

The interaction between the soldiers of Fort Riley and American Indians involved warfare, peacemaking, collaborative work, and the development of commerce and community between the two cultures. This 1867 Harper's Weekly sketch depicts General George Custer confronting Sioux Chief Pawnee Killer.

A Richly Textured Community

Fort Riley, Kansas, and American Indians,
1853–1911

by James E. Sherow and William S. Reeder Jr.

Fort Riley, Kansas, stood as a sentinel on the grasslands. The post, acting as a magnet, attracted pioneers and settlers, townspeople and farmers, Euro-Americans, African Americans, foreign immigrants, and American Indians. All arrived with a variety of dreams, fears, plans, and needs. The defenses of the fort placed no obstacle to the constant stream of people who poured through its perimeter like water through a sieve. The mingling of Indians and Euro-Americans set the history of the fort into motion.

The lure of the post was irrepressible. On any given day groups of Indians ventured to the fort seeking wealth, power, diplomacy, and the mundane—quests to fulfill simple needs and wants like play, socializing, and trade. In one such instance, well-armed Indians spied a rural farmstead located not far from the post, and they advanced toward the cabin alarming the occupants. On another day a larger party made its way toward the fort itself. They rode with an air of confidence and with battle on their minds. Once, while on their way to western bison hunting grounds, a party of Kansa (Kaw) Indians made its way straight for the town of Junction City where they hoped to fleece unsuspecting Euro-Americans.

*James E. Sherow is an associate professor at Kansas State University. His research is focused on environmental and ethnohistorical studies of the grasslands, and he published *Watering the Valley* in 1990. William S. Reeder Jr. is a doctoral candidate at Kansas State University. He is currently researching and writing his dissertation, which is a study of Pawnee warrior culture.*

The research and writing of this paper was funded through a grant by the Department of Defense Legacy Program. The authors would like to express their appreciation for the support provided them by Dick Shields, chief of Cultural Resources Division, Fort Riley, and John Dendy, archeologist, Dynamac Corporation–Fort Riley. The authors also would like to recognize the excellent project research completed by Brent Jackson, a graduate from the Department of History at Kansas State University.

At first blush these encounters conjure up stereotypical images of Indians raiding farms, attacking the fort, or stealing livestock. But what happened in each case breaks with these formulaic depictions. The history of Fort Riley, Kansas, and its relation to American Indians offers a study in cultural cross-currents including conventional hostilities and, depending upon conditions, a wide variety of human interactions.

Consider the way in which the three previous episodes of Indian–post encounters concluded. On its way to the fort, the first group of Indians rode toward the farm and clearly carried its guns high in the air. The Indians were not bent on laying waste to the farm, killing the mother, and kidnapping the children. Rather they dismounted, laid their guns along the side of the cabin, and in sign language asked Charlotte Harvey, a pioneer woman, for the brightly colored cloth out of which she was sewing doll clothes. She gave them the cloth, and after the Indians mounted their horses she returned their guns. The Indians, apparently satisfied with their acquisitions, continued on their way to the post.¹

In July 1862 the second group of unidentified, highly armed Indians headed through Junction City on its way to the fort. They paraded the spoils of war, more than forty imprisoned Confederate soldiers, and a local newspaper editor related how these Indian sentinels guarded these “butternut asses” with “grim satisfaction.”² Whether for gainful employment, social recognition as warriors, or political posturing with the U.S. government, Indian units and volunteers often served the Union Army in eastern Kansas, and Fort Riley was one place from which these forces mustered.

On the last occasion, some years after the war, citizens of Junction City and soldiers from the fort learned of an approaching Kaw party. They opened the town to the Kaws and visited their encampment just across the Smoky Hill River. Indians, townspeople, and soldiers enjoyed a time of merriment and exchange. The worst antagonism arose among some of

the Kaw wives who became disgusted by their husbands’ excessive drinking of whiskey.³

In the past, historians have had a limited perspective of Indians’ associations with the United States Army. They have researched and written about American Indians’ service in the armed forces or the military campaigns against them.⁴ In contrast, a historical examination of the interaction of American Indians and the personnel at Fort Riley reveals a more elaborate history of exchange and mingling. Instead of Indians living in a distant, isolated world apart from a great foreboding fort manned exclusively by Euro-American men, they formed an integral part of the legacy of the post.

Both well-known and obscure names loom large in the interactions at or around Fort Riley. Delaware scouts Sarcoxie, Ne-con-he-quin, and John Conner; Navajo scout Chiquito; peace chiefs Black Kettle of the Cheyennes, Little Raven of the Arapahos, and Poor Bear of the Plains Apaches; Stone Calf, Bull Bear, and Big Head of the Cheyennes; and Carl Taylor, Ben Big Horse, and Fred Big Horse, students from Haskell who wanted to enlist in the army, number among the Indians who dealt with the fort. More famous Euro-Americans including Fort Riley officers George Custer, J.E.B. Stuart, John Buford, Benjamin Grierson, and Louis Armisted, all of whom found fame during the Civil War, mixed with Indians.

From 1853 to 1911 Fort Riley stood at the crossroads of two worlds—one Indian and one Euro-American. The range of interaction between the soldiers of Fort Riley and the Indians occurred over a vast expanse of grasslands. The post served as the

3. “Dancing Kaws Visited by Post Personnel and Junction Citizens,” *Junction City Union*, January 4, 1868.

4. Just a few examples of these approaches include Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers: Indian Scouts and Auxiliaries with the United States Army, 1860–90* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982); Michael L. Tate, “From Scout to Doughboy: The National Debate over Integrating American Indians into the Military, 1891–1918,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 17 (October 1986): 417–37; George Bird Grinnell, *Two Great Scouts and Their Pawnee Battalion: The Experiences of Frank J. North and Luther H. North, Pioneers in the Great West, 1856–1882* (1928; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), each of which document Indian service in the U.S. military. Robert Utley, *The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846–1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1985); Ralph K. Andrist, *The Long Death* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1964); Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), vividly depict the army’s campaigns against American Indians.

1. John A. Harvey, “Some Incidents of My Parents’ Pioneer Days,” John A. Harvey Collection, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

2. *Junction City Union*, July 26, 1862.



Fort Riley stood at the juncture of two rivers and at the crossroads of two worlds — one Indian and one Euro-American — and it became the focus for the ever changing events that swirled around it. The post is pictured here in ca. 1860.

staging site for expeditions deployed throughout the Great Plains and as the headquarters of the District of the Upper Arkansas, which oversaw military operations conducted from posts as far west as Fort Lyon, Colorado. The history of Indians and the U.S. Army at Fort Riley involved warfare between the two, but it also included the soldiers' peacemaking and policing activities in Indian country, the collaborative work of Indians and soldiers in the military affairs of each other, and the development of commerce and community between the two cultures. In fact, the army had direct and indirect associations with at least twenty-three different Indian nations. Fort Riley truly was situated at the crossroads of cultures and became a focus for the ever changing events that swirled around them.

The post's location at the juncture of two rivers, the Smoky Hill and the Republican where they flow together to become the Kansas, placed it at an important crossroads thousands of years old. More than twelve thousand years ago big-game hunting peoples inhabited the area. In the following thousands of years a series of cultures inhabited the watersheds.⁵

5. Brian M. Fagan, *Ancient North America: The Archaeology of a Continent*, 2d ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995).

The groups who first greeted Euro-Americans in this tallgrass prairie world first arrived one thousand years ago, perhaps earlier.⁶ These proto-Pawnees, and later Pawnees proper, lived along the Republican and Kansas Rivers, and around 1700 the Kaw Indians began pushing them northward from the immediate area that would become Fort Riley. The Pawnees shifted first to concentrations on the upper Republican River in northern Kansas and southern Nebraska, and then incorporated with the related Skidi band on the Platte and lower Loop Rivers of west-central Nebraska. They continued to hunt throughout central Kansas, however, and they continued to interact with the soldiers of Fort Riley.⁷

6. Waldo R. Wedel, *Prehistoric Man on the Great Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961); Donna C. Roper, "Spatial Dynamics and Historical Process in the Central Plains Tradition," *Plains Anthropologist* 40 (1995): 203–21; Patricia O'Brien, "The Central Lowland Plains: An Overview A.D. 500–1500," in *Plains Indians, A.D. 500–1500: The Archaeological Past of Historic Groups*, ed. Karl H. Schlesier (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994); Lynn Richardson, *National Register Eligibility Assessment of Seven Prehistoric Archeological Sites at Fort Riley, Riley and Geary Counties, Kansas* (Champaign, Ill.: U.S. Army Construction Engineering Research Laboratories, 1997).

7. See George E. Hyde, *The Pawnee Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951); Gene Weltfish, *The Lost Universe: Pawnee Life and Culture* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977); Martha Royce Blaine, *Pawnee Passage, 1870–1875* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990).

Fort Riley soldiers were involved with numerous High Plains and Prairie nations and many of the prominent members of these tribes, including (left to right) Little Raven, Arapaho; Black Kettle, Cheyenne; and Bull Bear, Cheyenne.



The soldiers found themselves routinely involved with the Kaws. These Indians flourished in the Kansas River valley and had established a major settlement at the site of present-day Manhattan, Kansas, by the end of the eighteenth century. By 1830, however, this village had been abandoned, and the Kaws moved to villages just west of present-day Topeka. In 1846 they relocated to a reservation near Council Grove where they remained until well after the construction of Fort Riley.⁸

Other early High Plains and Prairie nations in the region included Osages, Kiowas, Cheyennes, Arapahos, and Comanches. Each of these had migrated into the western and southern fringes of the grasslands, preceding the arrival of whites in central Kansas, and each greatly affected the soldiers at Fort Riley.⁹

8. Waldo R. Wedel, "The Prehistoric and Historic Habitat of the Kansa Indians," in *Pawnee and Kansa Indians*, ed. David A. Horr (New York: Garland Press, 1974), 430–37.

9. A good starting place for the literature on High Plains Indian nations is E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Plains Indians: A Critical Bibliography* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977). Scores of works are available on the nations that inhabited the grasslands during the nineteenth century. Some of the more notable books include George Bird Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956); Stan Hoig, *The Peace Chiefs of the Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980); Donald Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963); Berthrong, *The Cheyenne and Arapaho Ordeal: Reservation and Agency Life in the Indian Territory, 1875–1907* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976); William Chalfant, *Cheyennes and Horse Soldiers: The 1857 Expedition and the Battle of Solomon's Fork* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1898); Thomas Kavanagh,

More powerful than these, the Lakota (or Teton) Sioux swept across the Plains to the north and created their own short-lived empire there. They had been pushed from their eastern homes by the pressure of other Indian tribes, themselves displaced by the advance of white settlement, and by the mid-1700s had experienced a metamorphosis upon the Plains from beleaguered woodland farmers to horse-mounted hunters. They became the powerful enemies of all who lived in the path of their expansion, including the soldiers at Fort Riley.¹⁰

Other nations, often called "the immigrant tribes," were relocated by the United States government to Indian Territory, which was an often ill-de-

Comanches Political History: An Ethnohistorical Perspective, 1706–1875 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996); Rupert N. Richardson, *The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement: A Century and a Half of Savage Resistance to the Advancing White Frontier* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur Clark Company, 1933); Ernest Wallace and E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Comanches: Lords of the South Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952); Mildred P. Mayhall, *The Kiowas*, 2d ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971); Alice Lee Marriott, *The Ten Grandmothers* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1945); James Mooney, *Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979); Loretta Fowler, *Arapahoe Politics, 1851–1978: Symbols in Crises of Authority* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982); A.L. Kroeber, *The Arapaho* (Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 1975); Willard H. Rollings, *The Osage: An Ethnohistorical Study of Hegemony on the Prairie-Plains* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992).

10. Richard White, "The Winning of the West: The Expansion of the Western Sioux in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of American History* 65 (September 1978): 319–43.

fined, always shrinking region running somewhere between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains. At mid-nineteenth century, this region covered the expanse that later would comprise the states of Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska. By the time Fort Riley was established in 1853 several nations already were settled within the new post's area of operations. These groups included Potawatomis, Delawares, Wyandots, Sauks and Foxes, Shawnees, Kickapoos, Otoes, Missouris, Miamis, Ottawas, Peorias, Senecas, and Kaskaskias, and to a lesser extent Cherokees and Choctaws.¹¹

In the early 1850s the army needed a fort in addition to Fort Leavenworth to cope with the relationships among emigrant tribes, long-established tribes, and Euro-Americans who were arriving in great numbers. Military officials decided that necessary repairs to Fort Leavenworth, along the Missouri River in Kansas, would be wasted because that post was not situated in the most advantageous location as a garrison to enforce Indian law and policies. A more strategically sensible position was desired, and in 1852 a troop of the First Dragoons escorted Major E.A. Ogden on a reconnaissance for a site for a new post. Ogden found the most promising terrain near the juncture of the Smoky Hill and Republican Rivers, a long-established crossroads of Indian activity. Soldiers erected a few temporary buildings in 1853, but Major Ogden oversaw the principal construction of the permanent buildings of the fort beginning in 1855.¹²

Interestingly, the quartermaster reports of "Persons and Articles Hired" give no evidence that Indians found formal employment in the construction of Fort Riley.¹³ This does not mean, however, an active underground market for Indian labor and goods did

not exist. It is likely that Kaws and others provided services and materials to individuals working at the new post. The Indians understood the employment possibilities at the post and sought these opportunities. A glimpse into this underground economy comes from one recorded instance a decade later. In 1864 Joseph Willmetts inquired about teamster work for a Potawatomi friend, but his Fort Riley correspondent, Peter Roberson, replied saying that the post had more teams than work. Individuals such as this unidentified Potawatomi knew of the sporadic job opportunities at the post and sought employment there whenever possible.¹⁴

The army initially named the garrison Camp Center because of its geographic position near the center of the United States, but it soon changed the name to Fort Riley in honor of Brevet Major General Bennet Riley, a distinguished military officer who died in 1853. Oddly enough, the army had named the post, destined to become famous as a focal point of cavalry operations on the Plains and later as the U.S. Army Cavalry School, for an infantry officer. Initially the army high command charged the new garrison with patrolling the immigrant trails and guarding future rail routes through the area. Later it served as a staging area for large-scale military expeditions onto the Plains. Here units trained and gathered to enforce by military might U.S. policy and law among Indian nations and Americans throughout the central grasslands.¹⁵

Conflict between whites and Indians on the Great Plains seemed endemic in the nineteenth century. This is certainly the predominant image in American popular culture. From the founding of the post, soldiers fought in major campaigns against Indians as they executed and enforced the laws and policies of the United States government. Some of the early campaigns launched in whole or in part from Fort Riley included the Second Dragoon Sioux Campaign of 1855, the Cheyenne Expedition of 1857, the 1860 Comanche and Kiowa Expedition, and the Curtis Expedition of 1864. Each of these expeditions employed

11. H. Craig Miner and William Unrau, *The End of Indian Kansas: A Study of Cultural Revolution, 1854–1871* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1978), 18; Carl Waldman, *Atlas of the North American Indian* (New York: Facts On File, 1985), 181.

12. W.F. Pride, *The History of Fort Riley* (Fort Riley, Kans.: U.S. Cavalry Museum and Fort Riley Historical and Archaeology Society, 1987), 55–72.

13. Percival G. Lowe, *Five Years a Dragoon, 1849–1854, And Other Adventures on the Great Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 143–66; Fort Riley Post Returns, May 1853–May 1857, microfilm 617, roll 1011, Fort Riley Archives, Fort Riley, Kans.

14. Peter Roberson to Joseph Willmetts, January 15, 1864, Willmetts Collection, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

15. Pride, *History of Fort Riley*, 61–63.

Indian scouts, often Delawares hired near the post but also scouts hired in the field.¹⁶

For much of this period Fort Riley served as the headquarters of the District of the Upper Arkansas. This headquarters was responsible for the army's operations and forts in western Kansas and eastern Colorado. As such, the officers at Fort Riley bear some responsibility for tragedies such as the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864 and the Battle of the Washita in 1868.

In 1864 Major Benjamin S. Henning commanded the district from Fort Riley. He fell under the command of Major General Samuel R. Curtis who headed the Department of Kansas, which included the Territory of Colorado, Indian Territory, and the state of Kansas, at Fort Leavenworth. Major Edward Wynkoop commanded Fort Lyon in southeastern Colorado, but Curtis viewed Wynkoop as far too sympathetic to Southern Cheyennes and Arapahos. Wynkoop often placed the blame for Indian–American hostilities upon whites, and he often advocated the Indians' positions. Curtis communicated his opinion to Henning at Fort Riley, who recalled Wynkoop and replaced him with Major Scott J. Anthony, an officer far less sensitive to the plight of High Plains Indians.¹⁷ Anthony informed Colonel John Chivington, commander of the Third Colorado Militia, as to the whereabouts of Southern Cheyennes and Arapahos along Sand Creek, and his troops accompanied Chivington's march and attack upon

these peaceful people. While the soldiers and officers of Fort Riley did not directly participate in the massacre, Henning's order to remove Wynkoop certainly served as a major factor in the events leading to Sand Creek.

After the Civil War the soldiers and Indian scouts of Fort Riley played important roles in the government's pacification campaigns, including the Dodge/Ford Expedition of 1865, the Hancock Expedition of 1867, and the Sully Expedition of 1868. Some of the more infamous episodes of military encounters with Indians began at Fort Riley. The Tenth Cavalry rescued Major George A. Forsyth's scouts at Beecher Island in 1868; Custer's Seventh Cavalry led by Osage scouts attacked Black Kettle's Cheyenne village on the Washita River in November of the same year; and troops from the Seventh Cavalry accompanied by Cheyenne and Oglala Sioux scouts fought at Wounded Knee in 1890.¹⁸ In all of these actions, scared, distraught, and weary soldiers and scouts encountered equally frightened, anxious, and tired Southern Cheyennes or Lakotas.

For the combatants, these fights seldom were romantic forays or the logical outcome of genocidal Euro-American policy. Consider Black Kettle and his band of peaceful Cheyennes who never sought military confrontation with the U.S. Army. Rather, he often aided and abetted the Fort Riley soldiers in their pursuit of raiding Dog Soldiers, a powerful and warring military society of the Southern Cheyennes. In 1867 Big Head, a leader among the Dog Soldiers, held peace-minded Black Kettle, Little Raven (an Arapaho), and Poor Bear (a Plains Apache) against their wills. The trio escaped and traveled to Fort Larned to warn the commanders there and at Fort Riley as to the intentions and whereabouts of the Dog Soldiers.¹⁹

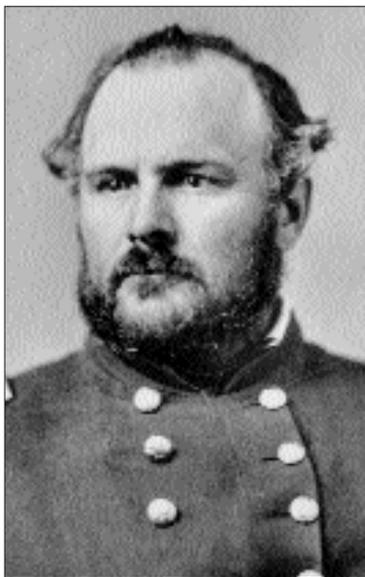
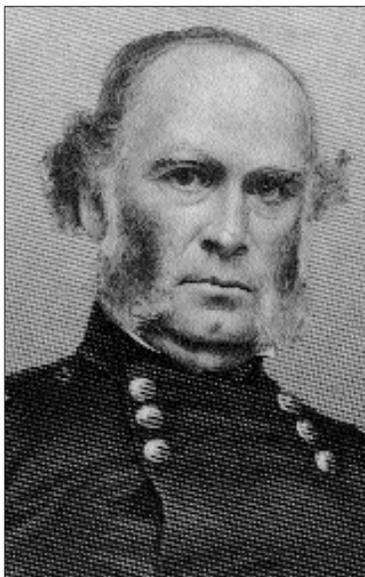
16. General works covering these expeditions include Ralph K. Andrist, *The Long Death: The Last Days of the Plains Indian* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1996); Wilbur S. Nye, *Plains Indian Raiders: The Final Phases of Warfare from the Arkansas to the Red River* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968); Stan Hoig, *Tribal Wars of the Southern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993).

Primary references to the hiring of Indian scouts for these expeditions are located in Second Lieutenant George B. Anderson, "Report of Persons and Articles employed and hired during the Mounted Expedition against the Comanches," box 50, Reports of Persons Hired, 1854–1855, Office of the Quartermaster General, 1818–1905, RG 92, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Second Lieutenant R.H. Riddick, Quartermaster, "Reports of Persons Hired, 2nd. Quar. 1860, Southern Column, Comanche and Kiowa Expedition, June 1860," box 77, Reports of Persons Hired, 1860, *ibid.*; First Lieutenant William Wise to Lieutenant J.E. Tappan, May 1865, box 1, Letters Received, U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821–1920, pt. 3, District of the Upper Arkansas, 1864–1865, RG 393, *ibid.*; "Gen. Hancock's Indian Expedition," *Junction City Union*, May 4, 1867; "The Indian War," *ibid.*; "Indian News," *ibid.*, May 11, 1867; *ibid.*, July 25, 1868.

17. U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., vol. 41, pt. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1893), 433, 751.

18. See David Dixon, *Hero of Beecher Island: The Life and Military Career of George A. Forsyth* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Orvel A. Criqui, "A Northern Cheyenne Called Roman Nose," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 8 (Autumn 1985): 176–85; Stan Hoig, *The Battle of the Washita* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979); Richard E. Jensen, R. Eli Paul, and John Carter, *Eyewitness at Wounded Knee* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

19. *Junction City Union*, October 5, 1867.



The actions of these and other well-known military leaders had direct bearing on Fort Riley: (left to right) Major General Samuel R. Curtis, commander of the Department of Kansas; Colonel John M. Chivington, commander of the Third Colorado Militia; and Major George A. Forsyth, Ninth Cavalry and commander of Forsyth's Scouts.

Southern Cheyennes were a deeply divided people in the years between 1850 and 1880, and those of Black Kettle's persuasion gladly cooperated with the army in an attempt to secure tranquil relations with the United States. Working with Americans also endangered them. In one case, militant Cheyennes captured and charged Will Comstock, a half-Cheyenne scout and one of Custer's most trusted guides, with being a spy and executed him. In another case, Dog Soldiers arrived in Black Kettle's camp located on the western fringe of a peaceful village of Southern Cheyennes, Arapahos, and Comanches. Black Kettle realized too late the danger their presence represented. The Dog Soldiers had left a trail for Custer's Osage scouts Little Beaver and Hard Rope to follow, and the general led his half frozen and fatigued soldiers from Fort Riley directly to Black Kettle's camp in November 1868. The ensuing massacre of Black Kettle's village demonstrated to other Indian leaders that peace with Americans did not guarantee their security.

Just as some Dog Soldiers wished to eliminate all whites, some whites wished Indians gone from the earth forever. Neither of these extreme groups would ever achieve its goals, but others who desired little more than simple lives died in the crossfire.

The fears that confrontation bred among white soldiers and Indians is clear in the events of Wound-

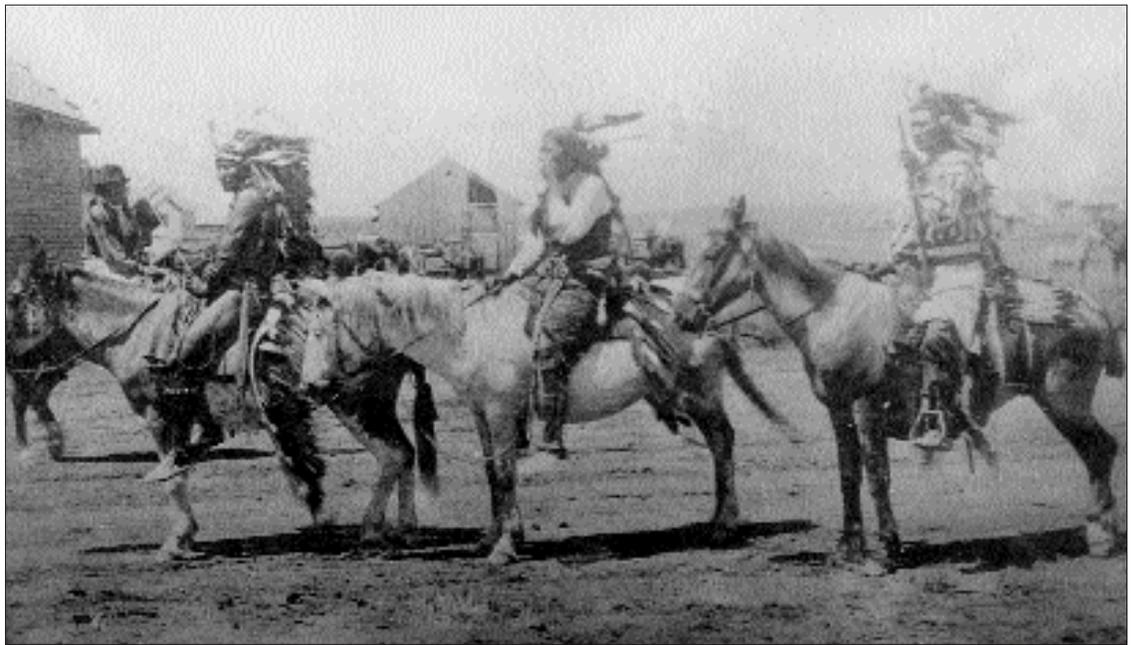
ed Knee. When the Seventh Cavalry was deployed to the Lakota (Teton) Sioux reservation at Pine Ridge, South Dakota, few if any soldiers were eager to revenge the regiment's famous drubbing at the Little Big Horn in 1876. Some historians believe this was a major motivation for the battle that ensued at Wounded Knee Creek on December 29, 1890, but most of the available evidence does not support this view.²⁰ It is true that during the engagement one lieutenant boasted to John Shangrau, an Indian scout, "Scout, we've got our revenge now." When Shangrau asked "what revenge," the lieutenant replied, "Why, don't you know, the Custer massacre?"²¹

Yet other voices showed little if any motivation for revenging the Seventh Cavalry's debacle at the Little Big Horn. Most soldiers at Fort Riley had been occupied with day-to-day duties, playing baseball, or courting local women. As they proceeded by train from Fort Riley, most hoped for a peaceful solution. Their angst is clearly illustrated in their correspondence. Their hopes for a nonviolent resolution and their torment at the death of both Indians and soldiers on that frozen winter day are poignantly com-

20. For example, Dee Brown intimates in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, 441-42, that revenge for the Little Big Horn figured in the soldiers' thinking at Pine Ridge.

21. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Wounded Knee Massacre: Hearings before the Committee on the Judiciary*, 94th Cong., 2d sess., February 5-6, 1976, 108.

At least two of the three Sioux in this ca. 1869 photo, Stinking Bear (left) and Crazy Bear (right), would participate in and survive the 1890 battle at Wounded Knee Creek. The trio is shown here at Fort Hays.



municated in the words of Edward Huston. He often wrote to his girlfriend, Arel Estes, who lived on a farm near Fort Riley. In a letter dated November 28, 1890, a month before the fight, Huston's apprehensions showed as he hoped that the Indians around him would "not show fight."²²

Huston wrote Estes again on December 30, 1890, the day after the Wounded Knee massacre. The carnage sickened Huston: "Dear it was a horrible sight to see yesterday there was dead and wounded all over the prairie." Huston knew the killing of the Sioux for what it was: "the Indians put up a flag of truce and then after we got a round them they commenced to shooting and then we commenced and there was a massacre." He had seen men, women, and children with their legs and arms shot off, and the frozen dead left an indelible image in his mind. Yet Huston's motive to fight lay not in avenging Custer's defeat at the Little Big Horn but in returning safe and sound to his Arel. "Dear I hope that I will not get killed here I want to see you . . . dear I hope the Lord will take care of us all."²³

22. E.B. Huston to Arel Estes, November 28, 1890, Deathridge Collection, Fort Riley Archives.

23. *Ibid.*, November 30, 1890.

Similarly, the testimony of Help Them, a Lakota, about the massacre a few days later reflects Huston's understanding of the tragedy. The soldiers, Help Them recalled, had treated the Oglalas with kindness and food. While the army guns on the hilltops surrounding the Indian village made Help Them nervous, he rested easy in knowing that the Indians had no intention of fighting. Along with many others, Help Them had surrendered his rifle only to find himself in a deadly hailstorm of gunfire. Unlike the nearly two hundred or more who died, he survived unscathed.²⁴

This warfare sounded a tragic note to the end of the fighting between the soldiers of Fort Riley and Indians in the American West. Chief Big Foot's band of Miniconjou Sioux suffered badly with more than 150 dead and 50 wounded, perhaps over one hundred more dying from their wounds where they escaped beyond Pine Ridge, and the spirits of many Lakotas sank toward a suffocating abyss. The Seventh Cavalry also had been bloodied, although not nearly so badly with twenty-five dead and thirty-nine wounded. Yet its own demoralization set in as the proud reg-

24. *Wounded Knee Massacre: Hearings before the Committee on the Judiciary*, 136.

iment was smeared with accusations of massacre at Wounded Knee and the charge that some of their casualties were the result of “friendly fire.”

Sometimes the soldiers of Fort Riley played a more direct role in peacemaking aside from outright warfare. As white settlement expanded into Indian Territory and the territories of Kansas and Nebraska were created in 1854, the army set about implementing national policy on the Plains. Those efforts often led to war, but the goal of that warfare, most often, was to arrive at a state of peace on terms consistent with American national policy. That policy normally led to Indian land concessions to facilitate white expansion; secure settlements, roads, and rails; and to ensure native compliance with the restrictions of their reservation boundaries. Military peace accords, often followed by formal government treaties, were important in securing the objectives of this national policy. Between 1840 and 1870 the need to reach agreements with the several tribes of the Central Plains became even more urgent as traffic increased along the Oregon–California, Santa Fe, and Smoky Hill Trails, and later the Kansas Pacific Railroad as it pushed westward to Colorado. Warfare was not the preferred goal; rather it was peaceful co-existence often leading toward assimilation or removal to and containment in a reservation.

Soldiers from Fort Riley assisted in treaty arrangements with many Indian nations. Some agreements were concluded with relative ease often facilitated by chicanery as in the cases of the Kaws and immigrant Potawatomis, Shawnees, and Delawares.²⁵ Many Indians in Kansas became U.S. citizens through the treaty process, but others were more resistant to change.²⁶ These included Cheyennes, Arapahos, Comanches, and Kiowas. Government negotiators concluded meaningful treaties with these tribes only after many hard fought military campaigns by Fort Riley soldiers, and even then peace had its difficulties.

25. The best overview of treaty making during this period is Miner and Unrau, *The End of Indian Kansas*. For examples of the newspaper coverage of these treaties, see “Indian Treaty,” *Junction City Union*, November 2, 1861; “The Pottawatomie Treaty,” *ibid.*, November 28, 1861; “Treaty with the Shawnees,” *ibid.*, January 20, 1863; “Indian Land,” *ibid.*, March 23, 1867; “The Kaw Lands,” *ibid.*, March 9, 1867.

26. “Ottawas become U.S. Citizens,” *ibid.*, August 9, 1862; “Treaty with the Shawnees,” *ibid.*, June 20, 1863.

After a summer of campaigning by Major General Grenville Dodge and Brevet Brigadier General James H. Ford, the succeeding commander of the District of the Upper Arkansas, Brevet Major General John B. Sanborn, concluded formal peace accords with several chiefs of the Apaches, Comanches, and Kiowas in August 1865. These negotiations were followed by formal treaties between these tribes and the U.S. government in October 1865, and some Cheyenne and Arapaho leaders joined in an agreement signed on March 1, 1866, at Bluff Creek along the South Arkansas River with army officers deployed from Fort Riley. Such accords, reached only after the use of force and threats of further action by units deployed from Fort Riley, helped lay the groundwork for other more formal treaties between Indians and the United States.²⁷

Besides making peace with hostile bands of Indians, soldiers at Fort Riley provided security not only for white trails and settlements but also to those Indians trying to live at peace on established reservations in the region. These included principally Kaws who had a reserve near Council Grove and Potawatomis who had a reserve near Saint Marys. At times Fort Riley soldiers also aided Shawnees and others across Kansas.

One problem at Fort Riley during the summer of 1870 involved the president of the United States before it could be resolved. On June 2, 1870, Ely S. Parker, commissioner of Indian Affairs, wrote to Secretary of the Interior Jacob D. Cox asking for army assistance to remove more than fifty trespassers from the Kaw reservation. Parker asked Secretary Cox to advise the president about the matter. The commander at Fort Riley subsequently received orders to evict the trespassers, and the soldiers accomplished this mission by the end of the month.²⁸ Despite Fort Riley’s ef-

27. Brevet Major General John B. Sanborn to The Chiefs and Head Men of the Apaches, Arapahoes, Cheyennes, Comanches, and Kiowa Tribes, August 9, 1865, box 3, Letters Received, Department of Kansas, 1865, U.S. Army Continental Commands, RG 393; Brevet Major General John B. Sanborn to Major General G.M. Dodge, August 14, 1865, *ibid.*; Peace Treaty with the Cheyennes, March 1, 1866, box 4, *ibid.*

28. E.S. Parker, commissioner, Office of Indian Affairs, to J.D. Cox, secretary, Department of Interior, June 2, 1870, box 1, *ibid.*; J.D. Cox, secretary, Department of Interior, to the president, June 2, 1870, *ibid.*; First Lieutenant Henry Jackson to Commanding Officer, Fort Riley, Kansas, June 17, 1870, *ibid.*; “Riley Aids the Kaws,” *Junction City Union*, June 25, 1870.

forts to police squatters, the situation became unbearable for the Kaws and unenforceable for the troops. In 1873 the Kaws, divided and broken, removed to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma.²⁹

Other policing actions included incarcerating Indian prisoners in the brig at Fort Riley. Over the years Indians from several tribes were detained at the fort, whose facilities were somewhat porous much to the embarrassment of post officials and the consternation of the local populace. The summer of 1883 alone witnessed escapes by small groups of Apache and Navajo detainees.³⁰ The editor from the *Solomon Sentinel* raised the alarm among the citizenry of the area when he reported how the Apaches had stolen horses in the vicinity, traded horses with a farmer, and roasted one of the mares before troops from the fort re-captured them.³¹

Additional policing duties were many and varied but providing military escorts was among the most frequent. Such escorts routinely accompanied pay agents bound for Indian reservations to disperse annuities, other officials traveling to Indian reserves, as well as mail and other items of special interest along the Oregon–California, Santa Fe, and Smoky Hill Trails or the Kansas Pacific Railroad. Escort details consisted of an officer and a small number of soldiers from a handful to no more than approximately twenty.³² The threat of hostilities was very real, and on occasion combat ensued. These small escort details normally acquitted themselves well. On October 26, 1867, the *Junction City Union* reported that twenty soldiers had defended Major Smith, the post paymaster, from a reported “four to five hundred Indians.” Smith claimed the troopers had killed two Indians while none among his group suffered any harm.³³

29. William E. Unrau, *The Kansa Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 213–15.

30. “Two Navajos Escape From Riley,” *Junction City Union*, July 14, 1883; “Apaches Escape from Fort Riley,” *ibid.*, August 18, 1883; “Indian Prisoners Returned to Mescalero Agency,” *ibid.*, September 29, 1883.

31. “Apaches Escape from Fort Riley.”

32. “Indian Payments to Occur Near Fort Larned,” *Junction City Union*, August 30, 1862; “Army Protects U.P. Railroad from Indians,” *ibid.*, August 15, 1868; Brevet Major W.M. Dunn to Commanding Officer, Fort Riley, October 22, 1870, box 1, Letters Received, Department of Kansas, RG 393; Channey McKeever to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel T.C. English, April 1, 1869, *ibid.*

33. “Paymaster Attacked by Indians,” *Junction City Union*, October 26, 1867.

Obviously, Fort Riley soldiers and Indians often fought to each other’s detriment, but on many other occasions they worked as armed allies. Many emigrant tribes in eastern Kansas and Nebraska found themselves and their horse herds raided by Indian nations to the west. These aggrieved peoples turned to the U.S. Army at Fort Riley for protection, and many cooperated with the army as scouts against their Indian adversaries. Potawatomis, Kaws, and Delawares, among them Jim Logan, Dog, and Jacob, effectively served with patrolling units from Fort Riley.³⁴

These Indian groups needed little encouragement to enlist as scouts with the army when it fought High Plains Indians. These eastern nations had been provoked on numerous occasions. For example, in the summer of 1854 while hunting bison, approximately one hundred Sauks, Foxes, and Potawatomis used their fine hunting rifles to withstand an attack of nearly fifteen hundred mounted Kiowa, Southern Cheyennes and Arapahos, Crows, Northern Comanches, Plains Apaches, and Osages.³⁵ In 1863 another small but well-armed group of Delawares was hunting bison in western Kansas when a war party of Sioux attacked them. The Sioux lost two warriors but escaped with more than two hundred robes and nineteen Delaware ponies.³⁶

Sometimes these same Indians became highly enamored with fighting in the U.S. Army, and the Civil War provided them with numerous opportunities for battle. In 1862 General James G. Blunt, who commanded the Department of Kansas from Fort Leavenworth, formed three Indian regiments composed primarily of Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles.³⁷ Some Indians joined regular units, such as the twenty Senecas who served in Company A under Captain

34. Anderson, “Report of Persons and Articles employed and hired during the Mounted Expedition against the Comanches.”

35. James Mooney, “Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians,” in *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Part I* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1898), 297–99.

36. “An Indian Fight on the Solomon,” *Junction City Union*, October 31, 1863.

37. Albert Castel, *A Frontier State at War: Kansas 1861–1865* (Lawrence: Kansas Heritage Press, 1992), 96–101; James G. Blunt, “General Blunt’s Account of His Civil War Experiences,” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 1 (May 1932): 222–34; Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Moonlight to Brigadier General Frederick Salomon, November 4, 1862, box 1, Letters Received, Department of Kansas, RG 393.



The Seventh Cavalry was deployed from Fort Riley in 1890 to the Lakota Sioux reservation in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, where the battle at Wounded Knee Creek ensued on December 29. This monument at Fort Riley is to the soldiers who were killed during this tragic event.

Nathan Ames in the Sixteenth Kansas Cavalry. These Senecas, however, came to regret their enlistment as they believed that their terms of service had been violated. In 1864 all Seneca chiefs signed a letter dictated by Head Chief Isaac Warrior charging that “when these men enlisted they were promised they should be mounted and serve only as cavalry and be treated with kindness and respect; but so far none of the promises has been fulfilled; they have never been mounted and have been treated with indignity.”³⁸ Isaac Warrior demanded their immediate discharge; the army apparently ignored or denied the entreaty. Delaware leaders such as Sarcoxie, Ne-con-he-quin, and John Conner, each a chief and prominent warrior,

38. About half of the privates in Company A appear to have been American Indians, representing several different tribes. A few died or were killed during their service, but most enlisted in September 1863 and were “mustered out with the regiment” in December 1865. Isaac Warrior, Head Chief et al., to Major General S.R. Curtis, August 30, 1864, box 2, Letters Received, Department of Kansas, RG 393; Office of the Adjutant General, Descriptive Rolls, Sixteenth Kansas Cavalry, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society; *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kansas, 1861–1865* (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Co., 1896), 534–36.

all strongly advocated serving the Union. And the Kaws had numerous men serving predominantly as scouts, enlisted men in various Civil War companies, and apparently forming one full company in the Ninth Kansas regiment.³⁹

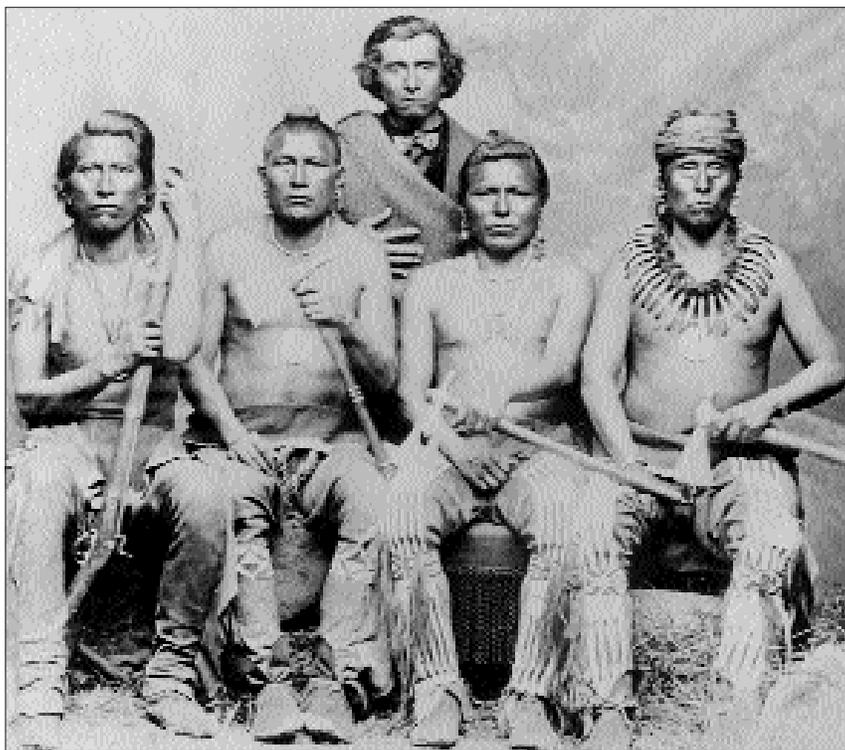
Of all the long-standing tribes in the area the Pawnees developed the most remarkable relationship with the United States Army. Many High Plains Indian nations, especially the Sioux, regularly fought with Pawnees for control of the vast bison hunting grounds of the Central High Plains. Pawnees found in the army a sometimes effective ally, and both cultures cooperated in the pursuit of their common enemies. The Pawnee Scouts, as they became known, participated in the Curtis Expedition in Kansas in 1864, the bulk of which was drawn from Fort Riley units, and for a time, a Pawnee battalion served as part of the Fifth U.S. Cavalry, a unit that frequently was posted to Fort Riley.⁴⁰ These Pawnee soldiers earned a reputation as some of the fiercest fighters on the Plains. Under the leadership of their army commander, Major Frank North, the Pawnee battalion was respected and feared by High Plains Indians.⁴¹ Pawnees were fast friends and allies of the cavalry on

39. “An Important Paper from the Delaware Nation,” *Junction City Union*, October 3, 1861; Rodney Staab, “Kansa Presence in the Upper Kansas Valley, 1848–1867,” *Kansas Anthropologist: Journal of the Kansas Anthropological Association* 16 (1995): 36–38.

40. Nye, *Plains Indian Raiders*.

41. Grinnell, *Two Great Scouts and Their Pawnee Battalion*.

As Pawnees became allies of the soldiers on the Plains, the Pawnee Scouts often participated with Fort Riley personnel in engagements against their common enemies.



the Plains, and they had never been at war with the United States. Sadly, in the end, it was the army's inability to protect this tribe in their own reservation villages and bison hunting grounds that eventually led them to relocate to Indian Territory after 1873.⁴²

Following the successes of the Pawnee Scouts, the army launched a trial plan to incorporate Indian units into the United States military in 1891. Anglo-American cavalry officers clearly appreciated and recognized Indians' horsemanship. Some officers believed that Indians could be trained as the "best light cavalry in the world." So began an experiment, overseen in part by the Fort Riley based regiments, to recruit, outfit, and train companies of Indians as cavalymen and infantrymen. Eventually, the army organized three companies under the cavalry regiments headquartered at Fort Riley: one under the First Cavalry consisting of Crows at Fort Custer, Montana; another under the Second Cavalry composed of Navajos at Fort Wingate, Arizona; and a

third as Troop L of the Seventh Cavalry comprising Comanches, Kiowas, Apaches, and Southern Arapahos at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. These Indian companies were under the direct command and control of their immediate installation commanders, but their unit administration was through their parent regiments at Fort Riley.⁴³

As far as is known, none of these Indian companies ever deployed with their parent regiments. They did train for combat, however, and were lauded for their progress toward that end.⁴⁴ They successfully completed a myriad of military responsibilities, and examples can be found of the execution of individual unit security missions such as that conducted by

43. Sergeant Michael Jones to Adjutant, Seventh U.S. Cavalry, Fort Riley, March 22, 1892, box 148, Correspondence Pertaining to the 1891–1895 Experiment in Enlisting Indians, RG 94, National Archives; First Lieutenant H.L. Scott to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Missouri, February 4, 1892, *ibid.*; Assistant Adjutant General, Headquarters of the Army to Commanding Officer, Seventh U.S. Cavalry, June 7, 1892, *ibid.*; "List of names, Indian members of Troop L, United States 7th Cavalry, between June 30, 1891 and May 31, 1897," Native American Files, Military/Troop F, Fort Sill Archives, Fort Sill, Okla.

44. Major Theodore Schwan to Adjutant General, December 31, 1891, box 148, Correspondence Pertaining to the 1891–1895 Experiment in Enlisting Indians.

42. Martha R. Blaine, *Pawnee Passage, 1870–1875* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 132–42.

Troop L of the Seventh Cavalry in July 1894 when the Indian troop, alone, provided armed military escort for army paymaster Major Charles McClure en route from Fort Sill to Rush Springs, Indian Territory.⁴⁵

Service in these companies grew in popularity. Some Indian youths at Haskell, a federal boarding school in Lawrence, Kansas, heard about the enlistment of these companies. Presumably at their requests, a teacher wrote to the Fort Riley commander asking if the Haskell students could join. Carl Taylor, Abe Somers, Ben Big Horse, and Fred Big Horse made this petition, but the fate of their request is unknown.⁴⁶

Indian warriors, however, often had difficulty making the transition to regular army life when required to “soldier” by the book. Lieutenant Hugh L. Scott, commander of the Seventh Cavalry’s troop at Fort Sill, did not have his Indian enlistees cut their long hair, in which they took so much pride. He also sought special permission to allow young enlistees to bring their wives with them. This was permitted after consideration by the secretary of war, but wives were not allowed to accompany their men on campaigns.⁴⁷ Major Frank North in his earlier battalion had allowed a mix of uniforms and even then allowed his Pawnee troops to shed their military issue and enter battle naked and painted, using their bows and arrows to fight as warriors, not as well drilled cavalry.⁴⁸

Adjustment of the Indians to regular army units continued to be a problem, and the utility of their continued service came under growing question. By 1895 the problems had become so numerous that it was decided to disband the companies. By 1897 the last of the companies was gone, and those few Indians who remained in army service reverted to their more traditional roles as scouts.⁴⁹

45. J.B. Goe, post adjutant, Orders No. 106, July 17, 1894, Hugh L. Scott Collection, Fort Sill Archives.

46. Petition from Carl Taylor, Ben Big Horse, Abe Somers, and Fred Big Horse, October 31, 1893, box 149, Correspondence Pertaining to the 1891–1895 Experiment in Enlisting Indians.

47. Adjutant General of the Army to Various Military Departments, May 7, 1891, box 148, *ibid.*; Assistant Adjutant General, Headquarters of the Army to Commanding General, Department of the Missouri, July 21, 1891, box 147, *ibid.*; “Documents of Troop L, 7th Cavalry,” Troop L, Scott Collection.

48. Grinnell, *Two Great Scouts and Their Pawnee Battalion*.

49. “Documents of Troop L, 7th Cavalry,” Troop L, Scott Collection; “Documents of Troop L, 7th Cavalry,” Troop L, Swett Collection, Fort Sill Archives.

The long running interaction between the Fort Riley community and the surrounding Indian nations offered valuable lessons to both sides. Indian horse practices influenced the manner in which soldiers tended their steeds. In winter most Indians camped in riparian woodlands and often fed their ponies cottonwood bark and small twigs after nearby grazing grounds were played out. While on winter campaigns cavalrymen adopted these same practices and fed their mounts bark.⁵⁰ Additionally, the army cavalry drill manual used at the fort contained many exercises that directly emulated Indian horse practices on the High Plains. In 1893 Lieutenant H. W. Smith commented on the improvements to the *Cavalry Drill Regulations* (1891) as a result of fighting horse-mounted Indians on the shortgrass prairies. “Since the Rebellion,” he wrote, “all our actual fighting has been against Indians where, in nearly every case, it was thought to be necessary to fight in skirmishing order. In this practical work the defects of our old skirmish drill were brought home to us and in the new most of these defects have been remedied.”⁵¹ At the cultural crossroads of Fort Riley, Indians and cavalrymen learned from each other.

Indian contact with the soldiers and officials of Fort Riley was not limited strictly to operational warfare and concomitant peacemaking. A bevy of business transactions was routinely taking place between Indians and the personnel at, or deployed from, Fort Riley. In June 1863 a group of approximately one hundred Sauks passed through Fort Riley and Junction City on their way west to hunt bison. This hunting band, so reported the businessmen of the area to the editor of the *Union*, spent more than three hundred dollars in “greenbacks” before departing. All of the merchants rejoiced with this infusion of cash into the local economy.

The horse trade was an important aspect to a cavalry installation. The army had strict regulations about the quality of horses to be purchased and who might serve as suppliers. Most of the horses at Fort

50. David L. Spotts, *Diaries and Letters Received, 1868–1928*, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society.

51. H.W. Smith, “Some Remarks On Our New Cavalry Drill Regulation,” *Journal of the Military Service Institute of the United States* 14 (1893): 526.

Riley came from Fort Leavenworth and St. Louis. These horses were big military mounts capable of carrying a 450-pound load. Indian ponies were lighter and normally did not carry as much weight as an army horse. Still, on occasion Indians sold soldiers ponies even though higher command forbade this practice. Not until 1891 did the army assistant adjutant general officially announce the acting secretary of war's decision "to authorize purchase of Indian ponies in accordance with existing law instead of at fair valuation by the Quartermaster's Department."⁵²

Indians frequented the post for simple economic exchange or provided economic services aside from horses. Often many came and traded supplies with the fort sutler. Potawatomi Joseph Willmett operated a ferry near Fort Riley and conducted freighting operations throughout the region. Other Potawatomis hoped to find work near the fort in freighting or cutting wood even though Anglo-Americans had fairly well cornered most of these services.⁵³

Perhaps the most lucrative form of commerce on the grasslands came in the form of whiskey. The commanders' responses to the whiskey trade took many different forms. One of the fort commanders' original responsibilities was to enforce the trade and intercourse acts governing commerce in Indian Territory. These acts set the regulations governing licensed traders, and one of the main provisos was the complete curtailment of trading whiskey to Indians. But the trade formed an important, irrepressible aspect of American society and Indian interactions with whites.⁵⁴

Indians provided important functions for the soldiers of Fort Riley, and they expected to be paid for these services. In 1855 the officers of Fort Riley contracted with several Kaws to herd and tend their horses. The officers also purportedly paid them in whiskey. The Kaw agent wrote a bitter denunciation of this practice, but whether his letter had an effect on

halting this practice is not known. What is known is that the Kaws consumed some of the whiskey they acquired, and they wholesaled much to other tribal groups such as the Kiowas and Arapahos.⁵⁵

Most importantly in the relationship between Fort Riley and American Indians from 1853 to 1911 was the intermingling of the various peoples within the community. The fort served as more than just a place from which to wage war or to police the Great Plains. Fort Riley was a place where numerous cross-cultural exchanges and socialization occurred. In 1862 the Delawares proudly marched in the environs of the fort and exhibited "with the liveliest gusto imaginable all that was left of nine of their Pawnee brethren."⁵⁶

Whenever large groups of Indians came to town there was always curious interaction and often great festivity as was seen during the last visit of Pawnees in November 1875. In reporting on this grand event, the *Junction City Union* noted:

The Pawnee tribe of Indians, on their way from their old home in Nebraska to their new home in Indian Territory, camped on the Republican river near town Thursday night. The town was full of them Thursday afternoon. A large number of ladies and gentlemen visited their camp Thursday evening, went through their lodges, and inspected Indian life by camp light. It did us 'old settlers' good to shake hands and say 'how!' They moved on Friday, and their march through our main street was a magnificent pageant.⁵⁷

Moreover, contact between local settlers and Indians rendered valuable lessons that were incorporated into many a frontier lifestyle. The John Harvey family living just outside Fort Riley, for example, dried and smoked buffalo meat utilizing Indian methods. They also incorporated Indian stories into the tales they would tell around the campfire on family hunting trips.⁵⁸ News was shared too, as passing groups

52. Telegram, April 3, 1891, Adjutant General's Office, box 147, Principal Record Division Document File, 1891, RG 94.

53. Willmett Collection.

54. For an excellent overview of this subject, see William E. Unrau, *White Man's Wicked Water: The Alcohol Trade and Prohibition in the Indian Country, 1802-1892* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996).

55. John Montgomery to Colonel A. Cummings, superintendent of Indian Affairs, November 1, 1855, Kansas Agency, Letters Received, 1824-1880, U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, M 234, roll 364, National Archives; *Junction City Union*, May 26, 1862.

56. *Junction City Union*, November 1, 1862.

57. *Ibid.*, November 20, 1875.

58. Harvey, "Some Incidents of My Parents' Pioneer Days."



As is evident in this 1897 photo, horses played a major role in Fort Riley's daily operations. Indian horse practices influenced the manner in which the fort's soldiers tended their steeds. Additionally, the army cavalry drill manual used at the fort contained many exercises that directly emulated Indian horse practices on the High Plains.

sought information on the latest developments. For example, in 1868 when Kaws passed through the fort on their way to their western bison hunting grounds, they obtained information about the progress of the Beach and Neosho Valley Railroad.⁵⁹

Western posts such as Fort Riley little resembled their counterparts in Hollywood movies. The fort did not stand as an exclusive enclave of Anglo-Americans, a lone stockade on the vast grassland expanses. It was a place from which the United States government sought to touch and shape, for ill or good, the lives of people far removed from its barracks, mess halls, stables, and armory. Perhaps the interaction between the soldiers at Fort Riley and Indians was similar to other fort-Indian relationships throughout the region. But that story remains unwritten.⁶⁰

59. *Junction City Union*, November 14, 1868.

60. Leo Oliva nicely depicts the conflict between soldiers and Indians in his histories of several forts in Kansas. But our research shows that a broader range of interaction existed between these cultures at those forts. See Leo E. Oliva, *Fort Scott: Courage and Conflict on the Border* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1996); Oliva, *Fort Hays: Keeping Peace*

Certainly, as depicted in histories of forts in the state, troops and Indians fought each other throughout the grasslands. But as the history of Fort Riley indicates, soldiers also engaged in serious peacemaking efforts among Indian nations and occasionally attempted to protect Indian interests. As it suited their purposes, several Indian nations allied themselves with the U.S. Army. Together they fought common enemies and embraced elements of each other's warrior cultures. More than a staging site for warfare and police actions, the fort served as a place for Indians to socialize and to engage in commerce. It was a human community, a richly textured community, and a place where soldiers, diverse civilians, and scores of Indian cultures mingled. Any complete history of the fort will include Indians interacting with soldiers and others in varied and extensive ways.



on the Plains (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1996); Oliva, *Fort Larned: Guardian of the Santa Fe Trail* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1997).