarked upon their journey completely oblivious to the hazards they would encounter. Although forewarned of the dangers, they failed to heed this advice. A portion of these travelers were so naive in their attitude that "When asked how they would live on their long journey, they blithely answered that they would kill game and sleep in barns."⁴ There are numerous examples recorded of the suffering which these innocent travelers encountered. Per-

haps the most pathetic is of the Blue brothers who " . . . gained questionable fame when one reached the mines only after subsisting on the bodies of the two who had succumbed."⁵

Because of the hardships and personal disaster experienced by some of the early travelers of the Smoky Hill, there was a certain amount of controversy over the merits of this particular route. Although the trail was condemned, and those who advocated the use of it were severely criticized for encouraging the use of it, there were some who believed the Smoky Hill could be developed into a practical route. The defenders of the Smoky Hill Trail were ruled by the spirit of competition. Their motive in this effort was to receive for their communities the economic benefits which would be generated by travelers who used this route.

Although they were criticized for their belief, the advocates of the Smoky Hill defended their actions and countered the arguments against the new trail by publishing guidebooks describing the advantages of the Smoky Hill route. These guidebooks stressed the fact that certain precautions and preparations should be made before starting on the journey. Had this advice been taken seriously, most of the hardships and dangers could have been avoided. A portion of this situation was created by newspapers in the towns which would benefit from the business generated by the trail. These newspapers printed numerous stories which contained many fabrications, concerning the lack of danger to travelers using the Smoky Hill. Although these newspaper stories

contained erroneous information, they all offered the same general set of facts and expounded upon the idea that Kansas offered a direct route to the gold fields.⁶

The perseverance of those who supported the trail would eventually produce results. The credit for this accomplishment must go to a dedicated group of people in Leavenworth. Because of its geographic location, these individuals recognized that Leavenworth could benefit extensively from the business produced by people on their way to the gold fields. If the strike continued to grow and develop, as many expected it to do, the profits from this business would be phenomenal. It would not be easy to accomplish this task because of the adverse publicity which was created from the hardships the early travelers over the Smoky Hill had encountered. In spite of this, there were numerous supporters of the route who remained dedicated to their cause and would establish the idea that the Smoky Hill was a safe route.

Although the immediate objective was to establish the road, there were others who were looking at future developments that could possibly be created by placing a permanent trail through the Smoky Hill Valley.⁷ It was at this time that railroads were beginning to captivate the interest of the American public. A side result of the gold strike was the development of the proposal to build a transcontinental railroad. By establishing the Smoky Hill Trail, the chances of building a railroad across Kansas would be enormously

increased. Supporters of the plan to construct the trail were well aware of this fact. To influence others on this idea a newspaper in Lawrence suggested ". . . that if the Smoky Hill Route were not opened the Pacific Railroad would go by way of the Platte Route."⁸

This idea soon spread to other communities and began to grow in popularity. The idea was to be further expanded by newspapers in these areas. This is illustrated by an article in the Manhattan Express which emphasized ". . . that the road . . . would be the forerunner of a railroad which would soon be demanded by the importance which the gold mines on our western border are beginning to assume."⁹ It would be several years before the railroad would become a reality, but the efforts of this group helped to implement the idea that Kansas would make a good location for this future railroad.

Before they accomplished their goal, the supporters of the Smoky Hill Trail would face failure, but they continued at the task until their efforts succeeded. In their haste to establish the trail, the first attempt was a disappointment which ended in a complete failure. Because of this eagerness to establish the road, the people of Leavenworth contracted the services of William Greene Russell who ". . . offered to locate a road over the Smoky Hill Route for \$3,500."¹⁰ For this fee Russell agreed to provide a guide for the road ". . . giving the distance between camping grounds and information on the supply of wood, grass and

water. . . ."11 After completing any necessary preparations, Russell was ready to commence his task and left Leavenworth late in the month of March. Upon the completion of his expedition, he answered the agreement by returning a report to Leavenworth. When this information was made public, there was a large amount of excitement over it. However, there were some who recognized that the information sent back by Russell was of limited value. In his report, Russell did not provide enough satisfactory information for the successful establishment of a permanent road.¹²

No doubt there were some in Leavenworth who were discouraged and disillusioned with the project when the failure of the Russell expedition was fully recognized. However, there were others who were determined to see the project through to a successful completion. Although a costly mistake, the planners were to profit from the experience. Within a short period of time a second expedition was organized to establish the road. The planning and preparation for this attempt was more carefully thought out and better organized.

Because of their earlier mistake, the Leavenworth merchants were more discreet when they began to formulate a plan for another expedition. For this attempt they selected individuals who possessed the skills needed for the task. This expedition was organized into an efficient operation which included a superintendent, a guide, an engineer and a practical surveyor. These individuals were provided with

the necessary wagons and equipment and were assisted by approximately forty other men who did the work needed to construct a usable road.¹³

Selected for the job of superintendent was Henry T. Greene and the job of chief engineer was awarded to O. M. Tennison. After these two individuals were selected, they were given the responsibility of organizing the expedition. By mid-June, Greene and Tennison had completed this task and their party was formed and ready to go. In approximately six weeks, Greene and his party had accomplished what they set out to do.

By early August, reports were received from Greene and Tennison which were satisfactory in their description of the trail and proved to the people of Leavenworth that their goal had been achieved. The information received from Greene and Tennison was encouraging and soon began to circulate into other areas.

The chief engineer, Tennison, assisted in circulating information about the practicality of the Smoky Hill Trail by publishing in the Western Mountaineer a lengthy article describing the journey and what the expedition had accomplished. In his article, Tennison stated the expedition

. . . found an abundance of water and grass and wood and fuel more than sufficient for camping purposes. We have found a first rate road. . . .¹⁴

The authenticity of the road and the description of it was soon backed up by people returning from the gold fields who traveled back over the new route. Describing

their journey, these travelers sustained the enthusiasm that had been started by the report of Tennison and Greene for the Smoky Hill Road.¹⁵

The combination of the reports by members of the expedition and the favorable statements by those who traveled the new road were instrumental in dispelling earlier beliefs and attitudes that the Smoky Hill was a dangerous and hazardous route.

As a promotional effort and to publicize this new and promising information, the city of Leavenworth used the reports of Greene and Tennison as the format for a pamphlet. This pamphlet, "Report and Map of the Superintendent and Engineer of the Smoky Hill Expedition," was designed to make it known that there was now an established road through the Smoky Hill Valley and it expounded upon the advantages of this new route. The pamphlet also pointed out that the city of Leavenworth offered numerous advantages for travelers who chose to use this new route. To illustrate this, the pamphlet describes ". . . from the position which Leavenworth City occupies . . . the emigrant, in his journey to the gold regions of Kansas, can be furnished with everything necessary for the trip at this point."¹⁶ For anyone contemplating a trip to the gold fields, the pamphlet would help to convince them that Leavenworth was the ideal place to start and the Smoky Hill would be the best route to travel.

Although it was designed to promote the city of Leavenworth, the Greene--Tennison expedition was instrumental

in establishing the idea that the Smoky Hill Trail was shorter and as safe as the other established routes. In the coming years the route would prove its usefulness, but only at a later date and under different circumstances. Within several years, the Smoky Hill Trail was to become one of the major travel routes across Kansas. In the end the people of Leavenworth were rewarded for their efforts. However, the financial gain was not as much as that which could have been acquired from emigrants traveling to the gold fields. The trail was to serve as a road for a stage and express line. But of more importance was the fact that the course of the road was to lay the foundation as a proposed route for the Kansas-Pacific Railroad. The combination of these two items was to have a profound impact upon the development and course of events for the Great Plains of western Kansas.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER II

¹Ray Allen Billington, The Far Western Frontier 1830-1860 (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), pp. 259-60.

²Frank A. Root and William Elsey Connelley, The Overland Stage to California (Glorieta, New Mexico: The Rio Grande Press, Inc., 1970), p. 149. (Originally published privately by authors in Topeka, 1901).

³Billington, The Far Western Frontier, pp. 260-61.

⁴Ibid, p. 262.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Calvin W. Gower, "The Pike's Peak Gold Rush and the Smoky Hill Route," Kansas Historical Quarterly, XXV (Summer, 1959), p. 161.

⁷Ibid, pp. 163-64.

⁸Ibid., p. 166.

⁹Ibid., p. 169.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 165.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 167.

¹³Ibid., p. 168.

¹⁴Western Mountaineer (Denver City, Colorado), August 30, 1860.

¹⁵Gower, "Pike's Peak Gold Rush," p. 171.

¹⁶H. T. Greene and O. M. Tennison, "Report and Map of the Superintendent and Engineer of the Smoky Hill Expedition" (Leavenworth: Kansas, 1861), Kansas Historical Pamphlets, III, part 2.

CHAPTER III

THE SMOKY HILL VALLEY AND THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND DESPATCH

Events far removed from the geographical region of Kansas and the Smoky Hill Valley called the attention of the American public eastward, temporarily delaying the active development of this area for several years. The national calamity of the Civil War fell upon the United States in the spring of 1861. This gigantic struggle captivated the interest and compelled the energy of the American people, both north and south. The war effort became their number one priority and other issues were relegated to positions of lesser importance.

Nevertheless, efforts were continued during the Civil War years to establish a transcontinental railroad. This much talked of railroad was on the horizon and would soon become a reality. Along with the railroad was an ambitious project to establish a freight and stageline on the newly established Smoky Hill Trail. These two items guaranteed that the settlement of central and western Kansas would resume as soon as the war ended. The railroad and trail were instrumental in helping to aggravate the Indians and would

help create a major role for the military in helping to tame the frontier during the post-war years.

Both the North and the South readily perceived the importance of the West to their war effort. Indeed, the national government "did not turn its back on the West while it dealt with the rebellious South."¹ President Lincoln and his administration appreciated the allegiance expressed by delegations from the western territories, stating their support for the Union and the war. In a display of appreciation, the government assigned volunteer troops throughout the West to maintain the emigrant routes, to provide security for the mail and telegraph services, and to offer protection to the exposed settlements. At the conclusion of the war, these tasks would be assumed as a primary mission by the regular army.²

There is no doubt that four years of Civil War curtailed westward expansion to a certain extent. "Despite the war the flow of emigration continued. From the Pacific Coast as well as the East, emigrants poured into the new territories over established travel routes and blazed new ones too."³ It made no difference to these people that the country was in the grips of a struggle to decide whether it was to be divided into two countries or remain united. The beckoning of the West persisted and there were those who, for various reasons, heeded the call. War or no war, the frontier, on a limited capacity, would continue to be expanded and developed. This enthusiasm was further stimu-

lated by the discovery of several large mineral deposits in the western territories. These discoveries, combined with a steady flow of settlers, helped to intensify the importance of the need for a more efficient transportation and communication system. Within a short period of time the Smoky Hill Valley would play an important role in the development of freight lines and as a major branch of the transcontinental railroad. The decision to establish a railroad in this area was made before the express line was established, with construction of the railroad starting after the Civil War was concluded.

For organizational purposes only, the events leading to these decisions will be in sequential order, with a brief description of circumstances which led to the establishment of the railroad. This will be followed by a general summary of the founding of the express line known as the Butterfield Overland Despatch. It is necessary to explain these two subjects, because without them, there would have been no need for the series of forts that were constructed along the Smoky Hill Trail.

As described in the preceding chapter, it was the discovery of gold which provided the stimulus creating a large amount of interest in this region. Although the gold strike displayed the need for better transportation and did much to encourage its development, there were numerous plans proposing railroad construction before this event took place.

When the Kansas Territory was organized in 1854, there

arose a discussion of building on to existing eastern railroads to link both sides of the continent by rail. Early leaders in the Kansas Territory were quick to recognize that the geographical location and physical terrain of the Kansas plains were ideal for railroad construction. One of the first official acts of the new territorial legislature which convened in March of 1855, was to grant charters to five railroad companies. During the next several years, railroads were a major topic of discussion during the legislative sessions. Plans to start a railroad were so popular "that in the years 1855-60 'paper railways' became more common in Kansas than weeds in a roadside ditch."⁴ Within five years after the Kansas Territory was first organized, approximately one hundred railroads had been incorporated by the territorial legislature. From this multitude of railroads, the majority of which would never lay one foot of track, there emerged a small number which eventually became the main lines through Kansas. Of these, the one which was to play a dominant role in the Smoky Hill region was the Union Pacific Eastern Division. Eventually this name would be shortened to the Kansas Pacific.⁵

The forerunner of this railroad, chartered in 1855, was known as the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western. As stipulated in the terms of the charter this railroad was ". . . to build from the Missouri up the Valleys of the Kansas and Republican rivers to Fort Kearney, Nebraska."⁶ By 1857 the railroad was organized and construction was started in May

of that year. By the end of the year a route from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Riley had been surveyed and the location of the line between these two points had been established. Events would soon change the course of this railroad to where it would be built directly across Kansas.⁷

During the presidential election of 1860, one of the main campaign issues of the Republican party was the promise to pursue the development and construction of a transcontinental railroad. In July of 1862, President Lincoln fulfilled this pledge by signing into law the Pacific Railway Bill. The terms of the bill

. . . provided for federal aid for the construction of a transcontinental railroad and provided for three feeder lines which were authorized to build through Kansas and eventually connect with the mainline in Nebraska.⁸

One of these feeder lines was to be the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western. Within a short period of time, efforts were being made to change the original course of this railroad and build it in a direct line from east to west across Kansas, with its terminus at Denver. The most logical route for this would be parallel to the Smoky Hill Trail.

This task was accomplished with the assistance of Senator Henderson from Missouri. The Senator proposed a bill in Congress which

. . . argued that the Smoky Hill Route was 134 miles shorter than the Republican River route to Denver; that the country through which it passed was richer and possessed an abundant supply of coal; that the company was offering to build the road without bond aid. . . .⁹

The basis for proposing this change was that this line could

have a tremendous effect on the development of trade in the New Mexico Territory. Senator Henderson's efforts were to be successful ". . . in 1866 the government granted the Eastern Division permission to build to Denver via the Smoky Hill Valley."¹⁰ Along with granting permission to change the route, the government added an additional incentive, by awarding the railroad company nearly four million acres of public land adjacent to the proposed route. This land was to be disposed of by the railroad to help cover the cost of construction.¹¹

This decision was warmly welcomed by the people of western Missouri and eastern Kansas. Their enthusiasm can best be described by an article in the Manhattan Kansas Radical of July 14, 1866. The article expressed the idea that

The route over the Smoky Hill will be the main route from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Nature so decrees it. . . . Being so it puts Kansas in the center of the Union . . . and will draw to it rapidly and steadily a dense population for our state, indeed, it is a material triumph, the extent which no mind can calculate.¹²

Perhaps the author of this article had a gifted talent to perceive the future. After its construction, the railroad gave the white man a tremendous advantage in his conquest of the western frontier.

The Indians of this area, who considered this their ancestral homeland, would not stand idly by and have their land wrested from them. Thus, the coming of the railroad helped to instigate a major struggle for control of the

Great Plains between the white man and the Indian. This struggle would not cease until the Indian was completely subjugated and his will to resist was broken forever.

Although there was much interest and emphasis upon establishing a railroad across Kansas, the first important use of the Smoky Hill Valley was for an express and stage route. This express business developed concurrently with the railroad and helped to establish the importance of the trail. The man responsible for achieving this was David A. Butterfield. In the early 1860's, Butterfield was one of Denver's leading businessmen. While there, he formed an extensive acquaintance in the towns and mining camps of Colorado. Butterfield had a good eye for business and quickly recognized the potential that the vast commerce of the plains and mining communities could offer. A description of Butterfield characterizes him as an energetic person with an ambition to organize and establish some great enterprise connected with the overland route.¹³ His ambition was developed into a scheme that would be promoted into a gigantic enterprise.

In June of 1864, he established residency in Atchison and began work on setting up his express business. For the task at hand, Butterfield possessed a natural talent. He was described as ". . . a smooth talker, was very ambitious and had few equals as an organizer. . . ." ¹⁴ As it offered the most direct route from Atchison to Denver, it was only logical that Butterfield should select the Smoky Hill Trail

for his express line. By the early months of 1865, Butterfield had convinced others of his plan. His salesmanship gained him the necessary financial support. With his financial base firmly established, he formed a joint stock company which was named the Butterfield Overland Despatch. In this company, nearly three million dollars were invested; half of this initial outlay was paid in cash.¹⁵

To publicize the new business, Butterfield engaged in an extensive advertising campaign. In the spring of 1865, a vast amount of money was spent to publicize the new business. Notices were put in newspapers in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Denver and Salt Lake City. From the advertising, the Butterfield Overland Despatch became one of the most popular topics in the country. "The leading newspapers printed column after column about it and everywhere it was talked about."¹⁶ The advertising campaign achieved better results than originally expected. By late June, the company had enough consignments to start the first train. On June 24, 1865, ". . . the first train of the Butterfield Overland Despatch Company's freight wagons set out from Atchison . . . loaded with seventy-five tons of freight for Denver and the Colorado mining towns."¹⁷

Once the freighting business was firmly established, Butterfield began to prepare his line to handle passenger travel. To accommodate those who desired to travel by this overland route, he purchased twenty new stagecoaches and more than two hundred high grade horses to pull them. To

provide the travelers with adequate facilities ". . . relay stations were being built along the entire Smoky Hill route at intervals of approximately twelve miles."¹⁸ By September, all preparations were completed and the first stage over the new road was traveling west.

From all indications it appeared that Butterfield's operation would be an overwhelming success. However, it would not be long before the company was financially ruined. "It was less than eighteen months from the first organization of the Overland Despatch until there was nothing left of it."¹⁹ This resulted from heavy financial debts and extremely high operating costs. Financially ruined, Butterfield sold the business to the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company. Although continuing the operation, this new company was plagued with the same problems which destroyed Butterfield's Company.²⁰ The financial problems both companies faced were the result of post-war recession which crippled the mining industry and the increasing number of Indian attacks.²¹ With the expanding use of the trail, attacks by Indians were becoming more frequent. Many of the relay stations were destroyed within the first year. As travel over the Smoky Hill was becoming extremely hazardous, merchants and travelers became reluctant to utilize the services offered over this route.²²

The problems Butterfield encountered with Indians were not isolated to the Smoky Hill Region. Attacks were becoming more numerous along the Platte and Santa Fe routes as

well. Because of this, pressure was put upon the government and army to see that these routes remained open to travel.

In the years following the Civil War these western travel routes would be of vital necessity for advancing the frontier. In the post-war period, westward expansion resumed with a renewed vigor, and on such a grand scale that within fifteen years approximately two and one-half million white settlers entered the western territories.²³ This infiltration of white settlers to the Great Plains created an untenable situation for the Plains Indians. The plight of the Indians can best be described from a statement made by contemporary Senator Morrill of Maine. He summed up the Indian predicament by stating,

. . . as population has approached the Indian we have removed him beyond population. But population now encounters him on both sides of the continent, and there is no place on the continent to which he can be removed beyond the progress of population.²⁴

Thus, the wheels of progress were beginning to turn at a more rapid pace and any obstacle which stood in its path would be crushed. It was only natural for the Indian to offer resistance, and after a long and tragic struggle, he was eliminated. The object here is not to explain in detail the entire story of this tragedy, but to briefly illustrate how the drama of this situation dictated events and developments in western Kansas.

With the rapid increase of transportation and settlements, military protection for the travel routes became a

leading priority. This expansion placed extraordinary demands upon the military. During the Civil War, manpower requirements to defend the borders of Kansas from Confederate raiders placed a heavy demand on the State's supply of available men for defense. This left the northern and western areas of the state without adequate military protection to quell the increasing number of Indian attacks. As a result, the public began to demand that not only in Kansas but other western states and territories as well, that the military do something and do it as soon as possible. It was not until the war ended that the army was able to fulfill this request.²⁵

At the conclusion of the Civil War, the U.S. Army had successfully completed the monumental task of forcing the fractious southern states to remain in the Union. With the completion of this task, the mission of the regular army turned to the protection of the public in the western territories. It did not take the military planners long to recognize that the railroad and overland routes would be of vital necessity to the logistics for the upcoming plains campaign. The officer primarily responsible for promoting the strategic importance of the transportation routes was General William Tecumseh Sherman.

When the army was reorganized at the end of the Civil War, General Sherman was retained as one of the high ranking general officers. The basic plan devised by the army was to organize the western states and territories into military

departments. General Sherman was given command of a vast area known as the Division of the Missouri. The geographical area contained in Sherman's division extended from the Dakotas in the north to Texas in the south and extended west to the Rocky Mountains. Within his command were the three major overland routes, the Santa Fe, the Smoky Hill and the Platte. Here also was the proposed route for the transcontinental railroad which would soon begin construction. The keen military mind of Sherman quickly perceived the strategic importance of these several lines of transportation. The military value of these lines can best be explained in General Sherman's own words. In referring to the Union Pacific Eastern Division Railroad through Kansas, he regarded ". . . this road as the most important element now in progress to facilitate the military interest of our frontier."²⁶ In devising the military plan for his division, Sherman put a high priority on the existing and future travel routes. It was his opinion that ". . . this modern means of transportation would not only save the government a vast sum of money, but immeasurably increase the efficiency of the military army on the frontier."²⁷ Although the idea of improving the efficiency of the army is open to challenge, the expanding transportation system played a vital role in assisting the army to subdue the Indian on the Great Plains. With the military importance that these existing and future transportation routes assumed, it was clear to General Sherman and other high ranking officers that the best strat-

logical use of these routes would be to ". . . employ the method of penetration, using well guarded roads as wedges into the great block of territory . . ."28 that was to be controlled. From this notion, the idea was conceived that small army posts, placed along the principal western travel routes could serve as forage depots to support cavalry expeditions in their mission to defend these roads. Necessity demanded these military posts be small, because

. . . to give them any sizeable body of troops would mean placing them too far apart to be of much use. By spreading out the available men, outposts might be located as close as one hundred miles from each other.²⁹

Although these posts were expensive to maintain and were not as effective as originally planned ". . . the necessity of western travel dictated their locations."³⁰

By establishing these posts along the travel routes, the military hoped to create a feeling of omnipresence among the Indians and thus discourage them from hostile acts. The basis of this plan was sound, but when put into operation it failed to achieve its desired results. It failed because the number of regular army troops assigned to the western forts was too small to effectively patrol such a vast area.³¹

The Smoky Hill Trail, along with the other travel routes, played an important role in the development of this plan; ". . . these roads were heavily traveled, and their protection was an absolute necessity."³² For the Smoky Hill, this plan called for the establishment of three new military posts; Fort Harker, Fort Hays and Fort Wallace. These posts,

and others which would be established along the Santa Fe and Platte trails were to have the responsibility of protecting these travel routes through Kansas, Nebraska and part of Colorado.³³

At this point, perhaps, a general summary of this work is in order, as the following material will begin to focus specifically on the establishment, development and important events of Fort Wallace. The first portion of this narration has been to explain a cause and effect relationship. The idea in offering a general description of these previous topics is to show that if these events had not occurred, the establishment of the military post of Fort Wallace would not have become a reality. All of these items are, of course, directly or indirectly related to the overall expansion of the western frontier. Specific examples of this cause and effect relationship would be the Pike's Peak Gold Rush creating the idea of establishing the Smoky Hill Trail. In turn, the trail germinating the idea of David Butterfield establishing a freight line over it, and railroad promoters recognizing its geographical structure as suitable for a proposed railroad. These items created renewed difficulties with the Indians and therefore necessitated the demand for military protection. This resulted in the military plan to saturate the Great Plains with military posts. From this point, the structure of this work will now turn to a more detailed examination of material and events which led to the permanent establishment of the

military post of Fort Wallace, Kansas. This examination will be divided into three specific parts. The first will be the development and construction of the post. This will be followed by a description of the role of Fort Wallace in protecting the travel routes, and major engagements with hostile Indians, and the third will conclude with the fulfillment of this mission and events which led to the abandoning of Fort Wallace as a military reservation.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER III

¹Utley, Frontiersmen in Blue, p. 214.

²Ibid., pp. 215-16.

³Ibid., p. 215.

⁴Charles W. Howe, This Place Called Kansas (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), p. 102.

⁵Ibid., pp. 101-02.

⁶Robert W. Richmond, Kansas: A Land of Contrasts (St. Charles, Missouri: Forum Press, 1974), p. 99.

⁷George L. Anderson, Kansas West (San Marcos, Calif.: Golden West Books, 1963), p. 11.

⁸Richmond, Kansas, p. 15.

⁹Anderson, Kansas West, p. 15.

¹⁰William Frank Zornow, Kansas a History of the Jayhawk State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), p. 137.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Richmond, Kansas, p. 99.

¹³Root and Connelley, Overland Stage, p. 391.

¹⁴H. C. Raynesford, "The Smoky Hill Trail" (address given to the Rotarians at Ellis, Kansas, January 23, 1935, p. 2. (Copy at H. F. Davis Memorial Library, Colby Community College).

¹⁵Alma D. Johnson, Trail Dust Over the B. O. D. Through Kansas (Detroit: Harlo Press, 1975), p. 16.

¹⁶Raynesford, "The Smoky Hill Trail", p. 2.

17 Johnson, Trail Dust, p. 26.

18 Ibid., pp. 26-27.

19 Root and Connelley, Overland Stage, p. 403.

20 Ibid.

21 Johnson, Trail Dust, p. 27.

22 Raynesford, "Smoky Hill Trail", p. 13.

23 Robert M. Utley, Frontier Regulars - The United States Army and the Indian 1866-1891 (New York: Macmillian Publishing Co., 1967), p. 2.

24 Ibid., p. 4.

25 David Kay Strate, Sentinel on the Cimarron The Frontier Experience of Fort Dodge, Kansas (Dodge City, Kansas: Cultural Heritage Arts Center, 1970), p. 17.

26 Robert G. Athearn, William Tecumseh Sherman and the Settlement of the West (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 24.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., p. 33.

29 Ibid., p. 43.

30 Ibid.

31 Utley, Frontier Regulars, pp. 11-15.

32 Athearn, Sherman, Settlement of the West, p. 37.

33 Marvin Garfield, "The Military Post as a Factor in the Frontier Defense of Kansas," Kansas Historical Quarterly, XXV (November, 1931), pp. 51-52.

CHAPTER IV
ESTABLISHING THE LOCATION
AND
THE CONSTRUCTION OF FORT WALLACE

With the increasing importance of the overland routes, efforts were begun by military strategists to offer protection to emigrants who would use them. So important were these transportation arteries to westward expansion--forerunners of the trans-Mississippi railroad--that their defense and protection became the number one priority for the army. High ranking officers were instructed to give particular attention to Indian troubles along the several overland highways. The suggested solution to this problem was the decision to build a series of permanent military posts along the Platte, Smoky Hill and Arkansas River routes. The decision by David Butterfield to use the Smoky Hill as the route for his freight and express business was to play a major part in the selection of locations along the Smoky Hill Trail as sites for a line of permanent military posts.¹

Before Butterfield could put his business into full operation, an expedition had to be sent from Atchison to Denver to establish the route. This expedition was assigned the task of surveying the exact course of the road, construct

any necessary bridges and to erect stations at a distance of every ten to fifteen miles for the convenience of travelers and teamsters hauling freight. The army was to assume an active role in this expedition. Under instructions given in special order No. 143, Department of the Missouri, dated June 9, 1865, Second Lieutenant Julian R. Fitch was assigned to accompany the expedition and to perform the duties of surveyor. He was well qualified for this task, as he was the surveyor five years earlier for the expedition of Henry T. Greene, which was organized and financed by the city of Leavenworth. It will be recalled that it was this organization which firmly established the feasibility of the Smoky Hill Trail.²

During the preceding five years, the original trail had received only limited use, therefore it was necessary to retrace its course. The order assigning Lieutenant Fitch as surveyor also instructed him to suggest suitable locations for U.S. military posts along the route. As a result of the instructions given to Lieutenant Fitch, several military posts were to be established on the Smoky Hill Trail. The last and most western of these posts in Kansas was that of Fort Wallace.³

By mid-June of 1865, the party was organized and ready to start. Lieutenant Fitch was not the only military person to accompany this group. The army assigned a rather large number of volunteer troops and engineers to escort the expedition. At Fort Riley the party was joined by two companies

of the Third Wisconsin cavalry, and when they arrived at Fort Ellsworth (later renamed Fort Harker), west of Salina, two companies of the Thirteenth Missouri cavalry joined the expedition. By this time the party consisted of 26 men who worked as constructionists, with a train of 11 wagons loaded with the necessary tools and other equipment needed for putting the road in good condition. The cavalry escort numbered 250 men, plus a detachment from the engineer corps.⁴

As they made their journey across the plains, they selected sites every ten to fifteen miles for stations and named each location. Many locations were named after members who accompanied the expedition. The station near which Fort Wallace was eventually located was named Pond's Creek. This site was named after Captain James Burton Pond, Commander of the escorting Third Wisconsin cavalry. This location was also recommended by Lieutenant Fitch as a place for a permanent military post. Early military correspondence to and from this location refers to it as Camp Pond Creek. In April 1866 instructions were issued from Headquarters, Department of the Missouri, authorizing the change of the post's name to Fort Wallace, honoring Brigadier General W.H.L. Wallace, who was killed at the Battle of Shiloh.⁵

By September of 1865 the expedition had completed the road to Denver and the Butterfield Overland Despatch became fully operational. To insure its unhindered operation, General Grenville Dodge, Commander of the Department of the Missouri, issued orders which ". . . placed troops on the

road west from Fort Ellsworth at Big Creek, Monument Station and Pond's Creek, who will closely watch and protect the road from Indian depredations."⁶ Part of these troops assigned to this duty were from Lieutenant Fitch's escort party.

The establishment of this line of forts was in conjunction with the overall master plan to inundate the Indian territory of the Great Plains with what would appear to be a large force of soldiers. To illustrate how these forts increased in number, there were 73 forts on the frontier in 1860, each post held an average garrison of 180 men. Seven years later these figures had expanded to 116 posts, with an average manpower strength of 212 soldiers.⁷ To effectively command this expanded area, the military divided the region into three different categories: divisions, departments and districts. Each of these was assigned to a specific geographical area. The largest of the divisions was the Division of the Missouri. "This division encompassed all of the central plains from the border of Mexico to Canada and composed four departments. One of these, the Department of the Missouri, covered the whole of the state of Kansas."⁸ This department was then divided into districts. The forts to be located along the Santa Fe and Smoky Hill were placed in the District of the Upper Arkansas with headquarters at Fort Harker.⁹ Once the structure for this organization had been completed, preparations were commenced to begin garrisoning these new posts.

In the fall of 1865, under orders from Generals Sherman and Pope

. . . volunteer and regular army troops were sent out from Fort Leavenworth . . . to Pond's Creek, Fort Aubrey, Fort Fletcher, Ellsworth, Dodge and other places, to protect stage stations and act as escorts for the stage-coaches.¹⁰

This order brought the first military garrison troops for duty at Pond Creek. Beginning their tenure of duty at this post was the 15th Missouri cavalry commanded by Captain McMichael.

The captain and his volunteers officially assumed their duties at Camp Pond Creek on October 26, 1865. One of their first tasks was to locate a camp where suitable quarters could be provided. The site chosen by Captain McMichael was along a line of bluffs south of the South Fork of the Smoky Hill and at a point approximately one mile west of where the permanent fort would be built. The captain's motive for locating his camp along the bluff was for the convenience of constructing dugouts. This mode of quartering troops was common on the plains until permanent structures could be erected and, when well constructed and not over-crowded, experience had proved them suitable for temporary use.¹¹

Duty for the 15th Missouri cavalry during the winter months offered very little in the way of interest or excitement. The only item recorded of any significance was when a buffalo bull traveling across the tableland reached the insecure roof of Surgeon Whipple's dugout ". . . through which

he precipitated in a proximity too close to be agreeable."¹² The Doctor must have been blessed with misfortune as he was also the victim of the only notable incident with the Indians during the first winter. It was reported that when he was returning ". . . from Monument, a post at which he likewise performed the duties of Surgeon, he was attacked by Indians and lost considerable public and private property."¹³

As the winter months passed, and with very little activity taking place to break the monotony of routine duties, the volunteer troops became bored and more concerned with being mustered out. On February 14, 1866, the supplies of the post were nearly exhausted and the decision was made to abandon the camp. The fear of starvation was the rationale behind this decision. Their worry of starvation was groundless because ". . . a few days later a wagon train loaded with rations and other supplies arrived at Camp Pond Creek."¹⁴ Of course, those responsible for the decision had no way of knowing that relief would arrive ". . . in time to save the garrison any inconvenience."¹⁵

The abandoned site was not to remain idle for long. During the winter of 1865-1866 plans were being formulated at District Headquarters to establish and construct suitable facilities to house and quarter a permanent garrison of troops at several points along the Smoky Hill route. The site of Pond Creek was selected as one of these locations. In the spring of 1866, Captain Edward Ball, in command of

Company H, Second U.S. cavalry arrived at Pond Creek to begin work on establishing a permanent post. Within a short period of time, Captain Ball made an estimate of the situation. Rather than clean up the abandoned site, he decided to move the post closer to the stage station. After Captain Ball had been at Camp Pond Creek for several weeks, and had the opportunity to become familiar with his new surroundings, he was requested to submit a written report and describe what would be needed to make the post comfortable and of sufficient capacity to hold the garrison with supplies for one year.¹⁶

Organizational plans for the post called for it to be a garrison of two companies: one cavalry and one infantry. The report submitted by Captain Ball described what he felt would be necessary to adequately house and store the supplies needed for a two-company post. He recommended that one barracks be built for each of the respective companies. For adequate living space he suggested that each be at least 130 feet long by 28 feet wide. Included in the barracks plan were quarters for laundresses and buildings for kitchen and mess facilities. For the storage of commissary and quartermaster stores, Captain Ball recommended that two buildings be erected with dimensions of 80 feet by 18 feet. To adequately stable the cavalry and quartermaster horses, a building 200 feet by 25 feet would be needed. Of course, no military post would be complete without the ever present guard house. The captain felt that a building 30 feet by 15 feet

would be adequate. Also needed would be a hospital with dimensions of 30 feet by 18 feet. Rounding out his report, Captain Ball stated that a building 50 feet by 18 feet would be needed to house the shops of the blacksmith, wheelwright, and carpenter.¹⁷

At the time Captain Ball submitted his report, construction on the buildings for the commissary and quartermaster stores had already commenced, with one building already completed and the other one expected to be completed within a short period of time. And, after completion, he expected to have several thousand feet of lumber left of that supplied from Denver. The captain completed his report by stating that all other material needed for construction purposes would have to be furnished. An earlier report, similar to Captain Ball's, recommended that all lumber and materials needed for construction of post buildings be acquired from Denver City. The advantage in this was that it would be less expensive to acquire this material from Denver than to have it shipped from Fort Leavenworth. Included in this report was information which stated that native rock was available and could be used for foundations. The use of this material would eliminate part of the problems in procuring construction material. However, to extract this rock for building purposes would require a tremendous amount of labor and a need for special tools. Obtaining the tools through the army supply system was a prodigious task in itself. This fact combined with the ever present problem of a

shortage of troops at the post compounded the problem of quarrying the stone for construction.¹⁸

From the information contained in these reports, authority was granted to construct facilities for a two-company post. Before all construction was completed the location of the post would be moved a third time and numerous unforeseen difficulties would be encountered, prolonging construction and in some instances bringing it to a complete halt. The bulk of these problems were created by an inefficient quartermaster service, irregular mail schedules, and attacks by hostile Indians.

Captain Ball did not remain at the post long enough to see any of his recommendations become realities. He was spared the frustration of the aforementioned problems by reassignment to recruiting duty. Captain Ball and his company were relieved of duty on June 6, 1866 by Company B, Sixth U.S. Volunteers under the command of Captain James J. Gordon. This volunteer company was soon to be reinforced by Company M, Second U.S. cavalry. Shortly after the arrival of this regular army unit, Company B was also relieved of duty and mustered out of active service.¹⁹

As post commander, Captain Gordon was instructed by Division headquarters to submit a report describing the post and the availability of resources in the surrounding area. The report submitted was, in a sense, erroneous, and created some confusion at headquarters. Captain Gordon's term as post commander was brief, as he was relieved the following

July by Lieutenant A.E. Bates, Second U.S. cavalry. With the change in command, the erroneous description by Captain Gordon was brought to light. Almost as soon as he took command, Lieutenant Bates ". . . immediately complained the situation was not as favorable as Gordon claimed."²⁰ The rationale behind the report submitted by Captain Gordon is open to speculation. However, physical examination of this area and the description in these respective reports leads one to wonder if the two officers were describing the same area.

The report sent to District Headquarters by Captain Gordon contains the following description:

The sight [sic] of the post is a level bottom through which a clean creek of water passes . . . and the margins of the creek are covered with good grass for shock. The country in every direction from the post for miles around are bold bluffs and canyons. In the canyons on the south side there is timber in sufficient quantity to furnish the post for an unlimited time also within a distance of fifteen miles timber can be had for building purposes in limited quantities. The kind and quality of timber mostly Cottonwood and Hackberry. . . five miles south of the post there is a heavy meadow from which hay in sufficient quantity can be had to supply the post. . . .²¹

Anyone without prior knowledge of the area described would assume that the post was ideally located and that there were sufficient natural resources available for it to operate.

By writing his report in the early spring, it is possible that Captain Gordon could have been misled by the rapid growth of the native grass which occurs at this time of year. This grass grows to a height of several inches and

then becomes dormant when the weather turns hot through the summer months. Being new to the area and unfamiliar with the vegetation, it is possible that he thought the grass would continue to grow throughout the summer months. The information about available lumber puzzles the imagination, as anyone familiar with the area of western Kansas is well aware of the fact that native trees are few and far between. Even a newcomer, such as Captain Gordon, would have no difficulty in recognizing this fact. Although there were a limited number of Cottonwood and Hackberry trees available, Captain Gordon should have known that these particular trees are unsuitable for building purposes. Had Captain Gordon remained at the post, he would have possibly recognized some of his errors, but he was ordered back East and released from active service. With his departure, command of the post was assumed by Lieutenant Bates.

Almost as soon as he took command, Lieutenant Bates filed two separate reports describing a more realistic picture. The first report, dated July 1, 1866, was sent to Brevt. Captain W.H. Harrison, acting Assistant Adjutant General, District of the Upper Arkansas. The second report was submitted to Colonel Roger Jones, Inspector General, Military Division of the Missouri. The objective in these two reports was to correct the errors of the earlier description, and to explain why it was necessary to relocate the site of the post for a third time. From these reports, Lieutenant Bates expected to protect himself from any unjust

criticism that might arise. The description which Lieutenant Bates sent in stated that

The camp was pitched in the most unfavorable place for a post that could be found for miles around. . . . It is now in a low bottom that can be approached from either side to within a few hundred yards entirely unknown to anyone at the post. As for the wood spoken of there is not more than one years supply and that along the bed of the Smoky. As for the ravines on either side Capt. Gordon was misinformed as I have been over the country and there is no wood in them for building or firewood. There is no building material within fifteen miles and I am informed by the guide that there is none nearer than seventy-five miles north of here.²²

In reference to the abundance of forage, the lieutenant's report was less than inspiring and was quite critical.

From what I have seen of the country about here I think that the quality of hay that can be cut in this vicinity has been much overated Siq . . . I have inspected the ground in this vicinity and. . . am certain that there cannot be cut within eighteen miles of this post eighteen tons of hay.²³

Because of the limited amount of forage in the vicinity, Lieutenant Bates believed that it would be necessary to cut and press the forage along the Arkansas River and have it transported to the post. This task would not be too difficult as the distance was approximately 100 miles. As a solution to the problem of obtaining wood for building purposes, the lieutenant suggested that good lumber could be bought for approximately thirty dollars per thousand feet from pineries located about 160 miles distance.²⁴

Although his initial report offers a rather uninspiring description for the development of a permanent post,

Lieutenant Bates included in his report suggestions for improvements. As he remained in command of the post longer than his several predecessors, many of his recommendations were approved and eventually followed through. Under his guidance a construction program was started and subsequently completed by future troops and commanders stationed at the post.

When he assumed command, Lieutenant Bates received instructions from higher authority to go ahead with the construction on buildings that would be needed to make the troops comfortable and to adequately store supplies and equipment. Future events would show that this was to be a monumental task; not only for Lieutenant Bates, but also for those who followed him as post commander. The lieutenant's problems were to start almost immediately upon assuming command. When he arrived at the post on June 27, Lieutenant Bates found that very little had been accomplished and informed headquarters

The troops were in camp on the spot where a company had made a temporary encampment in the spring. A site for the post had not been selected, no plot of the reservation at the post, if one had ever been made, and in fact nothing to distinguish this from any previous encampment save one building put up of lumber for the protection of common stores.²⁵

In spite of the handicaps facing him, Lieutenant Bates and the troops in his command set to work erecting facilities for a permanent post.

One of the first requests made by Lieutenant Bates was to ask for permission from District Headquarters to move the

location of the post to a more suitable position. This meant to a place where the fort could be defended against a surprise attack. Because he considered this move to be an urgent matter and time of essential importance, Lieutenant Bates took it upon himself to select a new site before he received proper authority. Although he exceeded his authority in this matter, permission was eventually granted from District Headquarters. The new site selected was two miles east on an open area of tableland, in contrast to the lower bottom lands of the former position, and allowing unobstructed vision for several miles in every direction. After Lieutenant Bates had selected what was to be the permanent site of the post, he had the temporary buildings disassembled and moved to this location to be rebuilt. Once this task was completed the troops were put to work building permanent structures.²⁶

To compensate for the lack of wood needed for building purposes, the native sandstone that was found earlier was utilized to construct the exterior walls of the buildings. Lieutenant Bates was quite enthusiastic about the use of this rock. His optimism over this material is revealed in reports to his superiors. He reported that approximately three miles from the post there was one of the finest quarries of sandstone that he had ever seen. He was confident that if the necessary tools and equipment were provided that this stone could be easily worked and made suitable for building purposes. Rather than wait on this equipment,

which would take months to acquire, work was commenced with the men and equipment that were available.

Acquiring the rock without the proper implements was much more laborious and required a larger number of men to do the work. Despite these circumstances, rock was obtained to begin building the walls for stables and quarters, but wood for roofing was an entirely different problem. It was expected that the Quartermaster Department would grant permission to purchase material for roofing. As simple as this seems, the Quartermaster Department would prove to be less than cooperative.²⁷

When he commenced this program of construction, Lieutenant Bates was skeptical about the Quartermaster Department sending the equipment needed for quarrying the stone and authorizing the purchase of roofing material. His skepticism is revealed in a letter he wrote to the District Adjutant General. In this letter his attitude towards the Quartermaster Department is revealed when he stated

My experience with the Quartermaster Department out here has been such that I am not sanguine about getting the necessary material for building until I have done most of the work without them. If I have the proper quarrying tools, such as I have sent for, the work that twenty men are performing could be done by six equally well.²⁸

As time passed, the lieutenant's assumption would prove correct. By August 15, he reported to his superiors that permission had not yet been granted to purchase roofing material. In spite of this, construction was continuing, as he stated in the same report that the stable walls would

be completed by September tenth and the barracks walls were expected to be finished approximately ten days later. Not having the roofing material was of grave concern. He expressed the idea that the wood should be cut as soon as possible and allowed to become seasoned before use.²⁹

Time was becoming an important factor, as the fall season of 1866 and colder weather was rapidly approaching. Favorable events soon developed. On August 18th Lieutenant Bates received permission to purchase the lumber and supplies needed to complete the post. From this, it appeared that the buildings would be completed before cold weather set in. Obvious as it seemed, this was not the case, as unforeseen problems were looming in the immediate future.³⁰

Although permission had been granted to purchase the lumber for roofing, and to have it delivered by private transportation, Lieutenant Bates was still plagued with problems quarrying the stone and getting it hauled to the post. Production at the rock quarry was slowed because of a limited number of teamsters, who had other needs and priorities placed upon them. Associated with this problem was the fact that the Quartermaster Department still had not sent the tools requested earlier.

These problems combined with the fact that summer weather was rapidly disappearing had Lieutenant Bates concerned. His worry was that the buildings might not be erected before cold weather set in and thus force his troops to face the elements without adequate shelter. Lieutenant

Bates offered a solution to this predicament. He requested permission to employ civilian mechanics, who were at present working for the stage company putting up stations, to assist with the construction. As most of the carpenter work would have to be done in cold weather, he felt it necessary to hire additional help in order to complete the job quicker.³¹ The request must have fallen on deaf ears, because the Post Returns of September through November reveal that only three carpenters and ten stone masons were employed at the post. Eventually these numbers were increased, but not until the troops had spent a miserable winter housed in inadequate quarters. Post records show that during the summer of 1867 a substantial number of civilian mechanics were employed to work on post construction. This was of little consolation for the troops, however, who had to live in cold quarters because of the incompetence at higher levels.³²

Despite numerous problems during that first summer of 1866, a substantial beginning on permanent structures had been made. It would take another full year before many of the buildings would be ready for occupancy. The troops of Company M, Second U.S. cavalry had contributed great toil and labor in this task, but they were not to be rewarded in seeing the fruits of their labor completed, or to be comforted by the buildings they had toiled on. The company was to be reassigned to a new location.

On September first, Lieutenant Bates and Company M

were given their orders for reassignment. Before leaving, they no doubt looked back with pride on some of their accomplishments during their stay at the post. Yet, the shoddy work of Company M also created headaches for the troops who were to follow them. Some of their accomplishments were that the original post site was abandoned in favor of one that was better suited for defensive purposes, and a temporary storehouse and bake house were completed. Also started was a well which was dug by hand to a depth of 80 feet. The first 50 feet of this well was dug through a hard shale permeated with petroleum. The well yielded an inadequate water supply and was tainted by the petroleum. Because of this, the project was abandoned and the well was refilled. The work started by Company M was continued by their replacements. This subsequent unit and its commander inherited the same administrative difficulties that had plagued their predecessors.³³

When Company M departed Fort Wallace the garrison that remained consisted of approximately 30 volunteer troops of Company B, Sixth infantry. The primary concern of these troops was their daily expectation of being relieved of duty and released from active service. Their anticipation of being mustered out ". . . dispelled all interests in the improvements already begun and nothing was done until the arrival of Company E, Third infantry."³⁴ This unit arrived at Fort Wallace in mid-October 1866, and was reinforced approximately six weeks later by Company I, Seventy cavalry,

commanded by Captain Myles W. Keogh. As Captain Keogh was the senior officer present, he assumed the duties of post commander. Both of these units were to remain at the post for the better part of a full year. During their tenure at the post a considerable amount of construction was completed, but not without the usual amount of difficulties encountered by their predecessors.

As winter was rapidly approaching, and the prospect of being sheltered in tents did not seem too appealing, the new troops vigorously resumed work on the post buildings. The citizen mechanics who had been hired earlier remained employed to assist in construction. As a result of their concern over cold weather, the work was hastily done. Because of this the barracks were not constructed to provide adequate light and ventilation essential to the general health and well being of the occupants. The severity of the winter weather increased their desire to finish the buildings as quickly as possible. By not following the basic principles of good construction, plus other problems that would be encountered, the troops occupying these quarters were forced to live in uncomfortable conditions.³⁵

Upon assuming command of the post in late November 1866, a position he was to hold until late the following summer, Captain Keogh reported to District Headquarters that he had inspected the condition of the post and ". . . found that everything was being done that could possibly forward the work."³⁶ The barracks that the previous commander,

Lieutenant Bates, expected to have finished was still not completed. However, Captain Keogh intended to have it completed by the end of the month. Apparently he did better than expected, as "The first barracks were finished by Christmas. . . and were occupied by one company of Infantry and a portion of one company of Cavalry."³⁷ Construction of a second barracks, to house the remainder of the troops, would be delayed for quite some time. In fact, the foundation work for this building had not even been started. Because of this, and evidence of shoddy construction, Captain Keogh was not overly optimistic about what had been completed by the troops of Company M. He reported to higher authority that some of the buildings were ". . . so badly built that it is doubtful they will support a roof of the lightest material."³⁸ This was only a sample of the problems Captain Keogh was to encounter as post commander.

Compounding the problem of constructing buildings was a lack of firewood. When he took over the duties of post commander, Captain Keogh found that there were only three or four cords of firewood available for fuel. A contractor had been hired to fulfill this need, but was eight cords short of completing his obligation. The Captain thought it was rather strange that the Quartermaster Department considered this to be a sufficient amount, and that the requisitions had not been approved before the heavy snow storms impeded delivery.

To obtain wood it was necessary to travel a distance

of 20 to 30 miles from the post. This situation was made more complicated because of a lack of wagons. Captain Keogh had retained the wagons that accompanied him from Fort Riley, as they were the only transportation available. The wagons and teams assigned to the post were transporting troops to stations along the Overland mail route toward Denver. This left the post with no means of transportation for hauling wood or stone. This problem was partially alleviated by using the wagons from Fort Riley. Before these wagons left the post, they were used to haul part of the necessary stone and to stockpile 15 cords of wood, approximately one month's supply.³⁹

Despite these difficulties, the troops spent the winter as well as could be expected. The meteorological records for the winter months of 1866-67 reveal extremely cold temperatures. A report written January first stated, "The cold here has been intense for the last eight days, a severe snowstorm, and the thermometer standing yesterday and today at reville [sic] at 6° below zero."⁴⁰ The bitterly cold weather exacted its toll as the register of medical treatment revealed a large proportion of frost bite cases.⁴¹

During this intense cold period nothing escaped the miseries of winter. Through the coldest months, the cavalry mounts were sheltered only by bare walls. The reason for this: nails needed to put a roof on the stables had not been received. By mid-January, however, Captain Keogh utilized the system that is best known to the military to

acquire an item you are short of--beg, borrow or steal. The nails were borrowed from Fort Lyon and a roof was put on the stables by late January, thus offering the horses some measure of relief from the elements. Although the horses were adequately sheltered, part of the troops were not as fortunate, as they were still sheltered in tents. There were stoves to warm the tents and wood for fuel; however, because of some foul-up in the Quartermaster Department, not one foot of stovepipe was available, so the stoves were absolutely useless.⁴²

Although the troops had to suffer and endure the hazards and hardships of cold weather in poor quarters, there was good provision for one basic necessity. The troops were liberally supplied with potatoes and other commissary stores, giving them an adequate diet. No doubt good food was a major consolation and a morale booster when compared with all the other handicaps. The cooking and messing facilities were inferior to what they should have been, but perhaps as good as tent accommodations would allow.⁴³

After surviving the rigors of winter, construction was resumed with a renewed vigor when warm weather returned, "During the winter this post seems to have increased in importance in the estimation of Dept. Hqurs. and the means of constructing a large and expensive post placed at the disposal of the post commander."⁴⁴ Evidence of this can be gained from records showing the number of civilians who were

employed by the army at the post. These records reveal that from May through August of 1867 there were 12 carpenters, 33 stone masons, 53 laborers and 17 teamsters. This made a civilian work force of 115 men; a rather sizeable force when it is considered that the post was built to accomodate a garrison of approximately 200 soldiers. These civilian employees and the troops that could be spared from military duties, completed most of the construction during the summer of 1867. By December 1867, most of the construction had been completed as post records reveal that there were only five civilian carpenters employed, and by January this number was reduced to two. After this time the records indicate that only a small number of civilians were employed and their principal duties were to maintain the buildings.⁴⁵

During the summer of 1867, the soldiers and civilian workers completed another set of quarters, built a dam across the Smoky Hill River and began construction on a hospital. All of this construction was made exceptionally difficult because of numerous attacks by Indians. By mid-June, attacks by the Indians halted construction at the post. As a result of their hostile acts, the Indians had made travel on the overland route extremely hazardous. This slowed construction temporarily as the lumber that was contracted from Denver could not be delivered. Because of these attacks along the road, a major portion of the troops stationed at the fort were detailed to guard stations along

the road or to serve as armed escorts for those using the route. This shortage of manpower created a critical situation at the post. Work on quarrying rock was halted because there was not an adequate number of men to serve as laborers and as guards for those engaged in the work. As critical as it appeared, it was only a temporary situation. By mid-July, after numerous skirmishes with the Indians, hostilities decreased and life returned to a normal routine. Travel on the Smoky Hill was resumed without incident. Construction was started again and continued through the summer months without interruption.

In spite of the handicaps, as noted, a major portion of the construction was completed during the summer of 1867. Although the work was substantially finished during this time, some form of construction continued until 1870. After 1870, only minor additions were made. Once the main construction was completed, the primary effort became that of keeping the buildings in a good state of repair. This task was necessary because of the poor quality of workmanship when the buildings were erected.⁴⁶

Throughout the entire existence of the fort, poor workmanship and improper construction made maintenance of the buildings a full time job. Despite this, the physical setting of the post buildings offered the appearance of a picturesque place. In time, part of the buildings were clapboarded and painted. The interiors were made more comfortable by plastering the walls. One of the most notable

improvements enhancing the appearance of the post was the officers' quarters. In the early 1870's these buildings were sided and painted. Verandas were built along the front with picket and latticed fences placed around the exterior of the yard. These quarters were suited for medium-sized families as they contained from four to nine rooms. All the rooms were eventually plastered and painted.⁴⁷ As cozy as they sound, the occupants of these quarters were plagued with the dirt, snow, and impossibilities of heating that troubled the enlisted mens' quarters. As time passed, the interior of the officers' quarters began to deteriorate. By 1875, the plaster began falling off the walls, making living conditions for the inhabitants distinctly unpleasant.⁴⁸

Despite the numerous handicaps of not having available the necessary tools, equipment and material, which created countless frustrating situations for the commanding officers charged with the responsibility of building a permanent post, the task of construction was eventually brought to a successful completion. For their efforts, the officers and men of Fort Wallace serve as a splendid example of the versatility displayed by the troops of the frontier army. They were ordered to the plains to protect and defend the white settlers and the overland transportation routes. This was their primary military responsibility, and yet they were also burdened with the chore of constructing facilities for their own convenience and comfort, in itself a full time

job. Their obligations no doubt taxed their endurance.

The problem of double duty was further aggravated by the Indian. It was only natural for the Indian to look upon the frontier soldier as an intruder. They were fully aware that settlers would follow the soldiers, and further demands would be placed upon them and their land. At first the situation was relatively calm, but with the passing of time, numerous incidents would ignite a smoldering coal into a violent raging fire. Although the garrison of Fort Wallace was involved in only a limited number of conflagrations, they would be directly affected by the consequences of them.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER IV

¹Marvin Garfield, "Defense of the Kansas Frontier, 1864-1865," Kansas Historical Quarterly, I (February, 1932), pp. 148-49.

²Mrs. Frank Montgomery, "Fort Wallace and its Relation to the Frontier," Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, XVII (1926-1928), p. 190.

³Ibid., p. 193.

⁴Ibid., p. 191.

⁵Montgomery, "Fort Wallace and Its Relation to the Frontier," pp. 189-91; Wilbur Sturtevant Nye, Plains Indian Raiders - The Final Phase of Warfare from the Arkansas to the Red River (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), p. 45.

⁶Kansas Daily Tribune, Friday, November 10, 1865.

⁷Garfield, "The Military Post as a Factor in the Frontier Defense of Kansas," p. 50.

⁸Stan Hoig, The Battle of the Washita - The Sheridan, Custer Indian Campaign of 1867-69 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1976), pp. 2-3.

⁹Garfield, "The Military Post as a Factor in the Frontier Defense of Kansas," pp. 61-62.

¹⁰Montgomery, "Fort Wallace and its Relation to the Frontier," p. 199.

¹¹U.S. War Department, Records of Adjutant General's Office, Record Group 94, Medical History of Posts, Selected Records of Kansas Army Posts, Fort Wallace and Fort Scott, Volumes 343-346-347, T-837, Roll No. 6, p. 1. (Hereafter cited as Medical History.)

¹²Medical History, P. 1. Nye, Plains Indian Raiders, pp. 44-45.

¹³Medical History, p. 1.

p. 45. ¹⁴Medical History, p. 1; Nye, Plains Indian Raiders,

¹⁵Medical History, p. 1.

p. 45. ¹⁶Medical History, p. 1; Nye, Plains Indian Raiders,

¹⁷U.S. War Department, Records of Fort Wallace, Kansas, Record Group 98, Letters Sent 1866-1882, Post Letter, April 30, 1866. (Hereafter cited as Post Letter.)

¹⁸Ibid., April 23, 30, 1866.

p. 45. ¹⁹Medical History, p. 1; Nye, Plains Indian Raiders,

²⁰R. Douglas Hurt, "The Construction and Development of Fort Wallace, Kansas 1865-1882," Kansas Historical Quarterly (Spring, 1977), p. 45.

²¹Post Letter, May 23, 1866.

²²Ibid., July 4, 1866.

²³Ibid., July 1, 4, 1866.

²⁴Ibid., July 4, 1866.

²⁵Ibid., July 12, 1866.

²⁶Medical History, p. 1; Post Letter, July 13, 1866.

²⁷Post Letter, July 1, 1866.

²⁸Ibid., July 13, 1866.

²⁹Ibid., August 18, 1866.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²U.S. War Department Records of Fort Wallace, Record Group 98, Post Returns, March, 1866-May 1882. Micro. Copy 617, Roll 1339, 1340, Post Returns for Sept. - Nov. 1866 and May - Oct. 1867. (Hereafter cited as Post Returns.)

³³Medical History, p. 2.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

36Post Letter, December 4, 1866.

37Medical History, p. 3.

38Post Letter, December 4, 1866.

39Ibid.

40Post Letter, January 1, 1867.

41Medical History, p. 3.

42Post Letter, December 4, 1866 & January 22, 1867.

43Medical History, p. 3.

44Ibid.

45Post Returns, May to December, 1867.

46Hurt, "Construction and Development of Fort Wallace," pp. 49-51.

47Surgeon General's Office, "Report on the Hygiene of the United States Army with Descriptions of Military Posts," Circular No. 8 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1875). (Hereafter cited as "Surgeon General's Report.")

48Hurt, "Construction and Development of Fort Wallace," p. 53.



Panoramic sketch of Fort Wallace
(Kansas State Historical Society)



Officers quarters at Fort Wallace
(Kansas State Historical Society)



Officers quarters at Fort Wallace,
Commanding officer's quarters at left
(Kansas State Historical Society)



Fort Wallace 1880's, mess hall center, guard
house at left (Kansas State Historical Society)



Distant view of buildings and grounds of Fort
Wallace (Kansas State Historical Society)

CHAPTER V

THE DEVELOPING INDIAN PROBLEM

Following the close of the Civil War and into the early 1870's the plains of western Kansas witnessed the native Indians in numerous battles against the soldiers and white settlers. Throughout these violent years the troops at Fort Wallace engaged in combat with the Indians on numerous occasions. Most encounters involved only a small number of soldiers and Indians, but several incidents occurred engaging larger numbers.

Because of its geographical location, Fort Wallace played a significant role in the battles that took place in western Kansas. To understand the development of this situation, it is necessary to briefly describe how a series of unrelated events dictated circumstances directly affecting the lives of the soldiers stationed at the post. The end result was the creation of a full scale war throughout the Great Plains, which provided a role for the troops stationed at Fort Wallace.

To fully understand the circumstances surrounding this developing crisis, it is necessary to describe a series of events which took place before Fort Wallace was established. The scenario for this conflict began during the Civil War

years. Between the years 1861 and 1865 the army was burdened with the task of forcing the rebellious southern states into submission. Therefore, the frontier region was only partially protected from the warring Indians. During the Civil War years, some of the settlements along the western frontier had been slowly driven back by various Indian tribes. This situation, along with the abandonment of some military posts, was seen by the Indian as a sign of weakness on the part of the white man. However, as the demands of the Civil War decreased and troops could be spared for duty in the west, this misconception by the Indian changed and the wrath of the plains warriors against the white intruder became more intense.¹

Two violent clashes between the white man and Indian occurred during the Civil War period which helped to pave the way for the ensuing conflict. First was the Sioux uprising in Minnesota and North Dakota 1862-1863. News of this incident was widely circulated in all of its hideous details and horrified the nation. It had an unsettling affect on those who lived along the western frontier. "In their state of anxiety, the slightest offense by an Indian portended another Minnesota massacre."² From this there developed a climate of fear and distrust for all Indians. This attitude was to play a dominant role in the relations with Indians in Kansas, Colorado, and Nebraska. It was because of this mood that officials in Colorado chose to pursue a blundering course resulting in the tragedy at Sand

Creek in the fall of 1864.³

At a time when the tribes of the central plains considered themselves at peace, the anxiety of the white settlers would not allow their conscience to accept this fact. They were steadfastly of the opinion that the plains Indian intended to go to war in the spring. Because of this public attitude, officials in Colorado were pressured until they submitted to the raising of a regiment of volunteers. The mission of these volunteers was to conduct a punitive expedition against those considered to be hostile Indians. The result of this campaign was the infamous and brutal attack on Chief Black Kettle's village at Sand Creek in November of 1864, led by the Commander of the Colorado Volunteers, Colonel John M. Chivington. A detailed description of this tragedy is not relevant for this narration, but suffice it to say history has recorded an Indian village of five hundred inhabitants, of which two-thirds were women and children, was attacked while under a promise of protection and awaiting word that peace had been achieved. Urged on by Chivington, the Colorado volunteers were excessively cruel in their attack and were responsible for the death of approximately 150 Indians. What is pertinent are the repercussions that resulted from it, and how it would have a direct effect on events in and around the region of Fort Wallace.⁴

This vicious attack united the plains Indians and created a strong motivation of vengeance among them against

the white man. This event was to scar the white man Indian relationship for years to come. The resulting conflict which the tragedy at Sand Creek helped to create can best be summarized by an army officer, who had long and timely experience on the plains, General Nelson A. Miles. He described the Sand Creek incident, "But for that horrible butchery it is a fair presumption that all subsequent wars with the Cheyenne and Arapahoes and their kindred tribes might have been avoided."⁵ The attack at Sand Creek was not the only incident which provoked the conflict, but the statement by General Miles offers a good estimate of the situation.

General Miles was not the sole advocate of this opinion. Colonel Jesse Leavenworth, Indian Agent for the Kiowa and Commanche, expressed a similiar attitude, "This atrocity destroyed the last vestige of confidence between red man and white."⁶ The statements of these contemporary individuals could lead one to believe that Sand Creek was the single cause of the conflict; such is not the case. There were multiple causes, but the tragedy at Sand Creek and the consequences resulting from it must be considered as one of the most important.

Because the incident took place in late fall with cold weather rapidly approaching, the Indian, as was his custom, retired to winter quarters. While in their winter quarters, news of the attack was circulated from camp to camp. During this time the animosity of the Indians grew stronger. With

the return of spring and warm weather the Indians were ready to seek revenge, and the return of bloodshed would follow. As was expected, the Indians began a series of attacks in retaliation for the November massacre. To counter this action the army embarked on a campaign which was to last all summer. During this operation, the army accomplished nothing and succeeded only in spending a large amount of government funds with nothing to show for it.

Considerable public sentiment emerged in opposition to the Sand Creek incident. These individuals unified into a combined effort to put pressure upon the government to halt the offensive operation by the army and to appoint a peace commission to work out a solution that would end the hostilities. The Federal Government yielded to these demands and formed a peace commission consisting of officials from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and high ranking officers from the army.⁷

Once this group was formed, arrangements were made to hold a meeting with the several tribes and negotiate a peace treaty. The result of these talks held October 12-24, 1865, was the Treaty of the Little Arkansas. Under the terms, the Indians

. . . gave up all their land between the Arkansas and Platte Rivers, and while still permitted to hunt in that region, agreed to settle on a reserve to be established for them south of the Arkansas. The Indians were not to go within ten miles of any main traveled road, post or station without permission.⁸

In return for these concessions the United States Government

agreed to provide the Indians with a specified amount of annuities. The treaty assuaged the national conscience troubled by the memory of Sand Creek, but within a year's time it would be seen that it is easier to sign treaties than to live up to them.

Even though the treaty offered a promising start and created a period of relative peace on the central plains, which was to last approximately eighteen months, there were provisions in the treaty which bore the seeds of a future conflict. These seeds would germinate into a major campaign against the Plains Indians starting in the spring of 1867 and lasting for approximately two years. There were two contributing factors to this conflict. The first was that not all of the Indians agreed to give up their claim to the area specified in the treaty. The second was a series of isolated Indian attacks and the creation of many false rumors over Indian difficulties. From this, Army officials were convinced that they had cogent reasons to start a major campaign against the Indians in the spring of 1867.⁹

The main premise for this difficulty was that the best hunting ground for the Plains Indians was between the South Platte and Arkansas Rivers. It should be recalled that under the terms of the treaty the full Indian use of this area was restricted. Because the buffalo was migratory by nature, the Indian, could not survive without following the herds, as their society and life style relied almost completely upon the buffalo. Thus, there was no conceivable

way that the Plains Indians could avoid the traveled routes as stipulated in the treaty.¹⁰

This fact, combined with the attitude of the warrior society of Cheyenne Dog Soldiers, who were the fractious element of the Cheyenne tribe, and who were usually not receptive to any of the white man's ideas, was to create a volatile situation. Although the treaty granted the Indian permission to hunt in the area between the Platte and Arkansas, the Dog Soldiers who did not attend the peace conference, adamantly refused to relenquish their claim. "All that they would say was that they would retain their country on the Smoky Hill and Republican where they had lived so long and that they did not want any railroad through the country."¹¹ The hostile attitude of the Dog Soldiers was instrumental in convincing other Indians to act in a like manner.

The bitter feeling of the Dog Soldiers combined with the rumors of possible attacks, precipitated a struggle in which Fort Wallace and the Smoky Hill Trail were confronted with a major portion of the conflict. This brief span of time was to be the highlight of the years for the fort's occupation during which it played its most important role during the Indian wars. To illustrate how this came about it will be necessary to describe specific events from Fort Wallace and the Smoky Hill Trail. Combined with this will be items from other locations to illustrate how the conflict developed and the part Fort Wallace played in this chain of events.

When the post was originally established, in the fall of 1865, there were no difficulties with the Indians along the Smoky Hill Trail. Evidence of this can be gained from the man who was in charge of the Butterfield Expedition, which established the express route to Denver, Isaac E. Eaton. In his report to the Mayor of Leavenworth, September 12, 1865, he states that part of his group ". . . returned from Denver, via Smoky Hill Route to this point with ten men, without a military escort, without molestation from Indians or any other sources."¹² The situation described in the report prevailed throughout the winter months and into the summer months of 1866. The only notable incident during this period was when Surgeon Whipple was accosted by Indians on his return to the fort from Monument Station.¹³ Examination of post records reveal only limited information referring to Indians, with nothing recorded of significant importance.

The only noteworthy material concerning the Indian situation was reported on June 6, 1866. In a letter to Colonel Palmer, District Commander of the Upper Arkansas, the post Commander, James J. Gordon, informed the Colonel that "I have the honor to state that no complaints by Emigrants [sic] or Freighters [sic] traveling the Smoky Hill road in regard to Indians."¹⁴ In this same report, the captain included information given to him by the post guide and interpreter, William Comstock. He stated that Comstock had informed him of a Cheyenne village encamped forty miles

north of the fort. Although there were Indians within close proximity of the fort, they had not made their physical presence known at the post. From this, it would appear that the treaty negotiations of the previous fall were achieving the desired results. The limited amount of Indian activity in the vicinity of the fort was characteristic of the situation along the entire route of the Smoky Hill. This auspicious atmosphere was present for the remainder of the summer months of 1866. However, by late August, the situation began to change.¹⁵

Although Captain Gordon's report of June sixth offers a favorable opinion from the military point of view, the civilians in the vicinity of the post were not as easily convinced. From material contained in this report the apprehension of the civilian population is easily recognized. Captain Gordon informs his superior officer that

Mr. Scott, Division Agt. on Overland Stage route sent in complaint to these Hd. Qtrs. a few days since that his stock tenders at Monument Station were not willing to remain at the station unless military protection was given them.¹⁶

The outward appearance of an idyllic, tranquil situation was to be dispelled within a few months and the concerns of the station keepers would prove correct.

In the latter part of August, Lieutenant Alfred E. Bates replaced Captain Gordon as post commander. Upon assumption of command, Lieutenant Bates submitted a report predicting a bleak future for the inhabitants along the Smoky Hill Trail. Lieutenant Bates revealed information he

gained from a conversation with the Cheyenne Chief, Spotted Horse, who visited the post on August 25. During the course of their conversation, Spotted Horse informed the lieutenant that his tribe was peaceful and intended to remain so. That evening, Spotted Horse and his band camped between the post and Pond Creek station. The following morning they visited the stage station and were orderly and displayed a peaceful attitude. Little concern was given to these Indians until the post guide, William Comstock, arrived at the fort on the evening of August 27. With Comstock was a rancher who was homesteading approximately 20 miles west of the post. They revealed information indicating the actions of Spotted Horse and his band were decidedly different from their behavior at the fort.

The guide and rancher stated that after leaving the vicinity of the post, Spotted Horse and his band proceeded to the next station west of Pond Creek and forced the station keeper to cook for them. After feasting for approximately three hours, they took what provisions were left and continued their journey to the next station. At this location, they systematically began to gather provisions, parts of harness, and any other item they desired. While engaged in their looting, the Indians informed the attendants that they intended to close the Smoky Hill Trail and would allow them 15 days to get out. This confrontation between the station keepers and Indian band almost erupted into open fighting. Had it not been for the presence of William

Comstock, armed conflict would have resulted. It was because of his efforts that bloodshed was avoided.¹⁷

Concluding his report of this incident, Lieutenant Bates explained the drastic change in the attitude of Spotted Horse. He stated that after the confrontation at the stage station, Comstock and two others went to the village of the Indians and attempted to recover the station's property. At first the Indians denied any knowledge of the theft, but later admitted to the deed. After admitting their guilt, the Indians refused to give up their stolen property and stated that they were going to continue to take whatever they wanted along the route. Before leaving, the Indians told Comstock to tell Lieutenant Bates

That everything they said here was false that they had said it because they were afraid to say anything else. That now they were on the prairie and were not afraid to speak the truth & they wanted all whites to understand that they had never given up the route & do not intend to do so. That after fifteen days time they should commence and burn the stations on the road and murder all the whites.¹⁸

Even though Lieutenant Bates considered a portion of this statement to be nothing more than boasting by the Indians, he informed his superiors that "it shows the disposition of the Indians and upon how slender a thread our peace with these hostile bands is hanging."¹⁹ Somewhat concerned over this incident, Lieutenant Bates was of the opinion that the real danger of trouble with the Indians was in

. . . the fact that the stations along this route are so indefensible and protected by

a force so insufficient, one or two men in a pitch pine house, make a great temptation to a party of Indians to get the material for a scalp dance & have at the same time a good bonfire.²⁰

Within a few weeks this prophecy proved correct as the Indians began attacking the stations along the Smoky Hill Trail to show that they intended to back up their word. These attacks, combined with others along the Santa Fe and Platte routes, helped create the flames for the campaign which was to come the following spring.

The first notable incident with Indians at Fort Wallace, which occurred on the night of September 19, 1866, helped contribute to this situation. At approximately 3 A.M. a band of warriors staged a raid and stampeded the post Quartermaster's stock. Within minutes 18 mounted troopers from Company M set out in pursuit. However, they were unable to overtake the raiding party because an intense snow storm made the trail impossible to follow. The troopers pursued the Indians approximately 11 miles before returning to the post. Lieutenant Flood, who was in temporary command, did not attempt to track the band at daylight. His reasoning for this decision was that he did not have over 20 mounted men present for duty, and this was an insufficient force to attempt to overtake the raiding party. Thus, the Indians made good their escape with 14 horses and two mules.²¹

After the raid there was some question as to which group of Indians was responsible. The Cheyennes were

suspected, but there was no definite proof that they were the guilty party. Information was later gained to show that they had committed the deed. This information was acquired from Mr. H. T. Wyatt, a beef contractor for the post, who offered corroborating evidence confirming the reports and establishing the fact that the Cheyennes were the perpetrators of the raid. Wyatt submitted a report through the post commander to higher headquarters, stating that on the night of the raid ". . . a band of fifteen Cheyenne Indians rode up to my house and asked permission to go in and warm up. It was then snowing and unusually cold for the season."²²

The Indians remained at Wyatt's residence for approximately 30 minutes. During this time he entertained them with cold bread and coffee. As he was offering them food and drink he questioned them and their answers left little doubt in his mind that they were composed entirely of the Cheyenne tribe. When he asked them what tribe they belonged to, the universal response was Cheyenne. Wyatt also recognized several in the party who had passed by his place several weeks earlier with Chief Spotted Horse. When they left his home, Mr. Wyatt stated that they rode in the direction of the post. Approximately two hours later he was informed by the Cavalry detachment of the raid.²³ These facts placed the finger of guilt upon the Cheyennes. Although much of it could be considered circumstantial, it would not be long before other attacks would reveal which tribe was creating

the real source of trouble. This incident was only the beginning. Over the next several months, there would be numerous reports of raids and small attacks by hostile Indian bands in the area of the Smoky Hill Trail.

An example of these disturbances is in a report made by a non-commissioned officer who was in charge of a detachment returning from Fort Ellsworth. In his report the sergeant stated ". . . that a party of 25 or 30 Indians came to a station and demanded stock, of a stock tender who would not let them have it, therefore they beat him nearly to death with clubs."²⁴ On October 14, the post commander was informed by one of the drivers for the Holliday Stage-line that a band of Cheyenne Indians had burned Chalk Bluffs station two days earlier.²⁵ Although these are two isolated incidents of attacks that would continue on into the month of December, they are described to emphasize the critical situation that was rapidly developing.

A vivid account of the destruction created by the Indians along the Smoky Hill Trail can be gained from a contemporary magazine story. Theodore R. Davis, a correspondent for Harper's Weekly, was given an assignment by his magazine to write an article about the newly established Smoky Hill Trail. It was Mr. Davis's misfortune to make his journey over this route during the height of the Indian attacks. From the article, one can gain a good description of the violence and destruction created by the hostiles.

Embarking upon his adventure from Atchison in mid-

November 1866, the journalist related, the trip from this location to Fort Hays was traveled without incident. However, from Fort Hays to Fort Wallace, Davis and his companions were under the constant threat of attack. After leaving the vicinity of Fort Hays, they were almost immediately attacked by Indians. Warding off this attack the party continued their travel west. After traveling for a period of time, movement was spotted in the distance. Their first instinct was that the Indians were returning to resume the attack. Their fears were laid to rest as it turned out to be survivors from Downer's Station, which had been attacked earlier in the afternoon. After questioning these individuals, the journalist and his party were reluctant to continue their journey. They decided to return to Fort Hays to request a military escort. The post commander at Hays granted the request, and the party resumed its journey.²⁶

The following morning they arrived at Chalk Bluffs Station which they found burned and destroyed. Continuing their travels, they arrived at Downer's Station in the afternoon.

The devastation here was complete. The coach and everything that would burn about the station was destroyed. The ground was everywhere tracked over by the unshod hoofs of Indian ponies.²⁷

There was no trace of the stocktenders. This resulted in a considerable amount of apprehension over the fate of these unfortunate souls. Later the travelers were informed that the stocktenders were killed and that the bodies had

been discovered and buried by a government supply train. No physical evidence of newly dug graves was present because they had been packed to prevent the wolves from digging them up.

On November 25, Davis and his traveling companions had a desperate fight with the Indians. They successfully defended themselves and the Indians eventually broke off the attack, thus enabling the party to continue their journey the following day. On the evening of the 26th, the party arrived at Henshaw Springs and remained overnight. Upon their arrival at this station they found it in the same condition as the others west of Fort Hays: deserted. This station was only a short distance from Fort Wallace, which they reached the following day without further incident. After a short stay at the post, the journalist and his party resumed their travel. Davis, concluding his article, describes no disturbances on the route from Fort Wallace to Denver, and that the remainder of the journey was completed without further interruptions.²⁸

The question might arise as to why the army, whose job it was to protect this route, was not engaged in a more hostile pursuit of the Indians to prevent or at least limit the attacks. The fact of the matter is that the military was almost helpless to do anything. The posts that had been established along the Smoky Hill Trail were so critically short of men, that it was almost impossible to pursue and engage the Indians.

Information taken from reports sent from the post to higher headquarters will help to illustrate this fact. For example, after the post stock was run off on September 19, 1866, only 40 horses remained available for service, a number sufficient to mount only half a company of cavalry. Even more severe, however, was the shortage of men. Because 22 officers and men were absent from the post on escort duty or in search of deserters, only 20 troopers were available for service. Stronger measures might have been taken had more men been available.²⁹

A similar situation occurred when Chalk Bluffs Station was attacked in October 1866. When he reported this incident, Lieutenant Hale informed his superiors that when notified of the incident his garrison strength consisted of one company of infantry, numbering approximately 50 men. As the station was located 75 miles east of the post, and infantry being the only troops available, he was not able to offer any assistance. Even if the station were located closer to the fort, it is doubtful that foot soldiers would be very effective in pursuing mounted Indians! In this same report, the Lieutenant reiterated that he could offer protection for the Smoky Hill Trail only within the immediate vicinity of the post. His reason for this limited defense was because of the number of men on detached service and those who were present at the post were engaged in hauling stone and other material needed for building quarters.³⁰

In concluding the report, Lieutenant Hale offers his

appraisal of the situation, which can serve as a summary of the military situation along the entire course of the Smoky Hill. In the Lieutenant's opinion,

The real danger of trouble arises from the fact that the stations along this route are so indefensible and protected by a force so insufficient as rather to invite attack.³¹

The problem as described by Lieutenant Hale was not unique for his command. This situation existed in every post along the Smoky Hill Trail and would be characteristic of all military installations in the west during the years of the Indian Wars.

In late November 1866, the garrison was reinforced with the arrival of Company I, 7th U.S. cavalry, under the command of Captain Myles W. Keogh. As he was senior to Lieutenant Hale, Captain Keogh assumed the duties of post commander. After several weeks and having time to make an estimate of the situation, Captain Keogh offered his estimate of the existing condition. In late January 1867 he informed his superiors at District Headquarters that because the majority of his men were detailed away

. . . guarding the express route, an extra duty as Teamsters [sic], carpenters, masons, wood cutters, quarrying rock etc. It is useless to suppose that I can offer any assistance of any material movement to points on the road that might need it.³²

The report concluded with the Captain stating that his motive in making this information known at District Headquarters was because he wanted ". . . to have our exact status known at Dist. Hqrs. in view of any unforeseen trouble

transpiring hereafter."³³ From this the idea is easily conceived that Captain Keogh did not have a very optimistic outlook for the immediate future of the post. The unforeseen trouble that he speaks of was only a few months away. His inclination for this reasoning probably resulted from information received during late December and early January concerning the movement of Indian tribes into the area.

In the month of December 1866 the post guide, William Comstock, made a trip to Fort Morgan, Colorado. He returned on December 31 with a report that several large parties of Indians had moved into the region from the Powder River country and were camped on the streams along the South Fork of the Republican. The guide informed Captain Keogh that several Indian camps were located anywhere from 60 to 100 miles from the post, and contained several hundred warriors. From the revelation of this intelligence, combined with the meager force at his disposal, Captain Keogh had sufficient reason for concern. It was a known fact that these Indians had been engaged in the deprivations in the Powder River country during the previous summer. Upon being questioned, however, they professed to have come south in search of buffalo. Although Captain Keogh made reference to the fact that these Indians had not threatened hostilities, he did indicate that they were highly annoyed over the white man's occupation of this line of country.³⁴ With this information and the presence of these Indians, the prophecy that Captain Keogh made earlier would eventually become a reality.

To mid-March 1867 the Indians remained in their winter quarters and were quite inactive. Records from the fort during this period reveal no hostile acts from the Indians. Examination of the reports sent by Captain Keogh to his superiors indicate a rather pessimistic attitude on his part. As a general rule his letters were usually very blunt and came directly to the point. More often than not, the Captain was not very tactful, and sometimes openly abrasive with his statements.

In early March, scattered reports of Indian hostilities began to reappear in post records. The incidents are minor and nothing to be openly alarmed about. However, by the end of the month, this situation would change dramatically. On March 8th, a report was received that a party of 40 Cheyennes was camped approximately 40 miles southwest of the post on the Big Sandy.³⁵

Two weeks later a report was submitted by a group of officers who were enjoying some leisure time hunting, when they came upon a small group of Indians. Not knowing their intentions, the hunting party did not molest them. After reporting the incident, a detail was sent to investigate, but by the time it arrived at the described location the Indians had disappeared.

In late March, these seemingly insignificant incidents were replaced by others of a more serious nature. On March 26, word was received at the post that the next station above Pond Creek had been attacked by a large band of

warriors.³⁶ This was to be the first of many attacks that would take place during the spring and summer of 1867. Although the Indians had professed earlier to be in this region to hunt buffalo, the return of warm weather obviously stimulated their spirits to hunt something besides buffalo. The reoccurrence of attacks along the Smoky Hill Trail, and incidents of hostilities at other locations convinced high ranking army officers that a campaign must be undertaken to summarily punish the Indians and to convince them that these lawless acts would not be tolerated. Before the return of cold weather in the fall of 1867, the plains of western Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado would witness a large amount of military activity created by this campaign, but in the final analysis, there would be very little, if anything, accomplished by it.

Although the events just described were, for the most part, isolated incidents, they serve as prime examples of the overall picture of the Indian situation that faced the Kansas frontier in the spring of 1867. How this situation grew and developed is a story in its own right, with parts of it directly related to Fort Wallace. What is relevant for this examination is to show how this situation would have grave consequences and determine events in and around Fort Wallace.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER V

¹General George A. Forsyth, Thrilling Days in Army Life (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1901), p. 169.

²Utley, Frontiersmen in Blue, p. 281.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., pp. 285-86; George E. Hyde, Life of George Bent Written From His Letters (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), pp. 159, 163.

⁵William H. Leckie, The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), pp. 23-24.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Utley, Frontiersmen in Blue, pp. 336-38.

⁸Hyde, Life of George Bent, p. 249.

⁹Utley, Frontiersmen in Blue, pp. 338-39.

¹⁰Leckie, Military Conquest of the Southern Plains, pp. 6-7.

¹¹Hyde, Life of George Bent, p. 251.

¹²Montgomery, "Fort Wallace and Its Relation to the Frontier," p. 194.

¹³Medical History, p. 1.

¹⁴Post Letter, June 6, 1866.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., August 28, 1866.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., September 20, 1866.

²²U. S. Congress, House Exec. Doc. No. 240 41 Cong. 1 sess. (serial 1425), p. 136. Difficulty with Indian Tribes.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Post Letter, September 20, 1866.

²⁵Post Letter, October 14, 1866.

²⁶Theodore R. Davis, "A Stage Ride to Colorado," Harpers New Monthly Magazine, XXXV (July, 1867), pp. 142-145. See Appendix I for list giving distances between stations on Smoky Hill Trail.

²⁷Ibid., p. 145.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 145-50.

²⁹Post Letter, September 20, 1866.

³⁰Ibid., November 8, 1866.

³¹Ibid., January 22, 1867.

³²Ibid., January 22, 1867.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., January 1, 1867. (Error on date of letter, it is written with date of January 1, 1866.)

³⁵Ibid., March 8, 1867.

³⁶Ibid., March 22, 1867.

CHAPTER VI

THE EXPEDITION OF GENERAL WINFIELD S. HANCOCK AND THE SUMMER RAIDS OF 1867

The crisis that took place in the summer of 1867 was not spontaneous in origin. It was similar to others in that it grew and developed over a period of time. It should be recalled that the Treaty of the Little Arkansas, which was negotiated in the fall of 1865, was designed to restore peace to the Great Plains. The treaty did as expected, creating a period of relative calm throughout the area during the summer of 1866. However, this proved to be only a temporary condition. Events in the Wyoming territory with hostile Indians and the refusal of the warrior societies to recognize the terms of the treaty renewed the crisis for the plains of western Kansas.

In the fall of 1866, as commander of the Division of the Missouri, General William T. Sherman received conflicting reports concerning Indian hostilities in his area of command and with this confusion, he decided to personally inspect the area. From this, he expected to determine for himself the reality of the existing situation. Thus, during that fall, General Sherman conducted his tour, covering the

Colorado and Kansas frontier and visiting the military posts in the area. What he found did not coincide with the reports received at his headquarters. Although there were some difficulties with Indian warriors, the situation was not as serious as the reports described. It was decided that a good portion of the reports was based on nothing more than rumors. Somewhat mystified by this, General Sherman formulated his opinion that a good share of this attitude was created ". . . on the supposition that our people out west are resolved on trouble for the sake of the profit resulting from the military occupation."¹ From his inspection, General Sherman resigned himself to the fact that most of the clamor over Indians was created from idle rumors and scheming plans by a minority in expectation of personal gain.

Some reports received by General Sherman and from which he formulated his opinion were sent by the Governor of Kansas, Samuel J. Crawford. During the summer of 1866, the Governor sent urgent messages to General Sherman and to his immediate subordinate in Kansas, General Winfield Scott Hancock, Commander of the Department of the Missouri. Governor Crawford informed these two officers that he was convinced the Indians were concentrating their strength and were going to launch a full scale attack. Their objective in this attack was to stop the construction of the transcontinental railroad. Despite his frantic warning and plea for help, the Governor could offer no concrete evidence to substantiate his theory. Although he could offer no

conclusive evidence, the Governor's office began receiving reports which added at least a partial credence to his theory.²

In the fall of 1866, Indians from the north began drifting into eastern Colorado and western Kansas. When news of this spread, settlers in the area became wary of Indian attacks and were fearful that raids and depredations were imminent. When questioned, these migratory bands professed to come in peace. Their story was unconvincing, and the prevailing attitude that began to develop was they had come south to arrange an alliance with the southern tribes, and that open warfare would result from it. This attitude was the general consensus throughout the fall and early winter months of 1866. Military officials lent an attentive ear to this information, but they considered most of it as a cry of wolf and that there was no real presence of danger. However, in late December an incident occurred at Fort Phil Kearney in Wyoming that radically altered the Army's attitude.³

On December 21, Captain William J. Fetterman left Fort Phil Kearney with a force of 80 soldiers in pursuit of a band of Sioux and was completely annihilated. As news of the massacre reached the frontier posts, the attitude throughout all ranks hardened into a feeling of indiscriminate hostility towards all Indians. The opinion developed that some form of retaliation must take place.

The Fetterman massacre breathed new fire into the

stories circulated by the rumor mongers, and every trivial incident was magnified. Army officials were subjected to a new barrage of reports based on both rumor and fear. The commanders of Forts Larned and Dodge, who were extremely edgy after the Fetterman slaughter, submitted alarming reports of tribal alliances supposedly forming for the purpose of promoting a war when warm weather returned. These reports and the incidents along the Smoky Hill Trail, which took place earlier that fall, helped convince military officials that something must be done.

In retaliation for the Fetterman massacre, and to show the Indians that their lawless acts along the travel routes would no longer be tolerated, General Sherman issued orders for an offensive campaign against the Indians that would span the entire summer of 1867. For this campaign General Sherman issued instructions to his commander in the Department of the Platte, General Augur, to organize a force of 2,000 cavalry to punish the Sioux and Cheyennes in the Powder River Country. Similar instructions were issued to General Hancock for the Department of the Missouri. For his department, General Hancock was instructed to ". . . form an expedition to show the flag to the Cheyennes and Kiowas south of the Arkansas River."⁴ The northern campaign under General Augur never materialized, as peace commissioners met with the Indians before the expedition was launched. No such obstacle was to stand in the way of General Hancock. He carried out his orders, but because of excessive exuber-

ance to them, General Hancock touched off a bloody and perhaps needless war.⁵

Contained in the instructions to General Hancock was information relating to reports that had been passed to Division Headquarters advising that Indians had assembled at or near the military posts on the Smoky Hill and Arkansas Rivers where they threatened to interrupt the use of the roads in these respective areas. General Sherman was of the opinion that this was an intolerable situation. He authorized General Hancock

to instruct your commanding officers of posts, on the recurrence of the same or similar cases to punish on the spot, and I authorize you to organize out of your present command a sufficient force to go among these Cheyennes, Kiowas and Arapahoes, or similar bands of Indians, and notify them that if they want war they can have it now.⁶

These instructions concluded with an alternative if the Indians declined war. In this event, General Hancock was to ". . . impress upon them that they must stop their insolence and threats and make their conduct conform more nearly to what we deem right."⁷ Although an alternative course of action was offered, General Hancock in his treatment and conduct towards the Indians he encountered prevented this from coming about.

By early April, the troops General Hancock needed had been assembled at Fort Harker. For the campaign he brought together a command of impressive dimensions. The force consisted of approximately 1,400 soldiers composed of eleven troops of the 7th cavalry, seven companies of the 37th

infantry and a battery of the 4th artillery. On April 3, all preparations had been completed and the order to march was issued. The expedition broke camp at Fort Harker on this day and headed southwest towards Fort Larned, a distance of approximately 65 miles.⁸

Just prior to embarking upon the campaign, General Hancock issued a field order which informed his officers and men

It is uncertain whether war will be the result of the expedition or not; it will depend upon the temper and behavior of the Indians with whom we may come into contact. We go prepared for war and will make it if the proper occasion presents. . . . No insolence will be tolerated from any bands of Indians whom we may encounter. We wish to show them that the government is ready and able to punish them if they are hostile.⁹

From the tone of his order, it is obvious that General Hancock was spoiling for a fight. When the General eventually met with the Indian chiefs he did not retreat from this provocative attitude or offer conciliatory gestures. The result of this was disastrous for his campaign and bred open warfare on the plains.

While organizing his campaign, General Hancock informed E. W. Wynkoop and Jesse H. Leavenworth, Indian Agents for the Cheyenne and Arapahoe, of his intentions. In the notification sent to the agents of the upcoming campaign, General Hancock displayed the same bellicose attitude shown in his field order. In the letter to Agent Leavenworth, General Hancock informed him his objective

. . . is to convince the Indians within the

limits of this department that we are able to punish any of them who may molest travelers across the plains, or who may commit other hostilities against the whites. . . . I request that you will inform the Indians of your agency that I will hereafter insist upon their keeping off the main routes of travel across the plains.¹⁰

From the field order and the letters to the Indian Agents, it is clearly visible that General Hancock was going to be excessive in his demands. Even though he expressed a desire to avoid trouble if possible, his belligerent attitude destroyed any feasibility of achieving that.

When informing the agents of the campaign, General Hancock instructed them to inform the principal chiefs to gather in the vicinity of Fort Larned for the purpose of having a council with him. General Hancock expected that by using a show of force he would overawe the Indian leaders and impress upon them that their hostilities would not be tolerated. What General Hancock expected and what he received were completely the opposite.

The agents did as requested and informed the chiefs of General Hancock's request. The Hancock expedition arrived and encamped at Fort Harker on April 7. The General assumed the chiefs would be there and awaiting his arrival. This was the first of several disappointments he received in attempting to negotiate with the Indians. The scheduled meeting was delayed for five days because of inclement weather and a buffalo herd which the Indians decided to hunt. As he was forced to wait, the General's disposition towards the Indians became more incensed.

Five days later, on April 12, two chiefs, Tall Bull and Whitehorse, accompanied by a dozen warriors arrived at Fort Larned for the meeting. Despite such a poor showing, General Hancock decided to meet and talk with them. During the course of their conversation, General Hancock sternly lectured his audience and offered them the choice of peace or war. Because all the chiefs did not come to Fort Larned, the general informed his guests that he intended to march his entire force to the village and personally deliver his message to the absent chiefs. If the Indians would not come to him then he would go to them. This decision proved to be an unwise choice as it destroyed the slim possibility that peace could be maintained.¹¹

Accompanying General Hancock on the expedition were the two Indian Agents, Wynkoop and Leavenworth. When hearing of the decision to march to the village, Agent Wynkoop submitted a letter to the General ". . . requesting him not to march his column of troops up to the village, as I feared the result would be the flight of the women and children from the same."¹² Taking no notice of this appeal, General Hancock broke camp; formed his columns, and marched to the Indian village.

As the troops drew close to the village, the Indians did as Agent Wynkoop predicted. The approach of so many soldiers revived the vivid memory of the Sand Creek tragedy. This memory created panic in the village and many of its occupants stampeded into the hills. When he arrived at the

village, General Hancock ordered the chiefs who accompanied him to round up the fleeing occupants and bring them back. With the expectation that his instructions were to be carried out, the General ordered his troops to camp near the village and prepared to await the return of its occupants. Later that same evening, General Hancock received information that the men of the village were getting ready to make their escape. Upon hearing this, orders were issued to surround the village with cavalry troops. By the time this information was received, and the cavalry alerted to move, it was too late. Before the troops could be placed in position, the Indians had departed. When informed of their departure, General Hancock took bolder steps by ordering eight troops of the 7th cavalry to pursue the fleeing Indians and herd them back to the village. One way or the other, the general was determined to deliver his message to the chiefs.¹³

The flight of the Indians further antagonized General Hancock. He considered the Indians guilty of bad faith by not accepting his wishes and considered their actions as sufficient provocation for war. In retaliation for the unfriendly actions the general began deliberating the idea of destroying the abandoned village. When he heard of this proposed action, Agent Wynkoop lodged a formal protest. In his protest to General Hancock, the Indian Agent stated

I would most respectfully request that you not do so. I am fully convinced that the result would be an Indian outbreak of the most serious nature; while at the same time, there is no

evidence in my judgement, that this band of Cheyenne are deserving this severe punishment.¹⁴

Agent Wynkoop's plea fell on deaf ears. For a second time General Hancock did not heed the advice and recommendations offered by the agent. Instead, the general remained adamant in his position and was convinced ". . . that the Indians had deceived him and commenced hostilities, and he was compelled to burn their village."¹⁵

The issue was settled when a messenger returned from the 7th cavalry, which was sent in pursuit of the Indians. The courier reported that when the cavalry troops reached the Smoky Hill Trail they found it in a state of shambles. Numerous stations had been attacked and the Indians had a virtual stranglehold over the road. Although there was some debate, and doubts were expressed as to whether the Indians from the village were responsible for the attacks, General Hancock was now more determined than ever to destroy the village. He issued orders to burn the village and on April 19, the orders were carried out. The torch was put to 111 Cheyenne lodges, 140 Sioux lodges and a large quantity of camp equipment. The results of this destruction were as Wynkoop predicted. The burning of the village so enraged the Indians for the remainder of the summer that they made repeated attacks along the Arkansas, Smoky Hill and Platte routes. The areas in Kansas which received the heaviest concentration of these attacks were the Solomon and Republican River Valleys and the western portion of the Smoky Hill Trail.¹⁶

When General Hancock embarked upon the campaign, he was fully confident that his large force would overawe the Indians and peace would prevail over the plains. In a matter of several short weeks, because of his blundering methods, he created just the opposite. Traveling with General Hancock was the distinguished world traveler, Henry M. Stanley, who later achieved African fame by finding Dr. Livingston. Writing his description of the campaign, Stanley was of the impression the expedition had created positive results. He revealed his opinion by stating that "The Santa Fe and Smoky Hill routes will in the future be better guarded. Kansas is now free from all hostile Indians, and is open to the emigrant."¹⁷ Had Mr. Stanley examined the reports from the Smoky Hill, it is doubtful he would have made such a statement.

There is however, one item about which Mr. Stanley was not in error. When offering his opinion of the campaign, he also stated that ". . . Major General Hancock obeyed his orders to the letter."¹⁸ There is no disputing this fact. When informed to prepare for the campaign, the basic instructions General Hancock received was to tolerate absolutely no nonsense from the Indians, which he didn't, and to chastise them if they refused to co-operate, which he did!

A concise statement by Indian Agent Jesse H. Leavenworth, who spent approximately a month with the Hancock Expedition, can be used to summarize the campaign and what resulted from it. In offering his impression of the

operation, Agent Leavenworth stated "I am sorry to say that, in my opinion little good, but a great deal of harm has resulted from this expedition."¹⁹ The ensuing situation resulting from General Hancock's high handed tactics created a state of turmoil along the Kansas frontier which lasted for the next several months.

Within a short period of time, news of the attacks began filtering into the fort from locations along the Smoky Hill Trail. Nearly all the reports were similar in structure and indicated the same basic facts. The consensus was that because of his actions

. . . Hancock has stirred up a veritable hornet's nest. Hostile Indians were swarming all over the Smoky Hill route. Stage stations were in a state of siege. Six citizens had been killed and livestock losses were mounting hourly.²⁰

It did not take long for this situation to develop. By April 22, Indian bands were reported swarming along the Smoky Hill Trail. It was estimated by stage passengers they numbered from 2 to 3,000. The most critical area of these attacks was between Fort Harker in the east and extending beyond Fort Wallace in the west.²¹

The veracity of this new surge of attacks was instantly recognized by officials of the railroad and postal service. On April 23, W. H. Cattrell, Superintendent of the Smoky Hill Route, expressed his anxiety over the attacks by sending a telegram to General Hancock. In the telegram, the superintendent requested that action be taken by the military to avoid serious consequences. Cattrell informed General

Hancock that because of the attacks he was in desperate need of protection from Big Creek, near Fort Hays, to Pond Creek. The superintendent was certain that if soldiers were not placed as guards at the stations located between these two points the mail service would be stopped.

The seriousness of this problem was not confined to the level of military command which had immediate responsibility for the Smoky Hill route. An example of this can be gained from a message received at the Headquarters of General Ulysses S. Grant from Alex W. Randall of the post office department in Washington. The text of the message dated May 18, 1867 reiterates the problems the mail service was having because of the disruption along the travel routes. The post office official informed General Grant that he feared a total suspension of mail service in the areas under attack, and expressing this concern that something must be done to correct this deplorable situation, and thus relieve the mail service of such an unfortunate obstruction.²² Although the mail service was one of the first groups to suffer the consequences of the attacks, they were not the only group that was handicapped in performing their assigned tasks.

Railroad officials were just as edgy and concerned over this renewal of violence. The message they sent to military officials, whom they felt should be exercising more control over Indian affairs, was almost identical in tone to those sent by the mail service. The primary area of concern

for the railroad was the area immediately west of Fort Harker. Railroad officials had sufficient cause to be alarmed, because the principal area of construction was taking place in this location. Because of the attacks, railroad officials were of the opinion that if the military did not do something to stop the depredations and protect the road, all the construction workers would be driven off and the citizens would be forced to leave the region.²³

These reports clearly indicated the situation was becoming serious, but as the weeks passed from spring into summer, conditions became even more critical. In early June, General Hancock submitted a gloomy report to General Sherman describing the extensiveness of the attacks in the Smoky Hill region. The report stated that, "For a distance of ninety-five miles east and seventy-five miles west of Fort Wallace hostile Indians had attacked every stage station on the average of four times."²⁴ An examination of the correspondence sent from Fort Wallace during this time period confirms the above-mentioned reports.

For the next two months a large volume of correspondence was sent from the post describing numerous Indian attacks and problems created for the garrison as a result of them.

The records of Fort Wallace for the period of April 26-June 14 show that twenty-seven Indian attacks were reported, undoubtedly with others unreported, along that portion of the Smoky Hill route protected by Fort Wallace.²⁵

The objective here is not to describe all of these incidents,

as a good portion of them took place at the several stage stations or against travelers caught on the open prairie. Although these issues are important to the total story of Fort Wallace, our primary effort is concentrated on events within the immediate vicinity of the fort.

With the series of attacks starting in late April and early May, it was several weeks before the Indians were bold enough to make a concentrated attack on Pond Creek Station or Fort Wallace. During this interim, reports were received when a soldier of the 3rd infantry arrived at the fort and reported that Goose Creek station, located 19 miles west of the fort had been attacked and burned on the night of April 13. The Indians set fire to the haystack and because of a high wind everything was immediately engulfed in flames and completely destroyed.²⁶

This information was followed within a few days by another report describing two other attempts to attack and burn Chalk Bluff station. The first attempt occurred on May fourth and was followed by the second on May tenth. On both occasions the sentry on guard was able to alert the other soldiers at the station quickly enough to extinguish the flames and drive off the attackers.²⁷

These selected incidents are described to illustrate the intensity and frequency of the attacks beginning to occur; they by no means tell the complete story. By the middle of May, almost every station had sent in reports to the post of attacks or information stating that Indians had

been tracked in and around the respective stations.²⁸

The close proximity of the station at Pond Creek to the fort could possibly have acted as a deterrent for the Indians in attacking this station. As a result of their successes elsewhere, the Indians no doubt became bolder and more confident. With this feeling of confidence, a raiding party attempted to burn Pond Creek station on the night of May 11. This was the first of several attacks that would take place within view of the post. Having failed in their first attempt the attackers remained undaunted in their efforts to destroy this station with future attacks.

On the morning following the attack, Captain Keogh ordered fifty cavalry troopers sent in pursuit of the raiding party. The captain took personal command of the force. Suspecting the Indians were camped in the vicinity of Eagle Tail Creek, his plan was to track them to this location.²⁹ As this was Captain Keogh's first experience in attempting to track Indians, he was soon to learn a disappointing lesson in Indian warfare, which was characteristic of most attempts by the army in trying to track the Indian on the open plain. At the conclusion of his scouting expedition, Captain Keogh was of the opinion that it had been an exercise in futility.

Upon returning to the post, Captain Keogh submitted a report of his search. The experience he gained made a lasting impression on him. Returning from this fruitless search, the Captain reported that up until this time he ". . . had

never before appreciated the difficulty of finding Indians."³⁰ The report stated that the soldiers were able to follow the trail for seven miles. It then led into an open plain where it was lost because the soil in this area did not reveal any signs. All attempts to find the trail were in vain and left the scouting party with nothing to do but return to the post empty handed. Captain Keogh offered his opinion of tracking Indians by informing his superiors ". . . that without knowing exactly where to surprise their camp or having a guide who can track them it is a waste of horseflesh and time to endeavor to come up with them."³¹

Not having the services of a person who was knowledgeable in the habits of the Plains Indian and skilled in following their trail, any attempt by the soldiers to track them was similar to a game of blindman's buff. There was a man with such skills assigned to Fort Wallace, the post guide William Comstock, but when his skills were in desperate need, he was absent from the post. At this time General George A. Custer and the 7th cavalry were in pursuit of hostile Indians. Before starting on this expedition, General Custer requested that Comstock be temporarily assigned to his command. The request was granted, thus leaving the fort without the services of a competent guide during its most critical period.³² Without a guide, the garrison was severely handicapped in its ability to pursue the raiding Indians.

Under these circumstances, Captain Keogh was compelled

to plead for assistance. By the first of June the Indians became so numerous, he considered it of the utmost importance that Comstock, or some other suitable person be sent to the fort. In the absence of an experienced guide, there was not a person in the area who knew anything of the country, nor could any of the soldiers at the fort follow a trail not distinctively marked. This circumstance tied the hands of the military and allowed the Indians to continue their attacks without fear of reprisal.

Within two weeks of the first attack, the Indians made a second raid on Pond Creek station. This attack occurred on May 26, and was more successful than the first attempt. This time the raiding party was able to drive off the contractors' stock. Although he was still without a guide, Captain Keogh considered it his military duty to pursue the hostiles. He mustered the men in his troop who could be spared from their required duties at the post, had them supplied with two days rations, and set off in search of the attackers.³³

By the time the soldiers were ready to march, the Indians had acquired a 16 hour head start. The troopers picked up the trail approximately one-half mile from the station and found it reasonably easy to follow because of soft ground. This encouraged Captain Keogh, who hoped to follow the trail directly to the villages of those responsible for the attack. However, the captain's favorable expectations soon ended and he learned a second lesson in Indian warfare.

When they were sure which direction the Indians had taken, the search party took up the trail and followed it approximately 14 miles. After traveling this distance they came upon a hastily deserted Indian camp. At the camp the stolen stock was recovered with the exception of five head that had been slaughtered. Encouraged by this, Captain Keogh was sure he was close to the Indians and decided to continue the march in expectation of overtaking them. He again took up the trail, but after a three-mile pursuit decided to relinquish the attempt as an utter failure, as the trail seemed to disappear.

It was concluded that the Indians, as was their custom, had been watching the approach of the cavalry and left the camp before the troops could get within several miles of it. Captain Keogh estimated there were 16 Indians in the party, who left a distinguishable trail when leaving the camp. It was followed for several miles, but then the trail appeared to evaporate as the Indians broke into small groups and vanished on the plains. Although the expedition returned to the post without engaging the hostiles, the troopers were consoled by the fact that they had at least recovered the stolen stock.³⁴

As the weeks passed, the troops were involved in more unsuccessful marches of this kind. With the limited amount of manpower available and the number of extra duties that had to be performed, extreme endurance was required of the soldiers who had to cope with the situation. As post

Commander, Captain Keogh became gravely concerned, not only for the welfare of his men, but for the physical protection of the post area. When the Post Returns were completed for the month of May, it was revealed there were only 63 privates available for duty. Earlier in the year there had been two full companies of infantry assigned to the post. The problems along the Smoky Hill caused by the Indian attacks made it necessary to assign the soldiers of these companies to serve as guards for the stations or as armed escorts on the stage coaches.

With the absence of the infantry, this left only the cavalry troops to perform all the necessary duties. Besides attempting to pursue and locate hostile Indians, these troops had to assume such mundane tasks as cutting wood, provide labor for the construction of buildings, work at the rock quarry, take care of their horses, and provide escorts for all wagon trains leaving the post. In conjunction with these duties, the garrison was also required to provide a 16 man escort for the stages traveling between Big Springs in the west to Monument in the east. There were 21 prisoners under arrest for various military offenses. This required more manpower to provide a suitable guard, as the prisoners were confined in tents.³⁵

The shortage of men was only one of Captain Keogh's problems. Another was his concern for the physical safety of the post, which was placed in jeopardy by the lack of troops. He expressed his concern in a report, stating

". . . the Indians are aware of the number of soldiers here and consequently are getting bolder. . . ."36 This boldness was witnessed on the night of June 5, when a raiding party attempted to steal the post stock. For their efforts, the Indians succeeded in capturing one mule. Angered over their meager prize, the raiding party fired rifle shots into the post area before departing. This small raid was a prelude for two larger attacks on the post that followed later in the month. As he was in no position to retaliate, this harassing raid agitated Captain Keogh. He considered it ". . . very unpleasant. . . to see the rascals come into the road at various points and returning to their camps and there remain unmolested."37 A critical shortage of men left the captain no choice but to remain on the defensive. All available personnel were needed to protect the post and none could be spared for pursuit of the raiding party.

When informing higher headquarters of the raid, Captain Keogh expressed his exasperation to his superiors. He also offered a speculative opinion that if Comstock were present and if Captain Keogh could be provided with the services of 80 to 100 mounted troopers, and could remain absent for a five or six day expedition, the camp of the attackers could be found and cleaned out. An interesting theory, but one that would never be tested because the troops he requested were simply not available. Although Captain Keogh desired to initiate some action to improve conditions at the post and along the Smoky Hill Trail, he

was forced to remain idle and watch the situation deteriorate. By the end of the first week of June, Indians became so numerous that travel by stage without a military escort was considered too hazardous to attempt. The risk was so great that stage travel had to be temporarily suspended.³⁸ Under the circumstances, the post garrison, although craving to take action, was forced to remain on the defensive. With the limited amount of manpower, all it could do was sit and wait. By mid-June the strength of the garrison had shrunk to even smaller proportions. Post records show that on June 11, there were only 43 privates available for duty. By now the post was so understrength that musicians and all other extra duty personnel were assigned to guard details. This step was taken to provide adequate security for the post area. The constant threat of attack required that a vigilant watch be maintained 24 hours a day. Kept in a constant state of alert, a full night's rest for the troops was an extreme rarity. Before the month of June was over this situation would tax the endurance of the depleted garrison.³⁹

On June 16, the Department Commander, General Hancock, arrived at the post for a brief visit. Because of the reported Indian violence, the General was conducting a personal investigation of the Smoky Hill Trail. While at the post, General Hancock offered his estimate of the conditions to his superior, General Sherman in a telegram. It appeared that General Hancock's impression was that even though the

post had been attacked, everything was well and there was no need for undue concern.⁴⁰ It is unknown whether General Hancock was misinformed, or chose to ignore the facts and remain oblivious to the reality of the actual conditions.

Before departing, General Hancock decided to supplement his escort with a good portion of the cavalry troops from the post, leaving it extremely short of mounted men. As the selected escort consisted of Troop I, 7th cavalry, Captain Keogh as their commander, left the post to accompany the inspection party to Denver.

Before leaving the post, Captain Keogh placed Lieutenant Joseph Hale in temporary command. To compensate for the cavalry troops being taken for escort, he ordered arms and ammunition issued to the 50 civilian employees. Although they were not hired to fight Indians, the civilian mechanics could be relied on in an emergency to fight for their survival. Within a few days, additional strength was added to the post when Lieutenant Hale ordered the station at Goose Creek closed, and the guard detachment assigned there returned to the post. Fully aware of the Indian situation undoubtedly made Lieutenant Hale apprehensive. Receiving the responsibility for the post, the lieutenant simply exercised his authority with caution. Assuming command under the existing circumstances, it is easily understood why he was concerned for the safety and security of the post. However, in several days the lieutenant's worries were partially alleviated. A survey party with a

military escort of 25 men from the 37th infantry arrived at the post. Their purpose in stopping at the post was to acquire additional supplies and men. With none to spare, their request was denied. Because of the seriousness of the Indian problem and with no additional forces available, the survey party was convinced to remain at the post until the present danger subsided. This decision proved to be a stroke of good fortune. In several days these infantry troops were needed to repel the strongest attack the fort was yet to witness.⁴¹

Just before noon on July 21, a large party of Indians was discovered approaching the post from a northeasterly direction. When the alarm was sounded, the troops at the post sprang into action. Lieutenant Hale immediately mustered the small number of cavalry troops. The assembled force consisted of 27 mounted soldiers and was placed under the command of Lieutenant James Bell. When formed and ready, they were sent out to repel the attackers. For the next two hours the post garrison was engaged in combat with the attacking warriors.

The raiding party was first observed when they came over the crest of a low range of hills approximately three miles distant from the post. Estimates of the number of attackers vary, but all descriptions of this incident indicate there were several hundred warriors present. As the attackers advanced towards the post, a group left the main body and rode towards the stone quarry located approximately

three miles southeast of the post area. The remainder of the Indians continued their advance straight towards the post.

The party advancing towards the stone quarry attacked two wagons which had just left that location. When they spotted the Indians the two drivers whipped their teams into a dead run attempting to reach the safety of the post. The first of the two wagons made a successful dash and thus eluded the attackers. The second driver was not quite as fortunate as he was overtaken by the Indians. The workers at the quarry watched with horror as the Indians pulled the defenseless driver from his seat and commenced to shoot and spear him. The two wagons were seen racing towards the post and a relief party was sent to assist in their escape. Because of the excessive fire power directed at them by the soldiers, the Indians were prevented from scalping the teamster and were driven off. When reached, the driver was still alive, but severely wounded and would later die from his injuries.

Because of their exposed position, the workers at the stone quarry thought of making a run for the post. Had they done so, their efforts would have been disastrous. Before they could initiate this plan, Lieutenant Bell and the cavalry troopers came to their rescue and escorted them to the safety of the post. The arrival of the soldiers was quite timely, as a group of Indians was on its way to attack the occupants of the stone quarry. After the rescued

workers were returned to the post, the Indians could be seen venting their frustration by burning and looting the tents and sheds at the quarry works.

While all of this was taking place, the main party of Indians was continuing their advance towards the post. To oppose them Lieutenant Hale assembled the remainder of his force, which consisted of infantry troops and some civilians. He organized them into a hastily formed defensive line along a low slope just north of the post. Returning from their rescue of the quarry workers, Lieutenant Bell and his mounted troopers advanced through the infantry's defensive line. The objective in this movement was to delay the advance of the attackers. At this point the Indians broke from their custom of circling their enemy. Instead of performing this usual maneuver, approximately thirty warriors dismounted and began to advance in a skirmishers' formation very similar to one used by the cavalry. Their tactic failed because of the well disciplined fire power directed at their line which broke up the formation and forced the attackers to withdraw to a safer location.

After forcing the skirmishers to withdraw, an attempt was made to extend the battle line further to the left. The effort failed and cost the lives of two men. Sergeant Dummel and ten other cavalry troopers were ordered to advance and extend the left flank of the defensive line. When they went over the crest of the high ground, the sergeant and his men ran head on into approximately fifty warriors. Rather

than retreat Sergeant Dummell decided to charge. He shouted for the others to follow and advanced towards the Indians. Of his ten men only three elected to follow. Within a moment the sergeant and his three followers were surrounded and knocked from their horses. Almost immediately a rescue party was dispatched to assist the downed soldiers. The four cavalrymen were able to fend off the attacking Indians until help arrived. Two of the four miraculously escaped unharmed, Sergeant Dummell was severely wounded, and died within a short period of time, and another trooper also died.

After a period of time, the attacking warriors realized they could not break the defensive position of the soldiers. The superiority of firepower by the soldiers forced the attackers to fall back. Lieutenant Hale took this opportunity to reorganize his troops into one continuous line and thus be better prepared when the Indians renewed their attack. The expected assault never materialized. Instead, the Indians retreated until they were out of effective rifle range. When at a safe distance they began to make gestures and taunt the soldiers in an attempt to lure them into a chase. The objective in this deadly game was to get the cavalry troopers to chase them for some distance and then separate them from the rest of the soldiers. If successful the Indian warriors would then have the opportunity to ambush and massacre those foolish enough to give chase. Approximately two hours passed, with both sides

sparring back and forth, before the Indians gave up their attempt to lure the soldiers into a chase. Once they concluded their efforts to draw the soldiers out were in vain, and their defensive position was too formidable to assault, the Indians broke off the battle and withdrew in the same direction by which they made their initial approach.⁴²

A summary of the battle concluded the Indians lost approximately ten warriors killed and several wounded. The attack cost the post garrison only two men killed and two men wounded. Of the two injured, one of them had a minor wound which was not considered serious. These casualty figures did not include the civilian teamster, who was not expected to recover. Losses in stock were held to a minimum; the Indian warriors were able to capture only seven mules and two horses. The two horses were lost during the ill-fated charge by Sergeant Dummell. In making an estimate of the situation, Lieutenant Hale was of the opinion that the loss of government livestock was kept small because of the prompt action taken by the garrison when the word was passed of the approaching Indians. The promptness of the soldiers prevented the Indians from stampeding a herd of mules which was out grazing, and was returned to the post without the loss of one animal.⁴³

The successful repulse of such a large band of attackers had a buoyant affect on the morale of the troops. Immediately following the attack ". . . there was an air of determination about the men which . . . that if the Indians

assaulted the fort that night their success would be purchased at a terrible price."⁴⁴ In his report of the attack, Lieutenant Hale exhibited the same enthusiastic feeling as was displayed by the men under his command. After withstanding such a strong attack, the lieutenant expressed confidence the post could be adequately defended in the event of another attack, by placing the troops inside the stone buildings. With this protection the garrison could hold out against any number of Indians. Although he displayed a positive attitude in defending the post with the forces available at his disposal, Lieutenant Hale reminded his superiors that the garrison was unable to extend any protection to the Smoky Hill Trail or to the stages operating over it. At this particular time the post was capable of defending itself and no other responsibilities for defense could be expected.⁴⁵

Within five days, the garrison received a second opportunity to further their new-found confidence, as the Indians soon launched a second strong attack. Although their spirits were lifted by their successful defense, the troops still exercised a great deal of caution and remained on full alert in expectation of a renewed attack. The constant pressure rapidly created an unhealthy condition at the post. The soldiers were physically breaking down from the excessive amount of guard and picket duty. Although the post was short of men, it was a necessity that a vigilant watch be maintained. The intensity of the attack and the

likelihood that it could be resumed at any moment made the watch standers doubly alert. As a precautionary measure, the entire area surrounding the fort was kept under constant watch. Nothing moved over the open prairie without being noticed. Although the troops of the garrison were confident they could repel another attack, they were not going to be caught by surprise, and thus allow the Indian warriors an advantage.⁴⁶

A tense feeling prevailed throughout the post during the night of June 21 and 22. This feeling carried over into the day following the attack. The day of June 22 passed quietly with no threats of an attack. Services were conducted for the men killed during the attack, and were attended by those who could be spared from their duties. The night of the second day passed similarly to the daylight hours, quietly and without any major alarms. The following morning, however, a considerable amount of excitement occurred.

As the new day dawned, the soldiers commenced their routine duties in preparation for the coming day. Around ten o'clock in the morning a sentry spotted a column of dust rising above the horizon approximately seven miles northeast of the post. As this was the same direction from which the earlier attackers had approached there was immediate apprehension that the Indians were returning. The troops were quickly assembled on the parade ground and were divided and placed into defensive positions, to await what they were

certain was another war party. The distance from the post to the object creating the dust was too far to ascertain who or what was heading towards the post. The troops could do nothing but sit and wait until an accurate recognition could be made. In the meantime, no chances were going to be taken, and they prepared themselves for the worst.

One can well imagine the suspense that undoubtedly grew as the soldiers watched the moving dust. As the dust cloud methodically and slowly drew nearer, recognizable features slowly became distinguishable. When the moving object was approximately three or four miles from the post, the tension which had been steadily mounting was rapidly dispelled and replaced with the joy of excitement. The white covers of wagons became recognizable and the bright sunlight reflected off shiny rifle barrels and sabre scabbards. As Indians were not equipped with such items, it was quickly surmised the dust was created by a column of cavalry troops. A thrill of pleasure mixed with relief passed through the troops when Lieutenant Hale, who had been watching the movement through field glasses from a lookout tower atop the post sutler's store, announced the approaching column was probably the cavalry escort for the railroad survey party of W. W. Wright. Information that this survey party was headed towards the post had been received earlier and its anticipated arrival was expected daily. As the approaching wagons drew nearer and became clearly recognizable, Lieutenant Hale's assumption proved correct.

When the survey party, with its cavalry escort reached the post, they were greeted with many hardy welcomes and handshakes. The addition of the cavalry troops, which consisted of Company G, 7th U.S. cavalry, commanded by Captain Albert Barnitz, was a welcome sight for the weary troops at the post. That evening a social gathering for the newly arrived visitors was held in the post officers quarters. The gathering offered a brief respite from the tension created by the Indian situation. However, the reprieve was short in duration. Within two days of their arrival, the shock of reality would return, and the visiting troops of Company G would play an instrumental role in repulsing a second major attack.⁴⁷

While enroute to the post, Captain Barnitz, who was an avid journalist and letter writer, recorded information which revealed a large number of Indians still in the immediate vicinity of Fort Wallace. Two days prior to their arrival at the fort, Captain Barnitz recorded in his journal that during the night of June 21 Indians had been prowling around the camp. The following morning moccasin tracks were found in the moist sand where the Indians had crossed the Smoky Hill River. The tracks were discovered only one hundred yards from the survey party's camp. A similar incident was recorded for the following day. On the night before their arrival at the post, the survey party camped near the North Fork of the Smoky Hill River. At this location, they found traces of a recently abandoned Indian camp.

In his journal, Captain Barnitz stated that from the size of the encampment there must have been a force of several hundred or perhaps even a thousand warriors.⁴⁸

As the survey party approached from the northeast, the same direction the attackers left on the 21st, the camp they discovered was more than likely that of the Indians who attacked the post. As the band was still within the area, the threat of another assault was a distinct possibility. The garrison would not have long to wait for the anticipated attack, as it occurred shortly after sunrise on June 26. Although they had defended themselves earlier against a heavy assault, the understrength garrison was fortunate to have available the services of the recently arrived mounted troops.

About six-thirty on the morning of the 26th, a large band of warriors descended on Pond Creek Station. The Indians struck just as the attendants were changing teams on a stage that had just arrived. The noise and confusion of the attack spooked the horses, which bolted and ran towards the fort. The commotion coming from the stage station attracted the attention of the sentries at the post. As Indians were seen chasing the runaway horses, the alarm was sounded and the garrison immediately assembled. Lieutenant Hale ordered the cavalry troopers to mount and sent a messenger to inform Captain Barnitz of the attack. The messenger's hasty trip to the camp of Company G was a wasted effort. By the time he arrived, Captain Barnitz was already

forming his men to engage the attackers.

Captain Barnitz was about to sit down to his breakfast when he sensed an unusual amount of activity taking place at the post. As the survey party had pitched their camp only a short distance away, he could see men running to their quarters and emerging with their weapons. Suspecting the presence of Indians he ordered his men to do likewise. Before he could mount his men, it was necessary to retrieve the horses, as they had been sent out to graze in the open prairie. Fortunately the men in charge of this detail had just left camp and were only a short distance away, so it was only a brief period of time before the horses were returned. Within a few minutes, the troopers had their horses saddled and were ready for action. Departing the camp, Captain Barnitz was reinforced by twelve mounted soldiers from the post. With these additional men, Captain Barnitz set out with a force of approximately 50 mounted troopers and proceeded to engage the attacking Indians.⁴⁹

After a rapid ride of three miles the cavalry troopers came upon a group of approximately 75 Indians. They engaged this band about one mile from the post, as they were attempting to escape with the horses that had run off when the station was first attacked. On seeing the approach of the cavalry, the Indians in pursuit of the stock broke off their chase and returned to the main raiding party. With their return, the entire band of Indians withdrew and gathered on a hill two miles west of the post. Their objective

in moving to this location was to draw the pursuing cavalry into a trap. Before the combat ended, their plan came close to succeeding.

As the cavalry came within rifle range, shots were exchanged with the Indians who had gathered on the high ground. The sound of gunfire was apparently the signal for a second group of Indians, who had been secluded behind a bluff and were to advance on the cavalry's left flank. By this prearranged signal, the Indians who were hidden, advanced around a point of high ground and assaulted Captain Barnitz's flank with vigor. The assault on their flank placed the soldiers in serious jeopardy. As a defensive measure, Captain Barnitz drew in both flanks to form a half-moon formation. The left flank was not retracted soon enough to prevent the death of five soldiers. Before the order to draw in the lines was received, the Indians had penetrated the left flank and were able to isolate one sergeant and four privates from the rest of the command. The five isolated men made a valiant attempt to defend themselves but were overwhelmed by a superiority of numbers. All five died violently before a rescue party could come to their aid. Their bodies were later recovered and the atrocity of their death was vividly revealed, as the Indians had horribly mutilated them.

To prevent the rest of his command from meeting the same fate, Captain Barnitz was forced to withdraw and reform his lines. During the initial attack, the troopers had

remained mounted, which put them at a definite disadvantage. One can well imagine the futility of attempting to fire a well aimed shot from the back of a frightened horse in the middle of an Indian attack. Falling back and reforming his men into a second half-moon position, Captain Barnitz ordered his troopers to dismount. This move possibly saved his entire force from being annihilated. On the ground the soldiers could use their weapons effectively and exercise their marksmanship skills. Under these conditions the volume of firepower produced by the repeating carbines enabled the troopers to successfully repulse the counterattack launched by the Indians. With the soldiers on the ground, and thus able to use their weapons effectively, the Indians considered the fact that discretion was the better part of valor and broke off the attack.⁵⁰

During this brief respite, word was sent to the post to send an ambulance to care for the dead and wounded. After seeing that the casualties had been adequately taken care of, Captain Barnitz elected to follow the retreating Indians. The warriors were last seen in large numbers five miles northwest of the post. Heading his force in that direction, Captain Barnitz expected to catch up with the fleeing Indians, and engage them again under conditions more suitable for the cavalry. Their attempts in this effort were in vain. The Indians had a sufficient head start, and in a chase across the prairie, the cavalry horses proved to be no match for the swift Indian ponies in speed and

endurance. After some distance, the Indians dispersed, by small groups in various directions. This maneuver left Captain Barnitz with no distinguishable trail to follow.⁵¹

Having no trail to follow and no Indians to attack, Captain Barnitz was left with no choice but to return to the post where a council was held and a review of the attack was made. From this meeting the consensus was that the attacking warriors numbered no less than two hundred. During the battle there was a total of fourteen casualties for the army, six killed and eight wounded. Losses for the Indians could not be exactly ascertained, but was estimated to be twenty killed and wounded. As the Indians had strapped themselves to their horses they were easily carried from the field, or if by chance they were unhorsed, their companions always made a strong effort to retrieve their bodies. Under these circumstances the casualties of the Indians had to be estimated, and as a general rule the numbers given were usually inflated. In this particular incident, the figures appear to be reasonable.

The after-action report, however, did contain an error, which was purely a case of mistaken identity. During the heat of the battle, a corporal supposedly shot and killed the famous Cheyenne warrior, Roman Nose. Various reports state that Roman Nose was attempting to kill a soldier who had been thrown from his horse. The corporal rescued the downed trooper by striking a blow to the back of the Indian's shoulder with his sabre. When the Indian turned to

ward off his assailant, the corporal fired his rifle at point blank range striking him in the chest and inflicting a mortal wound. As the Indian was tightly strapped to his saddle, his horse carried him from the battlefield; therefore, his body was not recovered to correct the error in identity.

Subsequent evidence revealed the Indian killed was actually a Sioux warrior and not the famous Roman Nose. The error resulted because the Sioux Indian, mounted on a grey horse, was wearing a war bonnet almost identical to that worn by Roman Nose earlier at Pond Creek station. During the attack, an attendant at the station saw the Indian who was similiarly dressed and mounted, and assumed it was the Cheyenne warrior whom he had seen at an earlier time. In reality, Roman Nose was not present at this battle. This famous warrior would continue waging warfare on the plains for the next 15 months before he was killed at the celebrated Battle of the Arickaree in September of 1868.⁵²

This mistake in identity was one of two errors which resulted from the battle of June 26. A month after the combat, Harpers Weekly published an article describing the attack. The contents of the article are unjust to Captain Barnitz and the troops under his command during the battle. The article contained an inaccurate description of what actually took place.

By the time the article was published, Captain Barnitz had completed his escort duties and was present at the post

when the July issue of Harpers Weekly arrived. When he read the article, the captain was incensed. His impression of the contents in the article is recognizable in a letter he wrote to his wife. Although the article is technically correct in describing how the attack started and covers quite well the highlights of the combat, the author included a statement which infuriated Captain Barnitz. The statement dealt with the attack by the soldiers upon the Indians after their retreat to the high ground west of the post. The article related that the Indians counter-charged the soldiers and engaged them in a hand-to-hand fight

. . . In which the Indians displayed unlooked--for daring. With their overwhelming numbers they succeeded in driving the Cavalry back to the fort, with a loss of seven men killed, several wounded, and half their horses captured or killed.⁵³

All the official reports show this statement to be a gross exaggeration. It is unknown if the author of the article was present at Fort Wallace during the battle, or received the information second-hand. Regardless of whether the author was present or not, the article is clearly a case of an overexuberant reporter creating a newsy story, solely for the entertainment of his readers. By misconstruing the established facts, this particular reporter no doubt gained a great deal of antipathy from the soldiers involved in the fight and who knew the actuality of the situation.

In a letter to his wife, Captain Barnitz described the reaction of his fellow officers at the post toward the contents of the article. The captain pointed out they were

indignant over such a gross exaggeration. He explained their feelings were such, because it was a well known fact that when his force left the physical area of the fort they did not come within sight of the post and were no closer than a distance of two miles during the course of the battle. Captain Barnitz also explained that his command did not return to the post until about two o'clock in the afternoon, and that during the entire time of their absence he did not ask for, or receive any additional reinforcements.⁵⁴

Engaging a hostile force when you are outnumbered approximately four to one and forcing the opponent to leave the field is a monumental accomplishment in itself. Then to read of your exploits in a magazine article which contains fabrications and a distortion of your deeds should make it obvious to anyone why Captain Barnitz and the other participants were aggravated over the contents of the article.

The assault of June 26 was the last appearance of hostile Indians in the immediate vicinity of the fort and Pond Creek Station for the remainder of the summer of 1867. Having no way of knowing this, the troops remained for a period of time, in a state of constant apprehension of more attacks. However, with each passing day this anxiety began to slowly disperse. This situation required the soldiers to maintain a state of readiness and be constantly on the lookout for a renewed attack.

Following the attack of the 26th, Lieutenant Hale

was ". . . of the opinion that these Indians are a part of the same band that attacked this post on the 21 inst. and they are evidently intent upon getting our stock."⁵⁵ Having successfully resisted a second attack boosted still further the confidence of Lieutenant Hale and his men. He was more confident than ever the post could be defended and that the hostile Indians would not be able to achieve their goal. To guard against another attack, pickets were placed on the high ground surrounding the post, thus making it impossible for any raiding parties to advance on the post or stage station without being discovered. The pickets were placed in such a manner so they could observe any movement over the open prairie. If their suspicion was aroused by anything they observed, there was sufficient time to notify the post and allow the garrison to prepare for an attack. This measure was suitable for daytime defense; however, the possibility of a night attack was not overlooked, and adequate precautions were also taken to guard against this.⁵⁶

As the days passed from June into July, the troops at the post gradually began to relax and become more at ease. However, reports were still coming into the post relating information of attacks along the Smoky Hill Trail. Two particular incidents served as a reminder to the troops that a large number of Indians was still present along the Smoky Hill and the possibility of an attack on the post still existed. The first of these reports dealt with a

supply train that was attacked 15 to 20 miles east of the post. The second concerned an ox train which returned to the post on June 30th. The train had passed the post the previous day, but after traveling only a few miles west they had to fight Indians constantly and elected to return to the safety of the post.

The arrival of the stage from Denver on July second, which was the first to pass through since June 22, reinforced the awareness of the potential dangers in traveling over the road. The stage was accompanied by a worn-out escort of infantry and cavalry troops. These soldiers informed their brothers in uniform that they had a running battle with the hostiles all the way from Big Timbers, which was 30 miles west of the post. The information received from the three attacks reminded the post garrison of the seriousness of the situation. Therefore, they remained vigilant in their duties and were on constant guard against a renewed assault.

During the month of July the tense feeling at the post began to ease with each passing day. The return of General Hancock and his escort helped to enhance this situation. On July 3, Captain Keogh and the troops which were selected to provide an additional escort for General Hancock returned to the post. Having completed his inspection, General Hancock was now enroute back to his headquarters. With the return of Captain Keogh and his troops, there was now sufficient strength at the post to allow for a small celebration

of the upcoming holiday. As nothing had been seen or heard of the hostile Indians in over a week, it was considered safe to allow the garrison at least a partial relaxation from their rigorous duties.⁵⁷

Independence Day, 1867, passed rather quietly, as no particular festivities had been planned. The only thing to distinguish this day from a routine Sunday was a meal which was planned for three o'clock in the afternoon. The dinner was eagerly looked forward to, and was considered a banquet when compared with the daily rations. The main course consisted of chicken pie, made from canned chicken, and oyster soup. These two dishes were prepared with other delicacies not part of the daily menu.

After consuming a satisfying meal, those who did not have required duties to perform spent the balance of the afternoon either resting or having casual conversation with others. For some, the evening hours were spent at the officers quarters visiting and singing. Upon retiring for the evening, the garrison bedded down for a night's rest with a contented feeling. Even though they were still in the middle of hostile Indian country, the day allowed the troops a brief respite and they temporarily forgot the threat of an attack.⁵⁸

The first week of July passed without any notable incidents. A general summary of the existing Indian conditions can be gained from an entry in Captain Barnitz's journal. On July 7, the Captain was preparing to resume

his duties as escort for the survey party. He wrote that the departure of his troops would not leave the fort critically short of men. Captain Keogh and Company I, again on escort duty with General Hancock for a portion of his journey, were expected to return within a few days. In addition, word had been received that Company F, 7th cavalry, had been assigned to reinforce the post garrison. That company was enroute and was expected to arrive momentarily. Captain Barnitz noted there would be sufficient manpower at the fort and he considered it unlikely for the Indians to make an appearance there.

On July 8, the two survey parties, which arrived at the post in June, formed into one unit; broke camp at Fort Wallace and headed their wagons southwest, starting an eight-day journey to Fort Lyon.⁵⁹

Although their tenure was brief, the officers and men of this group were responsible for the successful defense of the post on two separate occasions. Had they not been present, the question of what could or might have happened, must remain unanswered. The efforts of these soldiers provided a significant contribution to Fort Wallace during its most important period.

By the end of July, the garrison had almost returned to normal. During the month, nothing had been seen or heard of the Indians. An assumption for this situation was made by the post guide, William Comstock, and others who were knowledgeable in Indian affairs. These individuals surmised

the limited amount of Indian activity was due to the fact that the warriors were resting their horses and refitting their equipment in preparation for raids along the forks of the Solomon and Saline Rivers. Events in this region during the late summer months of 1867 proved this theory correct. For some unknown reason the Indians shifted their activities to the central region of Kansas. For the remainder of the summer the western portion of the Smoky Hill was virtually free of Indian attacks and safe to travel.⁶⁰

This condition made it possible to resume activities other than fighting Indians. By the end of July the stage company was restoring the destroyed stations to a usable condition and supplying them with stock to recommence full operations. At the post the civilian workers and soldiers who could be spared from their duties returned to their work on the construction of post facilities. By this time the proper tools needed for construction had been received and the work was being completed at a more rapid pace. Construction on a hospital building was progressing well; and work on a magazine was to be started soon and it was expected to be completed in one week.⁶¹ Although the Indians ceased to be a threat to those traveling the Smoky Hill Trail, another enemy appeared which was just as deadly as a well armed warrior. The new enemy was an epidemic of cholera.

The dreaded disease first appeared in mid-July at Fort Harker. Its prevalence would last approximately a full

month. Before its extinction the disease reached epidemic proportions throughout the entire length of the Smoky Hill Trail. Nearly every inhabited area along the trail was touched by the ravages of this dreadful disease.

The first appearance of the disease in the Fort Wallace area was at the 7th cavalry camp located three miles from the post. The camp was that of General Custer and the remainder of the 7th cavalry regiment. They had arrived at Fort Wallace July 13, after an unsuccessful expedition against the Indians. When the presence of cholera was discovered, immediate steps were taken to prevent it from spreading. Efforts were taken to improve sanitary conditions; drinking water was boiled and a standing order for personal cleanliness was rigidly enforced. A medical inspection of the men was held daily in hopes of detecting the disease while still in its early stages. A strict quarantine was imposed on the camp. In spite of these measures, the disease would spread to the post area and claim victims from the garrison.

The medical precautions did allow the post a temporary stay from the dreaded disease before it began taking lives. Medical records reveal there were no cases of cholera recorded until August 11. However, during the week following this date, records indicate that 22 cases of confirmed cholera were admitted to the hospital. Before the disease ran its course, six lives would be taken by it. The epidemic reached its peak in mid-August and gradually subsided

and had vanished completely by the end of the month.⁶²

Although they were plagued by the ravages of cholera, military duties at the post had to be continued by those whose health permitted. As the 7th cavalry regiment was still encamped near the fort, it was decided to utilize the availability of their services and send the regiment on a scouting expedition. The objective of this expedition was to find the location of an Indian camp and attack it. Although the main portion of the Indian raiders had shifted eastward, a fact unknown to military officials, it was believed that a substantial number of Indians was still present in northwest Kansas. The 7th cavalry was therefore assigned the task of finding and attacking this village.

On August 12, eight troops of the 7th cavalry left Fort Wallace. The first phase of the campaign took the regiment from Fort Wallace to Fort Hays. From there they continued the operation by going in a northwesterly direction to the headwaters of the Republican River, where the Indian camp was supposedly located. The entire operation was ". . . characterized by long exhausting marches, heat, dust, bad water and an absence of Indians."⁶³

For their wasted efforts, the 7th cavalry was awarded a fitting epithet by one of its officers, Lieutenant Samuel Robbins. Referring to the extensive marching, Lieutenant Robbins called it the marched-to-death regiment. During the course of this fruitless operation, it was estimated the 7th cavalry regiment covered more miles than any other

regiment in the same length of time and accomplished absolutely nothing. On September 2, after three weeks of continuous marching, the weary soldiers returned to Fort Wallace. They remained bivouacked at the post until September 19. On this date the regiment left the post again, as it was ordered to march to Medicine Lodge to take part in the treaty negotiations which would take place in October.⁶⁴

From the time of their first arrival in July until their final departure in September, the troops of the 7th cavalry witnessed a transition at the post from combat readiness to a return of routine garrison duties. As the Indians had posed no serious threat since their major attack of June 26, the post was in a much more relaxed atmosphere and the apprehension of an Indian attack was almost nonexistent. Captain Barnitz, having completed his escort duties and rejoined the regiment, offered a description which adequately describes this new atmosphere. Life had become so casual that the captain, in writing a letter to his wife, related that a good share of the time was passed by playing chess or cards. About the only duties he performed were to sign his name and receive the reports from roll calls.⁶⁵ From this, it is obvious that life at the post was completely opposite to what it had been three months earlier.

Although peaceful conditions had returned, the troops were reminded they were still in the military, as there was

also a return to traditional military customs and practices. Every evening the troops had a formal parade. For this daily occasion they fell out ". . . in good clothes, white gloves and sashes, and make a very creditable display"66 As there were no visitors present at the post to witness this event, the soldiers performed for their own satisfaction. The serene atmosphere prevalent at the post characterized the prevailing conditions beginning to develop throughout western Kansas.

After several months of intensive fighting, both sides were retiring to neutral ground. The Indians were beginning to prepare for their winter camps, and the army was restricting its patrolling activities and staying close to their established posts along the travel routes. During the preceding months of combat, neither side was able to inflict severe damage on the other. The Indians with their harassing raids did not force the army to give up any of its posts, nor to close permanently the Smoky Hill Trail. By the same token, the army wore out men and equipment in countless expeditions to track down the elusive Indian, who always managed to evade his pursuers. All the fighting and bloodshed achieved no conclusive results. What started out as a grand campaign by General Hancock in mid-April turned out to be a total failure.

An appraisal of General Hancock's punitive expedition and what resulted from it can best be summarized by a common soldier in the ranks. At the height of the warfare

in mid-July, a private stationed at the post, penned a letter to his mother and expressed his opinion of what his superior officers had created. The private, a soldier by the name of Richard Blake, offered his impression by stating

I think as everyone else with any sense at all thinks, that Genl Sherman, Genl Hancock, Genl Custer, and the balance of them have made a grand fizzle. I don't believe the whole pack of them have killed a dozen Indians all told.⁶⁷

It is obvious that private Blake did not have much esteem for his superior officers, but his statement can be used to illustrate the general consensus of the American public towards the army and the war being waged against the Plains Indians.

Because of inconclusive results by the army, public pressure was placed upon the government to restrain the activities of the military and restore peace to the plains. Yielding to this pressure, the Congress acted on July 20 by appointing a four-man peace commission. The commission was delegated authority to arrange talks with the hostile tribes. From these discussions the commission expected to learn the causes of hostilities and negotiate a treaty which would remove the origin of the present conflict, and thus prevent future clashes. The efforts of this group led to the historic council held at Medicine Lodge in late October, 1867. After several days of consultation, the Peace Commissioners and Indian leaders agreed to terms, and those clamoring for peace and fair treatment for the Plains

Indian were placated.

The Medicine Lodge treaty was similiar in structure to the Treaty of the Little Arkansas which had been negotiated two years earlier under similar circumstances. This new treaty, in time, would prove just as unworkable as the previous one. After concluding the agreement, the Indians retired to their winter camps and the soldiers marched to their military posts and assumed the mundane duties of garrison life. From all outward appearances it looked as though peace would prevail. The treaty created only a brief interlude in the struggle for supremacy over the Great Plains.⁶⁸

For the troops stationed at Fort Wallace the ensuing months of peace were gladly accepted. The leisure life of routine garrison duty was no doubt a welcome relief from the rigorous summer months that were spent on constant watch for hostile Indians. However, the summer of 1868 would see a resumption of warfare on the plains in just as large and violent scale as that just completed. Although the post would be actively involved in this renewed campaign, it would not experience the direct threat of attacks as experienced during the past summer. Nor would travel over the Smoky Hill be as severely restricted by hostile Indians as it had been during the summer months of 1867.

In the remaining years of its existence, Fort Wallace played a vital role in the defense of the Smoky Hill Trail and the trans-continental railroad, which would soon extend

into western Kansas. For the remainder of the 1860's, through the decade of the 1870's and into the early 1880's, when the decision was made that Fort Wallace was no longer needed, the troops of the fort would carry out all military duties required to protect life and property in their area of responsibility.

Within several years, the power of the Plains Indians to resist would be broken forever. After this time the Indians could only engage in small harassing raids, but these raids kept the inhabitants of western Kansas in a nervous state as they reminded them of the powerful attacks of the summer of 1867. During the twilight years of its existence, the troops of Fort Wallace never again witnessed the tremendous amount of aggressiveness as displayed by the Plains Indian during the summer of 1867.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER VI

¹Marvin Garfield, "Defense of the Kansas Frontier, 1866-1867," Kansas Historical Quarterly, I (August, 1932), p. 329.

²Leckie, Military Conquest of the Southern Plains, pp. 35-36.

³Ibid., p. 32.

⁴Utley, Frontier Regulars, p. 114.

⁵Ibid., pp. 111-115.

⁶U.S. Congress, 41st Congress 2nd session, House Executive Document No. 240, Difficulty with Indian Tribes (Serial 1425), pp. 98-99.

⁷Ibid., pp. 98-99.

⁸Utley, Frontier Regulars, p. 116.

⁹Henry M. Stanley, My Early Travels and Adventures in America and Asia (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1895), p. 10.

¹⁰House Executive Document No. 240, Difficulty with Indian Tribes, pp. 16-17.

¹¹Utley, Frontier Regulars, p. 116.

¹²U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Annual Report 1867, No. 108, p. 312.

¹³Utley, Frontier Regulars, pp. 116-118.

¹⁴Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Annual Report 1867, p. 313.

¹⁵Stanley, Early Travels and Adventures, p. 47.

¹⁶Utley, Frontier Regulars, p. 118.

¹⁷Stanley, Early Travels and Adventures, p. 88.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹House Executive Document No. 240, Difficulty with Indian Tribes, pp. 14-15.

²⁰Leckie, Military Conquest of the Southern Plains, p. 44.

²¹Garfield, "Defense of the Kansas Frontier, 1866-1867," p. 330.

²²House Executive Document No. 240, Difficulty with Indian Tribes, p. 57.

²³Garfield, "Defense of the Kansas Frontier, 1866-1867," p. 331.

²⁴House Executive Document No. 240, Difficulty with Indian Tribes, p. 60.

²⁵Nye, Plains Indian Raiders, p. 84.

²⁶Post Letter, May 1, 1867.

²⁷Post Letter, May 10, 1867. Post Returns for the month of May, 1867.

²⁸Post Letter, May 11, 1867.

²⁹Ibid., May 12, 1867.

³⁰Ibid., May 13, 1867.

³¹Ibid.

³²Blaine Burkey, Custer Come at Once: The Fort Hays Years of George and Elizabeth Custer, 1867-1870 (Hays: Kansas, Thomas More Prep, 1976), pp. 9, 21.

³³Post Letter, June 4, 1867.

³⁴Ibid., May 28, 1867.

³⁵Ibid., May 31, 1867.

³⁶Ibid., June 6, 1867.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., June 11, 1867.

⁴⁰House Executive Document No. 240, Difficulty with Indian Tribes, p. 60.

⁴¹Nye, Plains Indian Raiders, p. 86.

⁴²Post Letter, June 22, 1867. William A. Bell, New Tracks in North America (Albuquerque: Horn & Wallace Publishers, 1965), pp. 53-56. Nye, Plains Indian Raiders, pp. 86-88. (See Appendix III for additional information on sources).

⁴³Post Letter, June 22, 1867.

⁴⁴Post Letter, June 22, 1867. Bell, New Tracks in North America, p. 56.

⁴⁵Post Letter, June 22, 1867.

⁴⁶Bell, New Tracks in North America, p. 56.

⁴⁷Bell, New Tracks in North America, pp. 56-57. Nye, Plains Indian Raiders, pp. 88-89.

⁴⁸Captain Albert Barnitz, Journal and Diaries, June 22, 23, 1867. (Original diaries located at Yale University Library. A microfilm copy of this has been purchased by the Kansas State Historical Society at Topeka.)

⁴⁹Post Letter, June 27, 1867. Bell, New Tracks in North America, pp. 60-61. Nye, Plains Indian Raiders, pp. 90-91. Robert M. Utley, Life in Custer's Cavalry--Diaries and Letters of Albert and Jennie Barnitz, 1867-1868 (New Haven: Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1977), p. 69.

⁵⁰Nye, Plains Indian Raiders, pp. 90-91. Utley, Life in Custer's Cavalry, pp. 74-75.

⁵¹Post Letter, June 27, 1867. Utley, Life in Custer's Cavalry, pp. 75-78.

⁵²Post Letter, June 27, 1867. Bell, New Tracks in North America, p. 61. Utley, Life in Custer's Cavalry, pp. 75-79.

⁵³Harpers Weekly, July 27, 1867, pp. 467-468. As cited in Montgomery, "Fort Wallace and its Relation to the Frontier," pp. 209-210.

⁵⁴Utley, Life in Custer's Cavalry, p. 93.

⁵⁵Post Letter, June 27, 1867.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Post Letter, July 2, 1867. Utley, Life in Custer's Cavalry, pp. 80-81.

⁵⁸Richard Blake, letter written from Fort Wallace, July 14, 1867, Kenneth Spencer Collection, University of Kansas Library, Lawrence, Kansas.

⁵⁹Barnitz, Journal and Diaries, July 7, 1867. Utley, Life in Custer's Cavalry, p. 85.

⁶⁰Post Letter, July 29, 1867.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ramon Powers and Gene Younger, "Cholera on the Plains," Kansas Historical Quarterly, XXXVII (Winter, 1971), pp. 382-386.

⁶³Utley, Life in Custer's Cavalry, p. 95.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 97-98.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 100.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 101.

⁶⁷Richard Blake Letter, July 14, 1867.

⁶⁸William H. Leckie, The Buffalo Soldiers (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), pp. 26-28. Utley, Frontier Regulars, pp. 132-138.



Captain Myles W. Keogh, Commanding Officer of Troop I, 7th U.S. cavalry and post commander from November 1866 until late summer of 1867 (as illustrated in Life in Custer's Cavalry, p. 65)



Captain Albert Barnitz, Commanding Officer of Troop G, 7th U.S. cavalry (as illustrated in Life in Custer's Cavalry, p. 2)



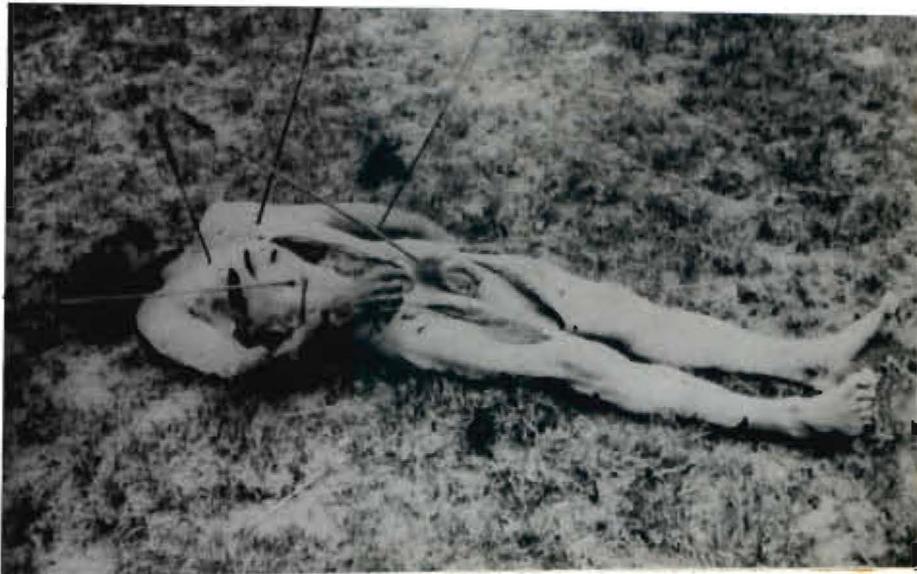
Captain Barnitz, seated in center, with other officers in front of Commandant's quarters, Fort Wallace, June 1867 (as illustrated in Life in Custer's Cavalry, p. 66)



Fort Wallace under construction, illustration from Harper's Weekly, July 27, 1867 (Kansas State Historical Society)



Captain Barnitz fight with Cheyennes, illustration from Harper's Weekly, July 27, 1867 (Kansas State Historical Society)



Mutilated body of Sergeant Fredrick Wyllyams who was killed during the battle of June 26, 1867 (Kansas State Historical Society)

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION OF INDIAN HOSTILITIES AND THE END OF AN ERA

With the passing of 1867, Fort Wallace became a typical military installation. Within a few years it was a post characterized by routine garrison duties, broken only by the responsibility of providing protection for the Smoky Hill Trail and the rapidly advancing railroad. Spanning the next several years, the soldiers of the post were actively engaged in the pursuit of hostile Indians who persisted in their harassing raids. This action was necessary because, after the summer of 1867, the Indians did not conduct any strong aggressive attacks near the fort. Throughout the remaining years of Indian hostilities, all combat the troops took part in occurred a considerable number of miles from the post area.

As the major portion of this work has been a description of events leading up to and specifically involving Fort Wallace, the remaining pages will offer only a cursory examination of Indian affairs, including the specific role of the troops. It should not be construed that these topics are unimportant. They are vital to the total story of the post and its role in eliminating Indian resistance in the

region of western Kansas, but a detailed examination of these topics could detract from the main significance of this work, which has been a description of the post and the immediate vicinity.

With the approaching winter of 1867-68, the troops stationed at the post were to spend the cold weather months in conditions similar to the previous winter. By December all the detachments stationed along the Smoky Hill route had been brought back to the post, where their return placed an excessive demand on the availability of quarters. Some soldiers had to live in tents, while others were quartered in buildings constructed for use as workshops. Built for other purposes, they were inadequate as living quarters. The only consolation for the occupants using them was they were at least sheltered from the elements. Overall, no one was billeted in comfortable quarters, and the winter of 1867-1868 was spent in miserable living conditions for all occupants of the post.¹

Although they were forced to live in inadequate quarters, the soldiers at the post were occupied with numerous projects which helped take their mind off their poor standard of living. During the winter months, the troops spent considerable time drilling to perfect their military skills. For those not occupied in this training, details were formed which worked at policing the post compound.

Throughout the winter months a tremendous effort was

put forth in removing the debris which had accumulated from the construction of the buildings. It took nearly all winter to accomplish this. For their labor, the troops at the post could take consolation in the fact that though their living quarters left much to be desired, they could look with pride upon the neat appearance of the post grounds. Once the post area was cleaned, efforts were made to keep it in this condition. As a result, visitors passing through always found it in a neat, orderly military appearance.²

After spending a busy winter, the post garrison began to prepare for the eventual return of Indian raids with the return of warm weather. The activities of the post were reoriented to the specific mission of defending the Smoky Hill area. The summer of 1868 saw a resumption of attacks again spreading throughout the frontier region of Kansas. These attacks led to another major offensive campaign by the frontier army. In this campaign, the troops of Fort Wallace were involved in one of the most famous rescues of the Indian war period.

The Indian raids of 1868 were as widespread and almost as numerous as the ones in the summer of 1867, but there was one significant difference. The large scale attacks of the second summer did not take place until the latter part of August. For the first part of the summer, it appeared as though the provisions of the Medicine Lodge Peace Treaty would be successful. What appeared to be an auspicious

start was dispelled by an incident involving two Indian tribes.

The spark kindling this raging fire was struck in early June, when a Cheyenne raiding party attacked the village of their traditional enemy the Kaw. Cheyenne justification for this act was in retaliation for members of their tribe supposedly killed by the Kaws. After raiding the Kaw village, the Cheyenne warriors in their excitement pillaged the homes of several white settlers in the Council Grove area. Although they did not commit any bodily harm to the settlers, their actions put the entire frontier region on edge. Many people vocally expressed their concern over the fact that large bands of Indians were allowed to roam the plains at will. This public outcry prompted an investigation by officials in the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

After concluding their investigation, the decision was made by these officials to halt the issuance of weapons as specified in the Medicine Lodge treaty. This decision prompted the argument by the Indian Agents that the Indians were expecting these gratuities and would be angered if they did not receive them as promised. The proponents of this argument won; the decision was reversed; and the weapons were issued. Within a few short weeks, hindsight proved this to an unwise choice.

Receiving the arms and ammunition in early August, the Cheyennes shortly thereafter began a series of raids in the Saline and Solomon River valleys. Accounts of these raids

show that the Cheyennes were excessively brutal in the treatment of their victims. As news of the atrocities spread across the Kansas frontier, soldiers and settlers girded themselves for another round of combat.³

As word of the attacks progressed westward, the white inhabitants along the Smoky Hill knew that they would not have long to wait before the Indians made their appearance. Since early summer, soldiers from the post had been assigned duties to serve as guards for the stage stations or as escorts for the coaches. As they were already in position, they were adequately prepared if and when an attack should occur.

The first report of a concentrated attack in the Fort Wallace area took place on August 22, ten miles west of the post. On this day, a portion of Company B, 5th infantry was returning to the post after being relieved of their duties at several stations between Pond Creek and Lake Station, Colorado. The soldiers were able to drive off their attackers and suffered only a small number of casualties. Immediately following this, word was received that Indians had attacked Lake Station. The contents of the report indicated that had it not been for the ten soldiers present at the station, the Indians would have been able to capture and destroy it.

Coaches traveling the road were by no means immune to attack. On August 25 a stage was chased by warriors for approximately seven miles between Big Springs and Cheyenne

Wells. The two soldiers serving as escorts were instrumental in preventing the coach from falling into the hands of the Indians. These attacks were the first of many before hostilities ceased. Although the Indians did not force the road to close, as they did a year before, they made it extremely risky for the life and property of those traveling over the route.⁴

As the attacks continued to mount, General Philip Sheridan, who replaced General Hancock as Commander of the Department of the Missouri, was of the opinion ". . . that a major campaign against the warring tribes of western Kansas was warranted and necessary."⁵ From this command decision, plans were made for operations extending both north and south of the Arkansas River. The objective of this offensive campaign was to drive the Indian from this region and deprive him of using it as a sanctuary.

To conduct operations in the Smoky Hill area, General Sheridan authorized the enlistment of a company of experienced frontiersmen to serve as scouts. The reasoning behind this decision resulted from the hard lessons learned during the previous summer's Indian campaign when the army ran itself ragged pursuing the Indian. Because of this, General Sheridan and other high ranking military officers felt men who knew how to survive on the open prairie and were knowledgeable in the habits of the Indians stood a better chance of tracking them down and forcing them into combat.⁶

The man selected to form and command this elite unit

was a favorite of General Sheridan and a member of his staff, Colonel George A. Forsyth. Colonel Forsyth had been yearning for a field command and eagerly accepted this opportunity. On August 24, Colonel Forsyth was issued orders authorizing the formation of the unit.

When announced, there was such an overwhelming response that within five days 50 men had enlisted and the unit was ready to commence its mission. Of the men selected 30 had volunteered at Fort Harker and the balance of the unit was completed when 20 more were added at Fort Hays. Selected as Forsyth's immediate subordinate was Lieutenant Fred Beecher. At the time of his appointment, Lieutenant Beecher was serving as post Quartermaster at Fort Wallace. The lieutenant was selected because he was rapidly gaining fame as a capable Indian scout. The famous battle fought by Forsyth and his scouts is often referred to as The Battle of Beecher's Island, in honor of Lieutenant Beecher, who lost his life during that engagement.⁷

On August 29, Colonel Forsyth and his volunteer scouts marched out of Fort Hays, starting an eight-day expedition which took them in a northwesterly direction between the Smoky Hill and Republican Rivers. Completing their scouting expedition through this area they arrived at Fort Wallace on September 5. During their journey, they encountered various signs of Indians, but did not see any hostile warriors.

The scouts remained at Fort Wallace until September 10

when word was received at the post that Indians had attacked a wagon train near the small town of Sheridan, located 13 miles east of the post, and the terminus of the Kansas Pacific Railroad. Upon receiving this information, Colonel Forsyth ordered his men to prepare themselves to pursue the raiding party. Almost immediately scouts were ready to travel. Colonel Forsyth and his men made a rapid journey to the site of the attack, located the trail of the attacking warriors and began to follow it.

When they started the chase, the scouts had no way of knowing they were about to create their own chapter in the history of the Indian wars. The narrative of this expedition is a story unto itself and one well worthy of examination by anyone interested in the struggle between the white man and the Plains Indian. Much has been written and records preserved which give a full account of the heroic nine-day stand of this group on a small island in the middle of the Arickaree River before being rescued by troops from Fort Wallace. However, the intent and purpose here will be to offer a description of how the troops from the fort became involved in this dramatic rescue.

After tracking the Indians for several days, Colonel Forsyth and his scouts were attacked at dawn on September 17 by an overwhelming number of Indians. Within a matter of minutes, the scouts fled to their island of safety and thus began their nine-day **siege**. Considering the desperation of the situation, it was decided that volunteers would be

called for to try and get help from Fort Wallace. The two men who offered their services for this hazardous task were Jack Stillwell and Pierre Trudeau. That night the two volunteers successfully slipped past the Indians and started their journey for help. Traveling by night to avoid detection, Trudeau and Stillwell covered approximately 80 miles in four days.

Apparently feeling safe, they were traveling by daylight on September 22. Near noon, they encountered two soldiers who were carrying dispatches to Captain Louis Carpenter, who was patrolling the Smoky Hill with part of the 10th cavalry in the area of Sandy Creek, 45 miles west of the post. Finding they were only 15 miles from the fort, Trudeau and Stillwell proceeded rapidly to the post and informed the commanding officer of Colonel Forsyth's desperate situation.⁸

After receiving the report from the scouts, the post commander, Colonel H. L. Bankhead, issued orders to send a courier to inform Captain Carpenter of the situation and instruct him to proceed immediately to the site of the beleaguered scouts. After issuing these instructions, Bankhead and 100 cavalrymen left the post within an hour. Of the two groups speeding to the rescue, Captain Carpenter reached the scouts first.

Receiving the instructions on September 23, Captain Carpenter set out immediately for the area where the scouts were located. Although he was concerned for the welfare of

the scouts, there was also a personal motive in the captain's eagerness to start. Captain Carpenter had served on Forsyth's staff during the Civil War and was a personal friend of his. While enroute to the location of the scouts, Captain Carpenter and his men, by pure circumstances, happened to encounter another scout who had escaped from the island. Fearing that the first two volunteers had failed, two more were sent in search of help. The second set of volunteers were Jack Donovan and Allison J. Pliley.

These scouts were successful in their journey to Fort Wallace and when they arrived they found the post almost deserted, as the majority of the command was with Colonel Bankhead in search of the scouts. Pliley elected to remain at the post, but Donovan persuaded four men to return with him to the Arickaree and was enroute to this location when found by Captain Carpenter. Not knowing for certain where the scouts were located, Captain Carpenter was extremely pleased to have the services of Donovan, as he knew exactly where to go, and thus expedite the rescue.

Captain Carpenter and his command arrived at Forsyth's location September 25. The arrival of the rescue party was none to soon. Since the day of the attack, the scouts had been without food or medical supplies. All they had to eat was horsemeat from their dead mounts. After several days this turned rancid and was unfit for human consumption. By the time the rescue party arrived, the wounded were beginning to suffer immensely from the lack of medical treatment.

It was estimated that Colonel Forsyth would not have lasted another day. When rescued, he was running a high temperature and afflicted with blood poisoning from the wounds received during the first day of the attack.

The following day, Colonel Bankhead arrived with more medical supplies and ambulances to transport the wounded. Two days later the scouts and their rescuers started the return trip to Fort Wallace, arriving at the post on September 30. At the post, those who required hospitalization were given the care needed. Colonel Forsyth was confined to the post hospital for three months before he was sufficiently recovered from his wounds.⁹

After their momentous rescue, part of the garrison was involved in one other notable event before cold weather returned and forced a conclusion to active operations in 1868. As they were marching to the relief of Forsyth's scouts, Captain Carpenter's men discovered a large Indian trail. It was presumed to have been made by the Indian band which attacked the scouts. When they returned to the fort, a report of this was sent to General Sheridan. With such a broad trail to follow, it was considered likely that the Indians could be located. Supplied with this information, General Sheridan ordered the 5th cavalry to go by rail to a point between Forts Hays and Wallace. Upon reaching the designated point, the cavalry unit was to proceed overland and locate the trail; follow it and strike the Indian camp when found. When these orders were received, the 5th cavalry

was under the temporary command of Major Royall. The 5th cavalry's commanding officer, Major Eugene A. Carr was absent in the performance of staff duties. It was because of Major Carr's absence that the troops of Fort Wallace would be involved in another notable Indian fight.

Two days after the 5th cavalry departed, Major Carr arrived at Fort Hays. Because of his experienced background in Indian fighting, General Sheridan wanted Carr to rejoin his unit. The Major was instructed to proceed to Fort Wallace where two companies of cavalry were to assist him in locating the 5th cavalry. Carrying out his orders, Major Carr arrived at the post where companies H and I of the 10th cavalry were selected to escort him. On October 14, Major Carr and his cavalry escort departed the post in search of the 5th cavalry.

After four days of marching, the Major and his escort reached the area on Beaver Creek where the 5th cavalry was thought to be, but no trace was found. Small groups were sent out in search of them, but after a fruitless search, it was decided that the 5th cavalry must have gone in another direction. It was concluded that to continue the search would be in vain and Major Carr elected to return to Fort Wallace.

On October 18 at seven o'clock in the morning, as the two companies were breaking camp and preparing for their return to the fort, they were attacked by a band of several hundred warriors. A running battle ensued which lasted for

approximately eight hours. Because Carr had camped in a creek bottom, the attacking warriors were able to take advantage of the ravines and trees and maneuver in close to the soldiers. Their jeopardy was quickly recognized and the cavalry formed a wedge formation, with two columns of wagons in the center moving to higher ground, where they were better able to defend themselves.

Late in the morning the Indians concentrated and launched a strong attack. The soldiers repulsed this assault and sent the Indians fleeing in wild disorder. Expecting a second attack, they rearranged their defenses, but it never occurred. About one o'clock in the afternoon it was noticed that the Indians were starting to slowly withdraw. After nearly eight hours of combat on a hot day, the men and animals were beginning to suffer from thirst. The retreat of the Indians enabled the troops to move back to the creek where they could obtain water.

At the creek, a wide bottom which allowed for good observation was selected for the night's camp. The site chosen allowed the camp to be guarded in a manner which prevented the Indians from getting too close. That night Indians could be heard moving about the area, but by sunrise they had all vanished. As they did 24 hours earlier, the troops broke camp and began their march back to Fort Wallace. Major Carr and his escort arrived at the fort on October 21. Their return trip was completed without any further encounters with hostile Indians.

Several days later, additional information was received regarding the whereabouts of the 5th cavalry and Major Carr was able to join his unit. Using Fort Wallace as a base for their operations, the 5th cavalry continued searching for the Indians. On October 25 the troopers made contact with a group of warriors they fought for the next two days. The band of warriors was a rear guard for an escaping village. They successfully held off Major Carr's advance and enabled the inhabitants of the village to flee to safety. After this engagement, Major Carr returned with his cavalry to Fort Wallace and terminated the campaign without achieving satisfactory results. With the conclusion of this campaign there were no further incidents of any significance with Indians in the Smoky Hill area for the remainder of 1868. Although the Indians continued to conduct small raids on the stage and railroad stations, these were more of a harassment and nuisance rather than full-scale attacks.¹⁰

With the passing of the summer of 1868, which brought the campaign against the Plains Indians to a close, the expectations General Sheridan had for the summer offensive failed to materialize. The inconclusive results were almost identical to those of the previous year. About the only difference was that the campaign of 1868 did not create the controversy and public demands that were prevalent the year before. The two years were almost identical, however, in that the army was yet to inflict any major damage upon the

warring tribes. Although the summer ended in a stalemate, some valuable lessons were learned. The most important was the near tragedy of Colonel Forsyth and his scouts. The close encounter of Colonel Forsyth's scouts taught the army how not to fight the Indians.

Frustrated by their lack of success, top military officials decided to try a different approach. As nothing could be achieved in warm weather, plans were formulated to conduct a winter campaign. When the plan was set up it called for three different columns to conduct operations in different areas. The most important phase of this innovative idea took place in late November with the attack of the 7th cavalry on the Cheyenne village located on the Washita River in western Oklahoma. Although it was not a smashing victory for the army, the attack made the Plains Indian acutely aware that their winter camps were no longer the secure haven that they were earlier.

Although the winter campaign was extremely costly in men and equipment, the efforts and hardships bore some results. The offensive created more of a psychological defeat rather than a physical one, as the warlike attitude of the Plains Indians was somewhat abated. Even though the troops of Fort Wallace did not take an active part in this campaign they did reap a portion of the benefits of it. The winter campaign helped stabilize the Indian situation in the vicinity of Fort Wallace and the Smoky Hill region, thus making the garrison's job easier. Future

battles with the Indians would occur, but they would not be the large-scale operations as those just ended.¹¹

Although the winter campaign put a damper on the war-like spirit of the Plains Indians, it did not extinguish it completely. With the return of warm weather, the potential for Indian hostilities was still a force to be reckoned with. It is probable that major battles would have taken place during the summer of 1869. A stunning victory by the army, however, prevented this situation from developing. Another offensive operation was rapidly developing, but was cut short by Major Carr and his 5th cavalry.

On July 11th, the 5th cavalry located a large Cheyenne village in northeastern Colorado and was able to attack it before the inhabitants were aware of their presence. This battle was one of the very few times a tribe was caught in camp completely off guard. This battle, known as Summit Springs, was a severe defeat for the Cheyenne and greatly reduced their capacity to conduct offensive attacks. Although this engagement did not gain the notoriety of other well known Indian battles, its significance was that it broke forever the power of the Indian in the region of western Kansas, Nebraska and eastern Colorado. After 1869, Indian activity in the upper Republican and Smoky Hill areas was limited to small raids.¹²

The troops of Fort Wallace did not take part in this battle, but its outcome played an important role in determining the future for the post garrison and the Smoky Hill

region. Although the Indian peril had diminished, the mission of the post had not changed. The troops were still responsible for providing protection for the Smoky Hill Trail and the rapidly advancing railroad which was completed to Denver by 1870. The railroad, which by now had replaced the Smoky Hill Trail as the primary transportation route, facilitated the duties of the post by providing rapid transportation to areas where troops were needed.¹³

Approaching the decade of the 1870's, life at the post became rather placid. The Indians still resisted the encroachment of white settlers in 1869 and 1870, but the intensity and ferocity of their attacks diminished with each passing year. To illustrate how the Indian peril had subsided, there was only one reported attack on the Kansas-Pacific Railroad for the entire year of 1871. No matter how hard he tried, the Plains Indian could no longer stop the progress of the white man's advancement into his ancestral domain.¹⁴

During the decade of the 1870's, the post garrison would continue to perform their assigned mission. With the demise of the Indian, this became more of a formality than a necessity. In the early 1870's there were minor skirmishes with hostile Indians, but these engagements involved only a small number of combatants on both sides. For the decade of the 1870's, there were only two significant battles with the Indians interrupting the tranquil life existing at the post.

The first of these occurred in April of 1875. On April 18, Troop H, 6th cavalry arrived at the post by railroad from Fort Lyon in pursuit of 60 Cheyennes who had escaped from the reservation in Oklahoma. The commander of this unit, Lieutenant Austin Henley, utilized the facilities of the post to conduct his search for the renegades. The visiting troops remained at the post only long enough to prepare for their mission and took to the field within a short period of time. After several days of scouting, the cavalry located the Indians on the North Fork of Sappa Creek, 60 to 70 miles northeast of the post. Catching the Indians by surprise, the soldiers attacked their camp at dawn April 23 inflicting heavy losses in both lives and property.

This attack, commonly referred to as the South Sappa Massacre, has been a controversial issue for a number of years. The dispute over the topic causes a division into two distinct groups. One side condemns the Army by stating that the soldiers indiscriminately shot women and children and committed other brutal acts. The opposition view claims that the soldiers did not commit any atrocities, contending that Lieutenant Henley and his men performed their duties as required by military authority.¹⁵

The second battle, which was the last major Indian attack in Kansas, took place from mid-September to early October of 1878. The area to pay the biggest price for this last raid was in the general vicinity of eastern Rawlins and western Decatur counties, near the present city of Oberlin.

This incident was created when a large group of Northern Cheyenne, who desired to return to their northern homeland, bolted from the reservation in Oklahoma. This band of runaway Indians was able to evade capture for several weeks. They were finally cornered in northwestern Nebraska, forced to surrender and confined at Fort Robinson, where they made a second suicidal escape.¹⁶

As their journey took them through some of their favorite hunting and raiding grounds, they decided to relive some of their old glories by attacking white settlers as they traveled north. In the area of Decatur County, the Indians displayed excessive brutality in their raids. Needless to say, the news of these raids, after a lengthy period of peace, created a state of near panic in western Kansas.

As Fort Wallace was located close to the projected Indian path to the north, the post commander was informed of the escape and ordered to place his troops on full alert, ready for deployment in the event they were needed. To expedite this movement, eight railroad cars were made available.

Equipment for pack mules was also prepared, but the commanding officer decided against their use as the animals were not sufficiently trained. Having previously experienced this situation, the commander was convinced that the animals would be more trouble than they were worth. Influencing him in this decision was the post guide who informed the post commander that the terrain which the troops would have to

cover could be traversed by wagon.

All of these preparations were for nought, as the fleeing Indians passed to the north of Fort Wallace, committing attacks and continuing on their way before the post garrison could be mustered into action. Thus, the soldiers of Fort Wallace missed their last opportunity to engage the Indian in combat before the post was abandoned.¹⁷

By the late 1870's and early 1880's the white man had nearly subjugated the Indian. The dominance of the white man's civilization over the native American Indian was, by this time, a foregone conclusion. Because of this, government and military officials began to reassess the value and need for the numerous military posts located throughout the western United States. Fort Wallace was about to become a victim of time. Having fulfilled its mission, the post would soon pass into history.

The existence of the post was first threatened in the early 1870's. In the annual report of the Secretary of War, for the year of 1870-71 a suggestion was made for the consolidation of several forts in Colorado and Kansas, including Fort Wallace. The recommendation was that the post buildings be removed to Fort Hays, and the abandoned post area be utilized as a summer camp to store temporary supplies needed by soldiers patrolling the region. It was believed that only a small number of soldiers would be needed to keep watch over the property. Apparently this resolution was overruled as the post remained active until 1882.¹⁸

In this year the decision was reached by the government to abandon the post and dispose of its property. On April 25, 1882, the Secretary of War ordered the withdrawal of the post garrison. Five weeks later the last military unit stationed at the fort was assigned duties at a new location. Company A, 20th infantry was directed by special orders from Headquarters, Department of the Missouri, to proceed to Fort Supply, Indian Territory. With the departure of this unit, Fort Wallace ceased to be an active military post. The only military personnel remaining at the fort after this was the post Quartermaster with a detachment consisting of one sergeant and seven privates, who remained behind to keep watch over the abandoned post property. Later these men were replaced by a civilian caretaker. Within a few years, Congressional action authorized the disposition of post buildings and other property by public sale and the land of the post reservation opened to settlers under the terms of the Homestead Act.¹⁹

The closing of Fort Wallace can be considered as the end of a chapter in the history of the American west. Although it existed only a brief 16 years in historical time, the soldiers of Fort Wallace made a major contribution to the history of western Kansas. One of many frontier military posts, the Fort Wallace story is an important link in the total understanding of westward expansion.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER VII

¹Medical History, p. 4.

²Ibid.

³Burkey, Custer Come at Once, pp. 38-39; Hoig, Battle of the Washita, pp. 43-47.

⁴Post Returns, August, 1868.

⁵Hoig, Battle of the Washita, p. 54.

⁶Hoig, Battle of the Washita, p. 56; Utley, Frontier Regulars, pp. 144-45.

⁷U.S. Congress, 63rd Congress 2nd session, House Executive Document No. 210, Pension to the Forsyth Scouts, pp. 5-8; Cyrus F. Brady, Indian Fights and Fighters (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), p. 70; Forsyth, Thrilling Days in Army Life, pp. 9-10.

⁸Hoig, Battle of the Washita, p. 57; Forsyth, Thrilling Days in Army Life, pp. 20-21.

⁹Post Letter, September 22, October 5, 1868; House Executive Document No. 210, Pension to the Forsyth Scouts, pp. 5-8. (See appendix IV for additional information on sources for this topic.)

¹⁰Brady, Indian Fights and Fighters, pp. 123-134; Hyde, Life of George Bent, pp. 309-311; Leckie, Buffalo Soldiers, pp. 36-38.

¹¹Hyde, Life of George Bent, pp. 311-312; Hoig, Battle of the Washita, pp. 66-67; Utley, Frontier Regulars, pp. 157-158.

¹²Hyde, Life of George Bent, pp. 332-335; Utley, Frontier Regulars, pp. 156-157.

¹³Montgomery, "Fort Wallace," pp. 245-246.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 249.

¹⁵Post Returns, April, 1875; Montgomery, "Fort Wallace," pp. 268-270.

¹⁶Utley, Frontier Regulars, p. 283-84.

¹⁷Post Letter, September 12, 21, and 23, 1878; Richmond, Kansas a Land of Contrasts, p. 31.

¹⁸Report of U.S. Secretary of War, 1870-71. As cited in Montgomery, "Fort Wallace," p. 247.

¹⁹U.S. Congress, 47th Congress 1st session, House Executive Document No. 225, Letter From Secretary of War, Subdivision of Forts Dodge and Wallace and the Sale of the Buildings Thereon (serial 2031), p. 6; Post Letter, May 31, 1882; Post Returns, May 1882.

EPILOGUE

As one concludes reading this material, it is evident that the establishment of Fort Wallace was, as are all historical events, part of a cause and effect relationship. The cause and effect relationship is created and developed by outside influences and circumstances. A brief sketch of the main topics of this work will serve as an explanation for this theory.

This theory begins with the idea that the Great Plains was an inhospitable desert and useable only as a vast Indian reserve. A series of events replaced this concept, beginning with the discovery of gold when numerous fortune seekers traveled through the Great Plains, and thus focused new attention on this specific area. This interest was instrumental in eroding the concept of the plains as a vast desert.

The lure of the Colorado gold fields captivated the interest of many. Efforts were begun which led to the establishment of a new overland route to the gold fields. The objective of the promoters of this scheme was to capture the lucrative trade generated by the discovery of gold. Combined with this idea was the growing emphasis on the building of a transcontinental railroad. Offering a vast expanse of land well suited for railroad construction, Kansas was looked upon by those involved in this project, as a possible

site. As circumstance would have it, both the overland freight-stage route and railroad were established in close proximity of each other.

Standing in the way of these advancements were the native inhabitants of the plains. From past experiences with the white man, the Plains Indian was fully aware that the overland route and railroad were only the vanguard for the throng of settlers that would follow. As these two transportation routes would pass through the middle of his domain, it was a foregone conclusion that the Indian would offer vigorous resistance. Although various methods were attempted to soothe the feelings of the Plains Indian, the seeds for a conflict which would bloom into a full scale war, were already sown.

Allowing nothing to stand in the way of progress, the expansionist white man demanded that his interest in the western frontier be protected. After being released from the burden of the Civil War, the military was in a position to protect the white man as he began his surge west. This series of events led to the placing of military posts along the two main travel routes through Kansas.

Reflecting on these various events, it is obvious that if there had not been a Colorado gold rush, a Smoky Hill Trail, and a Kansas-Pacific Railroad--then there would have been no need for Fort Wallace. However, these events did occur and thus gave the Fort its place in history. Although it played only a small part in a larger drama, the

accomplishments and deeds of the soldiers stationed at the Fort are worthy of preserving. A history of western Kansas would not be complete if it did not include the contribution made by the post and its mission in defending the Smoky Hill Trail. —at embarking upon the work of researching

Existing for only a small number of years in historical time, the troops of the fort served their country well during the tenure of its existence. When it had out lived its usefulness, the post was retired. Nothing remains of Fort Wallace now but distant memories. All physical evidence of this once active post has disappeared. The area which was once the post grounds is barren and swept by the ever present prairie winds. The sole surviving remnant of the fort is located in the old post cemetery. Standing tall and straight like a sentinel and weathered by the Kansas winters and countless rainstorms is a native stone monument erected by the troops of Fort Wallace. Barely legible on the monument is an inscription which dedicates it to the men of the 3rd infantry and 7th cavalry who made the supreme sacrifice in the performance of their duties during the summer raids of 1867. Maintaining a vigilant watch over the area, the monument is the last physical remnant of the original post, which serves as a constant reminder of the deeds, accomplishments and sacrifices made by the soldiers of Fort Wallace.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

When first embarking upon the work of researching this paper, my immediate concern was finding enough material to cover the subject. Early research revealed very little, but as time progressed an examination of various secondary sources and letters to historical societies and libraries revealed an abundance of material. Now that the task is completed, I believe there is still sufficient material on Fort Wallace that would warrant examination for further historical study.

The objective of this bibliographical note is to offer a short description of the more important sources used in this work. In future time, if by chance a researcher should come across this work, it is hoped that the sources included here and in the bibliography will make their task easier and more productive. It should be understood, this is by no means a complete list of all source material pertaining to Fort Wallace.

A. Primary Sources

Post Letters

These letters contain a wealth of first-hand information. In using them, one can gain a basic feeling of the post and an understanding of the problems faced by the garrison. The letters vary in length. They extend from

one-half page to several pages. Although listed as "Selected Letters," the microfilm contents of these documents cover the full breadth of the Fort Wallace years. When used in conjunction with other resource material, the letters are extremely valuable in establishing a firm foundation of the subject.

Post Returns

This source material is somewhat similiar to a current military morning report, but contains information for a whole month. The primary importance is its breakdown of available manpower. These items are recorded on a prepared form which is separated into specific catagories. These catagories consist of such items as the number of men present for duty, number of men confined to the hospital or guard house, and the number of men killed or wounded in operations against the Indians. Each return has a short space for remarks for any important event which took place. These remarks, when combined with a Post Letter, can add vital information to a specific subject.

Government Publications

A good share of this material is the transactions of numerous government agencies. All of these are quite lengthy and would require a tremendous amount of time to research thoroughly. In this work, these items were used for the most part to gain a better understanding of topics used as background material. For this work the main government publication used was the House and Senate Documents.

These contain a multitude of items. Such as letters from civilians who were involved with Indians, letters from high ranking military officers in areas concerning Indian affairs and records of Congressional investigations. The Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Report of the Secretary of War should not be overlooked, as their structure and content are similar to the House and Senate Documents.

Included in the government reports are the Surgeon General's Office Report on Hygiene and a description of Military Posts. These reports were issued every several years and contained a three to four page description of the military posts. They include such items as location and building facilities, and the general health and welfare of the men.

B. Secondary Sources

Articles - Books

This is not a complete list of all secondary sources used in this thesis. Included are only those items offering the most beneficial background information. For convenience they are listed in alphabetical order with a short description of each. Extended descriptions of some of these sources are in the appendixes relating to the attacks at the fort on June 21, 26, 1867 and the Forsyth's Scouts in 1868.

Articles

Theodore R. Davis, "A Stage Ride to Colorado," Harpers New Monthly Magazine, July 1867.

This magazine periodical was authored by a correspondent who was assigned by his company to make a journey over the newly established Smoky Hill Trail. Davis offers a vivid description of traveling over the trail, describing such items as the landscape, native animals, the stations along the route, and attacks by hostile Indians, especially the attacks on the stage stations by Indians in the month of November, 1866.

Calvin W. Gower, "The Pike's Peak Gold Rush and the Smoky Hill Trail," Kansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXV, 1959.

This article is a splendid example of the economic importance of the Smoky Hill route. Gower gives a detailed account of the efforts by the merchants of eastern Kansas communities to promote and develop the Smoky Hill. The article is thoroughly documented and offers valuable footnote material which reveals additional information on the subject.

R. Douglas Hurt, "The Construction and Development of Fort Wallace and the problems associated with it. The article describes complications which plagued the post because of poor construction. When used with Post Letters relating to the same subject, this article helps to establish a good background for this subject.

Mrs. Frank Montgomery, "Fort Wallace and it's Relation to the Frontier," Kansas Historical Collections, Vol. XVII, 1926-28.

Although the article offers a good description of Fort Wallace, it is difficult to follow, as the author has a tendency to ramble from topic to topic. The article includes several lengthy digressions on items irrelevant to the primary subject. Scattered throughout the article is information on the units which made up the post garrison and the principal officers in command of the post. It is especially valuable for its explanation of establishment of the fort.

Books

William A. Bell, New Tracks in North America.

The author of this work was a British scientist and amateur photographer who was accompanying the railroad survey party which stopped at the fort in June of 1867. This book has been republished by a different company, but in its original form. The author traveled extensively in the west with the survey party and the book is a description of his entire journey. The chapters especially usable for this work are chapters four and five. In chapter four, Bell describes his impression of his journey from Salina to Fort Wallace. In chapter five, he records his view of the attacks of June 21 and 26.

Ray Allen Billington, The Far Western Frontier, 1830 - 1860 and Westward Expansion.

These two books by a noted author of western history provide a solid background for the development of mining and the organization of overland routes. Westward Expansion is

primarily a general work covering the full scope of the western movement. The Far Western Frontier focuses primarily on the period 1830 to 1860. Chapters 11 and 12 contain a wealth of information on the Pike's Peak gold rush and a description of the overland express companies.

Cyrus F. Brady, Indian Fights and Fighters.

Although this work has been republished several times, the Brady book is one of the best references for Indian battles. Chapters five through nine cover in full detail the story of Forsyth's scouts and the battle on Beaver Creek in October of 1867. Brady has included in this area a description of the conflict that developed between Captain Carpenter and Major Carr as to which one was actually in command at Beaver Creek.

Stan Hoig, The Battle of the Washita. William H. Leckie, The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains and The Buffalo Soldiers.

These three sources all offer good material for the same area. The Battle of the Washita has an excellent description of the disastrous effects of Hancock's Campaign and the summer raids of 1868 which helped to bring on the winter campaign of that year. The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains provides a good background for the overall Indian problem with a description of events which occurred in the second half of the 1860's. The Buffalo Soldiers is a narration of the formation of the black regiments shortly after the Civil War. As the 10th cavalry was stationed at

Fort Wallace during 1867-1868, the book is useful in gaining information about specific events which involved that unit while at the post.

Wilbur Sturtevant Nye, Plains Indian Raiders: The Final Phase of Warfare from the Arkansas to the Red River.

Although a major portion of this book is a collection of photographs of Indians and military officers, it contains a good description about events in the Fort Wallace area. Of special value are the topics leading to the establishment of the post and the attacks which took place during the summer of 1867.

Henry M. Stanley, My Early Travels and Adventures in America and Asia.

This notable author was a first-hand participant in General Hancock's ill-fated expedition. Although somewhat biased in his views, which cast a favorable light on General Hancock, one can still gain a good impression of what actually happened. Stanley helps to establish a solid background for the topic. Originally published in 1895, the book is not widely circulated. It took some time to acquire a copy, but a microfilm copy was finally obtained through the Library of Congress.

Robert M. Utley, Frontiersmen in Blue, Frontier Regulars and Life in Custer's Cavalry.

The first two works are primarily histories of the military in the west 1850-1890. Although basically military in nature, they also offer a description of Indian affairs

and the problems associated with them. The author has covered nearly every major engagement between the army and Indians. Both books are thoroughly documented and contain extensive bibliographies. For additional information on a specific topic, the footnotes and bibliography are of invaluable assistance.

The third book, Life in Custer's Cavalry, offers a splendid first-hand account of events which took place in Kansas during 1867-1868. The author has edited the diaries and journals of Albert and Jennie Barnitz. When using a work of this type, a reader can sometimes become lost in a maze of insignificant events. Such is not the case with this book. When used in conjunction with other material, the book makes a great contribution towards gaining a thorough understanding of this two-year period. As an officer with the 7th cavalry, Albert Barnitz describes his attitude towards his superior officers and how they handled the Indian campaigns. Because of his participation in the attack of June 26, 1867, this book offers a reader a first-hand account of what happened. As Albert Barnitz spent several weeks at Fort Wallace, a researcher can gain information of the conditions which existed at the post during the summer of 1867.

Walter Prescott Webb, The Great Plains.

This book considered for many years as the standard work about the Great Plains, was helpful in establishing a background for the theory of the Great American Desert.

Chapter five is devoted specifically to this topic. The author gives a good description of how this idea developed and why it persisted for a number of years.

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APPENDIX I

Map and list of stations on the Smoky Hill Trail.

This list is from Mrs. Frank Montgomery, "Fort Wallace and its Relation to the Frontier," Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, XXII (1926-1928), p. 194.

	Miles	Miles
Leavenworth to Junction City.	118
Herseys.	16	..
Solomon river.	17	..
Salina	16	..
Spring creek	15	..
Leavenworth to Ellsworth.	14	196
Buffalo creek.	14	..
Lost creek	15	..
Fossil creek	14	..
Forks Big creek.	14	..
Downer Station	14	..
Ruthton.	10	81
Blufton.	11	..
Bridgens Raisin.	18	..
Grannell spring.	12	..
Chalk bluffs	13	..
Monuments.	14	..
Four Crossings	12	..
Eaton.	11	91
Henshaw's springs.	13	..
Pond's creek	11	..
Fitch's Meadows.	14	..
Blue Mound creek	9	..
Cheyenne Wells	13	..
Eureka creek	21	..
Dubois	13	..
Cornell creek.	11	105
Coon creek	12	..
Hedinger's lake.	18	..
Big Bend Sandy	10	..
Reed's springs	17	..
Beaver creek	10	66
Leavenworth to Bijou basin.	12	539
	<hr/>	
	78	

APPENDIX II

List of Military units stationed at Fort Wallace.

This list is taken from an unpublished article describing Fort Wallace which is on file at Fort Larned, Kansas.

April 1866	Co. H, 2d Cavalry
November 1866	Co. E, 3d Infantry
	Co. D, 37th Infantry
	Co. I, 7th Cavalry
June 1867	Co. G, 7th Cavalry
July 1867	Co. G, H and K, 5th Infantry
	Cos. F and I, 7th Cavalry
October 1868	Co. D, 37th Infantry
	Cos. B, H and I, 5th Infantry
	Cos. H and L, 10th Cavalry
	Cos. I and F, 7th Cavalry
	Co. D, 38th Infantry
	Co. E, 3d Infantry
1869	Cos. B, C and I, 5th Infantry
	Cos. B and E, 7th Cavalry
May-October 1868	Cos. A, B, F, H, I, L and M, 5th Cavalry
May 1870	Cos. B, C and I, 5th Infantry
	Co. C, 7th Cavalry
December 1871	HQ and Cos. A, H and E, 3d In- fantry
August 1872	Co. M, 3d Infantry
	Co. D, 6th Cavalry
August 1873	Co. H, 3d Infantry
	Co. A, 6th Cavalry
July 1874	19th Infantry (1 Company)
October 1875	Co. H, 5th Cavalry
November 1876	Co. K, 19th Infantry
June 1877	Cos. F and G, 16th Infantry
1880	23d Infantry (1 Company)
October 1881	Co. A, 29th Infantry

Leavenworth to Beaver creek	539
Box Elder.	10	..
Parkhurst.	11	..
Cherry Valley.	14	..
Denver	14	49
		<hr/>
Total distance		588

It should be noted that this list was made when the trail was first established and some of the original names were later changed. By using Pond's Creek as a reference point the approximate location of other stations can be located.

APPENDIX III

Description of sources for the attacks on Fort Wallace of June 21, 26, 1867.

For anyone desiring a detailed description of these two attacks, there are three sources which provide excellent material. Two of these are written by people who were present when the attacks occurred.

A description of both attacks is given by William A. Bell in his book, New Tracks in North America. Bell was at the post and witnessed both attacks. His description is primarily concerned with his part in the attacks. The attack of the 21st is covered between pages 52 and 56 and the attack of the 26th is described between pages 58 to 61. Bell was an amateur photographer and recorded for posterity the mutilated body of Sergeant Fredrick Wyllyams. Between pages 61 and 64 he offers his theory for the various cuts on the bodies of the soldiers who were killed and mutilated by the Indians. Although it is written from his own point of view, the information given by the author contributes much valuable information to both attacks.

Additional first-hand knowledge of the June 26th attack is gained from Captain Albert Barnitz who commanded the force that opposed the attacking warriors. In a letter to his wife, the Captain gives a detailed description of the

action. The text of this letter is in Robert Utley's book, Life in Custer's Cavalry, pages 68-74. Utley has also included the official letter Captain Barnitz wrote to Lieutenant F. B. Weir, Acting Assistant Adjutant General, District of the Upper Arkansas. The letter is dated June 28, 1867, and describes the combat his company engaged in and also includes a list of killed and wounded. The letter and list are located between pages 74 and 78. Both of these letters offer information of extreme value for anyone interested in this particular topic.

The third source for these two attacks is William Sturtevant Nye's book, Plains Indian Raiders. As a contemporary author, Nye has used original sources to develop his description. He describes both attacks between pages 86 to 92. As he footnotes this with original sources, a researcher would only have to consult these to acquire additional information. On page 258 the author has included the picture of the mutilated body of Sergeant Fredrick Wyllyams that was taken by William Bell. With the picture is a background description of the unfortunate soldier who was victimized by the Indians.

APPENDIX IV

Description of sources for the formation of Colonel George A. Forsyth's Scouts and the Battle of Beecher's Island.

When planning the organization of this thesis, it was originally intended to include a full account of Colonel Forsyth and his scouts. However, after progressing through this work, it became clear that a full description of this event would not fit into the primary topic. Therefore, it was decided to include only the part the troops of Fort Wallace had in this event.

A considerable amount of material has been written about the dramatic story of Forsyth and his scouts. Most general works of the Indian war period carry a basic reference to this topic. For anyone who may desire more explicit information on this subject, several sources are recommended. They are listed below with a short explanation of each one.

Cyrus F. Brady, Indian Fights and Fighters, chapters 5-6. In these two chapters, Brady gives a full account of the entire event. Chapter 5 starts with the initial attack at early dawn and continues with a graphic description of the siege of the scouts until their rescue. The chapter is

almost a day by day account of the hardships and suffering endured by the scouts.

Chapter 6 is primarily about the rescue. The first portion of this chapter describes how the two scouts slipped past the Indians and their journey to Fort Wallace. The chapter concludes with a description of the 10th cavalry and their march to the relief of Forsyth and his men.

George A. Forsyth, "A Frontier Fight," Harpers New Monthly Magazine, July 1895. Although it was written almost 30 years after the event, Forsyth's article is a vivid narrative of the entire operation. He begins with information about how the scouts were formed and a description of the men who made up this unit. This article is of exceptional value in its telling of the heroic stand of the scouts in repelling several attacks by the Indians when they were vastly outnumbered. For additional information on this topic, one should also consult Forsyth's book Thrilling Days in Army Life.

Captain Louis H. Carpenter, "The Story of a Rescue," Winners of the West, February, 1925. Captain Carpenter was the commanding officer of Troop H, 10th cavalry. This unit was the first to reach the beleaguered scouts. The primary content of this article concerns the march of the cavalry to the rescue of Forsyth and his men. Included in the article is a copy of the letter instructing Captain Carpenter to proceed on this rescue mission.

George E. Hyde, Life of George Bent, chapter 11, "The

Death of Roman Nose." Written from a different viewpoint, this book offers a different impression of this battle as it describes the Indians' part in this incident. Of special interest in this chapter is the description of the death of the famous Cheyenne Chief, Roman Nose.

Merrill J. Mottes, "The Beecher Island Battlefield Diary of Sigmund Shlesinger," The Colorado Magazine, July 1952. This article is a reprint of the diary entries of one of Forsyth's scouts. Although concise, they cover in chronological order the time from when Shlesinger volunteered until their rescue. The main value of this material is to help establish the pattern of events in sequential order.

United States Congress, 63 Congress 2nd session, House of Representatives, Pension to the Forsyth Scouts, Report #210. The main premise of this congressional document was to establish a sound reason for granting a government pension to the scouts. Contained in this report are copies of the official letters to and from Colonel Forsyth and other military officers concerning the formation and activities of the scouts. It is these letters which make this document of exceptional value.

A final source which can be consulted to gain information on additional sources is William H. Leckie's book, The Buffalo Soldiers. This book is a history of the black regiments in the post-Civil War Period. As the 10th cavalry was one of these Regiments, Leckie has material devoted to their part in the rescue. His documentation allows use of

the footnote items to acquire additional information.