

The Story of Fort Larned

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ONE of the motives that prompted the government to construct a fortification at the confluence of Pawnee creek and the Arkansas river was to provide a base from which troops might protect Santa Fe trail commerce in an area that was notorious as an Indian rendezvous. Equally important was the desire for a more centralized annuity distribution point to carry out the government's treaty obligations to the Plains Indians.

In the years 1822-1843, the monetary value of the Santa Fe commerce averaged over \$130,000 per year, making a total of nearly \$3,000,000 for the 21 years. The last year before the Mexican ports were closed (1843) saw \$450,000 worth of goods being shipped, involving 250 wagons and 350 men. In this 21-year period, however, only three official military escorts were provided.¹

The acquisition of vast new stretches of territory through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo provided an added impetus to traffic. The trade in 1859, according to one source, had risen to \$10,000,000 annually. The *Missouri Republican*, St. Louis, reported that between March 1 and July 31 2,300 men, 1,970 wagons, 840 horses, 4,000 mules, 15,000 oxen, 73 carriages, and over 1,900 tons of freight left Missouri for New Mexico. These were exclusive of the gold seekers who "were too numerous to count."² With such a volume, it became obvious that some type of fortification was needed between Forts Riley and Leavenworth and Forts Bent and Union.

As white settlements became more numerous in Texas during the 1840's, depredations by Indians increased. The belligerent attitude of the people of Texas forced large groups of Kiowa and Comanche Indians to relocate farther north, especially along the heavily traveled Santa Fe trail. William Bent, agent for the Upper Arkansas Indians, in a letter to A. M. Robinson, superintendent of Indian affairs for the Central Superintendency at St. Louis, reported on October 5, 1859, that he had encountered 2,500 Kiowa and Comanche warriors at the mouth of Walnut creek (25 miles east of

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1. Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1902), v. 2, pp. 538, 580 (quoting the figures of Josiah Gregg).

2. Walker Wyman, "Freighting: A Big Business on the Santa Fe Trail," *The Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Topeka, v. 1 (1931-1932), p. 24.

Pawnee Fork). Bent also stated that he had witnessed, to October of 1859, 60,000 white people along the trail.³

A. B. Greenwood, commissioner of Indian affairs, in his annual report (1859), enlarged upon the critical relations between Indians and travelers on the trail. He attributed the accelerated traffic to the discovery of gold in the Pike's Peak region, and his report pointed out the difficulty the Indians were having to maintain their natural subsistence.⁴

The location of Fort Larned at Pawnee Fork was the choice of William Bent. In his appeal for military protection, he stated,

I consider it essential to have two permanent stations for troops, one at the mouth of Pawnee Fork, and one at Big Timbers, both upon the Arkansas River. . . . To control them [the Indians], it is essential to have among them the perpetual presence of a controlling military force.⁵

There was no legal barrier to the establishment of a permanent military post and mail escort station.⁶ By the Treaty of Fort Laramie of 1851 the Cheyenne-Arapaho reserve came as far east as the 101st meridian and the eastern Indian reserve line was approximately the 97th meridian.⁷ The area where Fort Larned was to be located was government held land, being free from any binding Indian treaty.

On October 22, 1859, Maj. Henry Wessels arrived at Pawnee Fork with two companies of United States infantry. This group began the actual construction of "Camp on the Pawnee Fork," as the first Fort Larned was named. The exact location of this installation was at the base of Lookout Hill (now known as Jenkins Hill), on the south side of the Pawnee, eight miles from its confluence with the Arkansas river.⁸ Major Wessels was aided by Company K of the United States cavalry, under the command of Capt. George H. Stewart. This company had been busy during the summer patrolling the region between Cow creek and Fort Union.⁹

A description of the first structures of "Camp on the Pawnee Fork" is given in Capt. Lambert Wolf's diary,

3. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1859*, pp. 138, 139.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 21.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

6. The need for a mail escort station along the trail appears to have been another motive for the building of Fort Larned. An official mail route survey was instigated along the Santa Fe trail, the route being selected by Jacob Hall with L. J. Berry as official surveyor. The route, as designed in 1858, was to begin at Wyandotte and terminate at Pawnee Fork. The record of this survey to October, 1859, shows that at this date the farthest penetration was to Durham, roughly halfway to Pawnee Fork.—See *Twenty-Seventh Biennial Report of the Kansas Historical Society (1928-1930)*, p. 23.

7. James C. Malin, "Indian Policy and Westward Expansion," *University of Kansas Humanistic Studies*, Lawrence, v. 2 (1921), facing p. 103.

8. George A. Root, ed., "Extracts From the Diary of Captain Lambert Bowman Wolf," *The Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Topeka, v. 1 (1931-1932), p. 204.

9. Merrill J. Mattes, ed., "Patrolling the Santa Fe Trail: Reminiscences of John S. Kirwan," *ibid.* (Winter, 1955), pp. 583, 584.

October 23, plans are made for the horse and cattle stable, also for officers' and company quarters, all of which are to be built of sod, cut with spades by members of our company. Our stable [probably meaning fortification] is to be 100 feet square . . . wall 12 feet high. . . .¹⁰

These plans, however, apparently were deferred for several months, since as late as July 22, 1860, a letter from Camp Alert (as the installation was then called), failed to note anything more permanent than tents in the fort.¹¹

The forces of Stewart and Wessels remained at "Camp on the Pawnee Fork" until November 27, 1859, when they were relieved by a detail of 40 men under the command of one Lieutenant Bell, whose specific instructions were to act as a construction crew for the permanent site.¹² Some time during the period from October 22, 1859, until the midsummer of 1860, the original plans to construct a permanent sod fort were carried out at a new location three miles west.¹³ The new location had the natural advantage of being located on the south side of the Pawnee, with a big bend of the creek affording a natural barrier on two sides.

Just prior to the completion of the sod buildings and earth works, the post was given its third and lasting name, Fort Larned. On May 29, 1860, pursuant to General Order No. 14, the post was named Fort Larned, in honor of Col. Benjamin F. Larned, paymaster of the United States army.¹⁴ The reservation was four miles square, but the official survey was never carried out.¹⁵

On April 24, 1860, Major Wessels left Fort Riley to return to the nearly completed fortification with 160 men who had been based at Fort Riley.¹⁶ Some of these recruits left immediately on a campaign against the Kiowas and Comanches.¹⁷ Obviously the new commander was wasting no time attempting to make the government's new investment pay dividends.

10. Root "... Diary of Captain Lambert Bowman Wolf," loc. cit.

11. *The Daily Times*, Leavenworth, August 2, 1860.

12. *Kansas Historical Collections*, Topeka, v. 9 (1906), p. 572.

13. "Statement of Theodore Weichselbaum . . ." *ibid.*, v. 11 (1910), pp. 562, 563.

14. Frank W. Blockmar, *Kansas, A Cyclopaedia of State History* . . . (Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1912), v. 1, p. 663.

15. "Report on Barracks and Hospitals," *Report of the Surgeon General, 1870*, p. 299. According to General Order Number 22, Headquarters, Department of Missouri, 1867, 16 square miles were "laid out," the exact center of the reservation being the northwest corner of the commanding officer's quarters that were constructed in 1867.—See *Larned Eagle-Optic*, November 10, 1899.

16. *Correspondence of John Sedgwick, Major-General* (De Vinne Press, 1903), v. 2, p. 11.

17. *Leavenworth Daily Times*, August 2, 1860.

INDIAN RELATIONS AT FORT LARNED

By the Treaty of Fort Atkinson (1853), the Kiowas and Comanches accepted annuities amounting to \$18,000 a year for a ten-year period, the distribution point for these annuities to be at Beaver creek in present-day Oklahoma.¹⁸ Since this station was to be a temporary one, and since Bent had stated in his October 5, 1859, report that the Kiowas and Comanches desired an annuity distribution station on the Arkansas, it is reasonable to assume that Fort Larned was an official Indian post as early as 1860. To support this assumption is the fact that Col. Jesse Leavenworth at Fort Larned was known to be sending reports about these Indians in 1861.¹⁹

Efforts to relocate the Southern Cheyennes and Arapahoes farther south came in 1860, the year that Fort Larned was under construction. In this year congress authorized the negotiation of a treaty to take place at Fort Wise²⁰ on the Arkansas. Initial parleys with several Indian chiefs left the opinion that there was little hope that a permanent treaty would be drawn up.²¹ This proved false, for on February 18, 1861, the Fort Wise treaty was concluded with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians of the Upper Arkansas. The treaty authorized annual payments and it provided for a new reservation farther south that would initiate these Indians to an agricultural economy.²²

Fort Lyon was located in this reservation and was headquarters for these Cheyennes and Arapahoes. Great difficulty was experienced in keeping the Indians confined to a permanent location, as evidenced by the report of a large group of Indians camped near Fort Larned on August 5, 1862.²³ Since this group included tribes of Cheyennes and Arapahoes, it is reasonable to assume that Fort Larned was storing and handing out annuities under the Fort Wise treaty. In support of this assumption is the fact that Fort Larned was much closer to Forts Riley and Leavenworth, the general supply depots for Indian annuities, and as such, the freight to Fort Larned would have been considerably less than to Fort Lyon.

18. Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), v. 2, p. 446.

19. George B. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 121.

20. Named for the governor of Virginia. After Virginia seceded, it was renamed Fort Lyon after Nathaniel Lyon, Union military hero.

21. *Congressional Globe*, 36th Cong., 2d Sess., November 30, 1860, appendix, p. 28.

22. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1863*, p. 617. A map of this reservation is found in "Map of the Public Lands, States and Territories From the Surveys in the General Land Office, 1864"—*Ibid.*, 1864.

23. Joyce Faelowe and Louise Barry, eds., "Vincent B. Osborne's Civil War Experiences," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, v. 20 (May, 1952), p. 132.

With the establishment of Fort Larned, the roving Indians began, for awhile, to respect the trail commerce. In August, 1861, Colonel Leavenworth, reporting from Fort Larned, stated that the Indians had left the Santa Fe trail area and that there was no apprehension of any hostilities in the near future.²⁴ In the following spring, however, Fort Larned very nearly became directly involved in the Civil War. In May, 1862, Gen. Albert Pike, Confederate officer in Texas, arranged an alliance with some Kiowas and a group of renegade Seminoles. This alliance had as its design the seizure of Forts Larned and Wise by these Indians. Nothing came of this, since as soon as the weather permitted, the Indians left for their annual hunt.²⁵

In June of the same year, Fort Larned's small garrison was threatened by a large group of hostile Indians. Squadrons B and C of the Second Kansas cavalry under the command of Captain Whittenhall were sent from Fort Riley to bolster the fort.²⁶ A group of traders had induced some Cheyennes and Arapahoes to attempt the seizure of their annuities before they were to be issued. This incident, which took place in August, 1862, was thwarted by the ever watchful Colonel Leavenworth.²⁷

As more white people came to the area along the Arkansas river, the buffalo supply diminished immensely, with the result that the Indians resorted to looting in order to survive. It was this situation that brought about what is called the Nine Mile Ridge massacre.²⁸ In January, 1863, a wagon train that was preparing to bed down for the night was surrounded by a group of hungry Indians who demanded food and coffee. In the excitement that followed, a teamster wounded one of the Indians. This prompted them to return before daylight and massacre all the teamsters, excluding one who escaped to the protection of Fort Larned.²⁹ In that same year a group of destitute Kiowas, under the guise of wanting to trade, ran off 300 cattle from Fort Larned.³⁰

The deterioration of peaceful relationships between the Santa Fe traders and the Indians in the early 1860's was furthered by the

24. Grinnell, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 122.

26. *Official Military History of Kansas Regiments* . . . (Leavenworth: W. S. Burke Company, 1870), p. 69.

27. Grinnell, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

28. Nine Mile ridge is located approximately 75 miles west of Fort Larned, near the source of Pawnee creek in present eastern Finney county.

29. William H. Byss, *The Second William Penn—Treating With Indians on the Santa Fe Trail, 1860-1866* (Kansas City, Mo., Frank Riley Publishing Co., c1913), pp. 16-20.

30. James F. Meline, *Two Thousand Miles on Horseback* (New York, Hurd and Houghton, 1868), pp. 201, 202.

killing of an Indian chief at Fort Larned. In August, 1863, Little Heart, en route from his Cheyenne village just west of Fort Larned to the fort for the purpose of obtaining supplies, was shot by a sentry. It was later determined that Little Heart had been drunk and that he had attempted to ride over Isaac Marrs, the sentry. Gifts presented to this Cheyenne tribe by the Indian agent at the fort to compensate for the killing seemed to have little effect.³¹

Conditions precipitated by the Civil War resulted in further responsibilities for Fort Larned. On January 25, 1863, S. G. Colley, agent for the Upper Arkansas was visited at Fort Larned by 26 chiefs of the Caddo Indian confederacy. These chiefs represented one thousand Indians who farmed near Fort Cobb, in present Oklahoma. They told Colley that they had been abandoned by their agent, a man by the Name of Leaper, who had deserted to the Confederate army. Not wanting to join the Confederate army, these Indians drifted north to seek aid. Being very destitute, they were befriended by the authorities at Fort Larned, and W. P. Doyle, commissioner of Indian affairs, forwarded to Colley \$5,000 to help provide for them.³²

Since these Indians had been accustomed to farming, this money was used to set up a farm along the banks of Pawnee creek. Accordingly, 2,000 acres of land were surveyed on the south side of the Pawnee; this site was chosen over a Fort Lyon site because it was the opinion that more water would be available for irrigation purposes. Corn was planted the following spring, and here was probably the first instance of a large scale irrigation attempt in the Pawnee valley, an area that today is noted for irrigated farming.³³

This farming enterprise of the Caddos lasted till the fall of 1864, when open hostilities broke out in the area. By October 4, 1864, 250 acres of corn had been planted and buildings were being built. These Caddos, fearing that they might become involved in the Indian war, drifted to the southeast and finally established themselves between Cow and Crow creeks. They left all their crops, buildings, and equipment, and what the warring Indians did not take was plundered by soldiers from Fort Larned and freighters on the Santa Fe trail.³⁴

In the early months of 1864 conditions between the whites and the Indians became progressively worse, with the result that a general war broke out on the Plains. The underlying factor appears to

31. Grinnell, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

32. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1863*, pp. 253, 254.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 257-260.

34. *Ibid.*, 1864, pp. 387, 388.

have been that the Indians, due to the encroachments of white settlers, were having difficulty finding enough game to live on. Also it is a fact that most of the military posts on the Plains, due to the Civil War, were not adequately garrisoned³⁵ and that a good per cent of these meager garrisons did not appreciate the Indians' predicament. At Fort Larned, for example, the soldiers were reported, on January 23, 1864, to be selling whisky to the Indians and demoralizing their women.³⁶ The Chivington massacre of the Cheyenne Indians at Sand creek in November, 1864, served to compound the problem. From an examination of the documents concerning this incident, it appears that a very basic factor was that some Indians were openly friendly and that others were not, but that it was, in many cases, difficult to determine the one group from the other.³⁷

The decision was made by the War Department to subdue by force the Indians who were guilty of depredations. On July 27, 1864, Gov. John Evans of Colorado territory ordered all friendly Indians to the military posts, so that only the belligerent ones would remain in the field. He ordered the Sioux to Fort Laramie, the Arapahoes and Cheyennes of the Arkansas to Fort Lyon, the Arapahoes and Cheyennes of the Platte to Camp Collins, and the Kiowas and Comanches to Fort Larned.³⁸

In the summer of 1864 large numbers of horses and mules were stolen by angry Indians who found that ration day did not provide adequate supplies.³⁹ This and other similar events, brought about General Field Order No. 2, Headquarters, Department of Kansas, July 31, 1864, which stated that stockades or abatis enclosures must be provided for all troops and stock at the military posts of the frontier. These same orders severely reprimanded Fort Larned for not having a stone blockhouse or enclosures for the animals.⁴⁰ Consequently, on February 20, 1865, Col. James H. Ford reported the erection of a stone fortification.⁴¹

During the Indian war of 1864, Lt. George Eayre used Fort Larned as a base for a campaign against the Cheyennes. He engaged the Cheyennes about 50 miles northwest of Fort Larned, an encounter that Grinnell thought to be an unprovoked attack. Soon

35. *Ibid.*, p. 381.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 389.

37. These documents are found in Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 26, 39th Cong., 2d Sess., 1866-1867.

38. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1864*, p. 362.

39. "A Brush With the Cheyennes," *The Teller*, Denver, v. 2 (April, 1910), p. 17.

40. Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 26, 39th Cong., 2d Sess., 1866-1867, p. 76.

41. *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Ser. 1, v. 48, pt. 1, p. 923.

after the battle, Eayre moved his force to Fort Larned. The fort was under the command of Captain Parmeter, who had been warned by a group of Kiowas that they intended to run off Lieutenant Eayre's horses. Parmeter was reported drunk, and while the Indians were entertaining the fort's garrison, other Indians were stealing 240 horses and mules. Subsequent events led to even more strained relations.⁴²

Col. J. M. Chivington campaigned in the vicinity of Fort Larned during this same period. On July 26, 1864, upon his return to Denver from Fort Larned, he reported that ten men had been killed at that post, and that all coaches on the Santa Fe trail were given an escort of between ten and forty men.⁴³ In October, 1864, Gen. James Blunt and Maj. Scott Anthony met a group of Cheyennes at Walnut creek, with the result that nine Indians were killed.⁴⁴

The Chivington massacre in November brought an official opinion from Fort Larned, as voiced by J. H. Leavenworth, Kiowa and Comanche agent, January 9, 1865:

It is impossible for me to express to you [addressed to the commissioner of Indian affairs] the horror with which I view this transaction [Chivington massacre]; it has destroyed the last vestige of confidence between red and white man. . . . What can be done? Nothing; unless the department takes the matter up in earnest, and demands that the parties who were the cause of this wicked treatment of the Indians be properly dealt with.⁴⁵

In the spring of 1865 Colonel Leavenworth requested the government to authorize him to hold a peace treaty with the various warring tribes. At the same time, Gen. J. H. Ford, commander of the Upper Arkansas district, was marching to Fort Larned with orders to pay no attention to any peace movements. Ford was overruled on June 15, 1865, when President Andrew Johnson authorized Leavenworth to go ahead with his treaty plans.⁴⁶ Six tribes of Kiowas, one tribe of Apaches, eight tribes of Comanches, four tribes of Arapahoes, and five tribes of Cheyennes agreed to meet at a camp on Bluff creek, about 40 miles south of the mouth of the Little Arkansas⁴⁷ in October, 1865.⁴⁸

42. Grinnell, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-141. This incident is also recorded in the *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1864*, p. 353.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 374, 375.

44. Grinnell, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-157.

45. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1865*, p. 371. This was obviously a statement from the standpoint of the Indian agent and it shows the disagreement that existed between the War Department and the Department of Indian Affairs as related to the Plains' Indian problem in general.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 573-576.

47. Approximately 125 miles southeast of Fort Larned.

48. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1865*, pp. 278, 279.

At this treaty conference, Col. Jesse Leavenworth was retained as Kiowa-Comanche agent at Fort Larned and an official Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Apache agency was created there, with Maj. E. W. Wynkoop as their agent.⁴⁹ This brought 8,600 Indians under the control of Wynkoop.⁵⁰ On October 14, 1865, the Cheyennes accepted annuities amounting to \$56,000 for a period of 40 years,⁵¹ and they agreed to a reservation immediately south of Fort Larned. The Apaches broke their confederation with the Kiowas and Comanches and allied themselves with these Cheyennes and Arapahoes;⁵² they were to receive \$16,000 a year for a period of 40 years.⁵³ The Kiowas and Comanches accepted annuities amounting to \$40,000 for a period of 40 years,⁵⁴ and they agreed to a reservation which was to be located south of the Cimarron river.⁵⁵ It was emphasized that these reservations were not to be considered permanent, since in the future all Indians were to be removed from the state of Kansas.

Continued depredations by roving bands of Cheyennes in 1866 and early 1867 prompted the War Department to plan an extensive campaign to chastise the so-called dog soldiers. For this job the department chose Gen. Winfield S. Hancock, a hero of the Battle of Gettysburg. Just prior to marching to Fort Larned, he wrote to Agent Wynkoop that he was able to chastise any tribes who might molest people traveling across the Plains.⁵⁶ The general left Fort Harker on April 3, 1867, and arrived at Fort Larned on April 7. His force, numbering nearly 1,400 men, included four companies of the 7th cavalry, six companies of infantry, one company of the 37th infantry under George Custer and some artillery.⁵⁷

At the suggestion of Agents Wynkoop and Leavenworth, Hancock was induced to hold a council with the Cheyenne chiefs on April 13, about 20 miles up the Pawnee, near the Cheyenne village. Nothing came of this council, so, on the following day, Hancock moved within a mile of the village, where he met the dog soldiers. Hancock's understanding was that the Indians were to remain, but during the ensuing night, the Cheyennes quietly slipped away,

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 710, 711.

50. *Ibid.*, 1868, p. 514.

51. *Ibid.*, 1867, p. 361.

52. Kappler, *op. cit.*, p. 679.

53. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1867*, p. 361.

54. *Ibid.*

55. Kappler, *op. cit.*, pp. 683-685.

56. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1868*, p. 497.

57. George A. Custer, *Wild Life on the Plains* (St. Louis, Royal Publishing Co., 1891), pp. 39, 40.

much to his disgust. General Custer was sent after these Indians, but was not able to locate them. They (the Cheyennes) crossed over to the Smoky Hill river, where they destroyed some stations of the Overland Stage Company. When notified by Custer of this action, General Hancock ordered the whole Indian village to be burned to the ground.⁵⁸

General Hancock had great difficulty understanding the conduct of these Cheyenne Indians, when he found out later that they thought he was planning another Sand creek massacre. Agent Wynkoop answered by saying, "The nation knows, and I know, who General Hancock is . . . but the Indians . . . had no means of discriminating between him and Colonel Chivington or distinguishing the *man* from the *monster*."⁵⁹ Wynkoop also showed the true character of General Hancock by pointing out that the general had ordered the killing of six Cheyennes at Cimarron crossing before he had received any word from Custer regarding the Overland Stage depredations.⁶⁰

Before leaving the plains General Hancock had a council with Satanta, Kiowa chief. In a meeting at Fort Larned, it became apparent that the Civil War hero was no match for the Kiowa chief. Hancock was so impressed with Satanta's peace overtures that he presented the chief with a coat of a Union major general. A few days later Satanta proudly displayed this new wearing apparel while stampeding the livestock at Fort Dodge.⁶¹

By the fall of 1867 the Indians had agreed to peace councils to be held on Medicine Lodge creek.⁶² This parley was to solve permanently the Indian problem in its entirety. A preliminary council was held at Fort Larned, and on October 13, 1867, the peace commissioners and chiefs left Larned for Medicine Lodge creek. At the same time the gifts for the oncoming treaties were being shipped from Fort Larned to the treaty grounds, a task that took nearly a month.⁶³

Upon the completion of the Medicine Lodge treaty arrangements,⁶⁴ it became obvious that the Indians were not quick to remove themselves to their new homes. As late as July 4, 1868, Gen.

58. William E. Connelley, "The Treaty Held At Medicine Lodge," *Kansas Historical Collections*, v. 17 (1926-1928), pp. 601, 602.

59. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1867*, p. 314.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 310-313.

61. *Harper's Magazine*, New York, v. 36 (February, 1868), pp. 297, 298.

62. Located near present Medicine Lodge, some 75 miles south of Fort Larned.

63. Grinnell, *op. cit.*, pp. 263, 264.

64. Stipulations of the Medicine Lodge treaty are found in Kappeler, *op. cit.*, pp. 754-764.

Alfred Sully had to detach six companies of cavalry from Ellis Station to Fort Larned where the Kiowa and Comanches were holding up Santa Fe freighters.⁶⁵ The Cheyennes were reported to have killed 16 men at Pawnee Fork in September of the same year.⁶⁶ Because of these sporadic depredations, Agent Wynkoop was instructed to withhold all issues of arms until the Indians had confined themselves to their new reservation as outlined in the treaties of the previous year. Just after this order was issued, the Cheyennes raided the Kaw settlements near Council Grove where they stole some livestock. Since Wynkoop was not aware of this incident and since he still did not believe that any of the Indians of his agency would deceive him, he acted contrary to his orders by issuing arms to a group of Cheyennes who argued that unless they were issued arms and ammunition, they would starve. These very same Indians, with their newly acquired weapons, proceeded to the Saline and Solomon where they killed 16 white farmers and ravished several women.⁶⁷

The War Department acted swiftly after these depredations were reported. Lt. Gen. William T. Sherman of the Department of Missouri, on August 10, 1868, issued General Order No. 4, which stated, "W. B. Hazen, Major General, United States Army will have the supervision of all issues and disbursements to said Indians. . . ." ⁶⁸

On September 21, 1868, Agents Wynkoop and Leavenworth were relieved of their duties at Fort Larned and on September 25, the Interior Department (Department of Indian Affairs) abandoned the annuity distribution center at Fort Larned. Fort Cobb, in the Indian territory, had thus inherited the functions of Fort Larned with respect to the five Indian tribes.⁶⁹ In the fall of 1868, General Custer was planning his winter expedition to the Washita river and the outcome of this campaign served to remove any organized Indian troubles for the area around Fort Larned.

Troops remained at Fort Larned to as late as 1882, but these garrisons saw very little action. In the early 1870's Fort Larned troops were used to subdue the Wichita and Osage Indians who were revolting against railroad construction,⁷⁰ and in 1874 three Fort Larned cavalymen were wounded in a battle which saw five

65. *Report of the Secretary of War, 1868*, p. 10.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

67. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-12.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

69. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1868*, pp. 536-538.

70. *Topeka Daily Capital*, June 24, 1928.

Indians killed. These Indians had scalped a man south of Dodge City.⁷¹

Ralph Wallace, manager of the Larned *Tiller and Toiler*, stated that newspaper files record 192 deaths of red and white men in the vicinity of Fort Larned from the year 1859 to 1869. In addition to this, Wallace stated that there were approximately another 200 wounded cases recorded, bringing the total casualties to nearly 400 for the period that Fort Larned was active in Indian affairs.⁷²

LIFE AT FORT LARNED AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION

It will be remembered that early as February, 1865, General Ford had erected a stone blockhouse, primarily because of an official reprimand from the War Department. The type of defenses at Fort Larned prior to this construction were described as "earthen-works [that] were . . . washed away by the constant rains."⁷³ Other installations were described as tents,⁷⁴ dugouts covered with thatch and sod,⁷⁵ or mud-houses.⁷⁶

There may have been some who entertained the idea that the treaty at the camp on the Little Arkansas in the fall of 1865 had resolved the Indian troubles, but surely it was not the War Department. Maj. Gen. John Pope, in a letter dated August 11, 1866, to General Sherman, stated that he was sure that hostilities would break out in the near future. He went on to say that he would order the military posts on the frontier to be placed in the best possible condition, since he did not believe the Treaty of 1865 worth the paper that it was written on.⁷⁷

Also in 1866 Gen. U. S. Grant, in a letter to Secretary of War Stanton, remarked on the adverse condition of the frontier military posts. Explaining the great need for more suitable barracks and storehouses, he suggested that the appropriations needed to correct the situation could be held to a minimum by having the garrisons of each fort do their own construction work.⁷⁸ Consequently, a building program was instigated at Fort Larned, beginning in late 1866 and ending some time in 1868. For construction materials,

71. *Progress in Pottawatomie County* (18th anniversary supplement to the Larned *Tiller and Toiler*), December, 1932.

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, loc. cit.

74. George A. Root, ed., "Reminiscences of William Darnell," *Kansas Historical Collections*, v. 17 (1926-1928), p. 510.

75. *Larned Chronoscope*, November 20, 1919.

76. *Harper's Weekly*, New York, v. 11 (June 8, 1867), p. 357.

77. *Report of the Secretary of War*, 1868, p. 90.

78. *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18.

pine timbers were obtained from Michigan and sandstone blocks were quarried from near-by Lookout hill.

The building of barracks probably began in late 1866, since a drawing made in June, 1867, shows one division completed.⁷⁹ When finished, the two barracks, which also included mess rooms, kitchens, orderly rooms, and storage space, were capable of accommodating four companies. The space allotted each company was 40 feet square. Both of these buildings were ten feet high and they were located just south of the Pawnee creek bed, facing south and forming the north side of the quadrangular parade grounds.⁸⁰ These buildings still stand today, the only basic change being the addition of roofs to provide for hay lofts that are today used by the Frizell family in their ranching operations.

The dimensions of the buildings today are, west barracks, 150 feet by 43 feet, east barracks, 172 feet by 43 feet. It is reasonable to assume that these dimensions are the same as when constructed, since there is no physical evidence that the masonry has been tampered with.

The officers' quarters, probably built in late 1867, were constructed of sandstone, with shingle roofs and broad porticos in front. They were located on the west side of the quadrangle, facing east, with the banks of the Pawnee forming a convenient means of protection to the rear. The commanding officer's building was the middle of the three in this group. It had four rooms, 14 by 16 feet each, a kitchen 19 by 16 feet and servants' quarters upstairs.⁸¹ This building, containing the original sandstone (although remodeled somewhat), still stands today.

The other two buildings for officers were described in 1870 as follows:

Each contains four sets of quarters. They are traversed by two halls seven feet wide, each hall being common to two sets of quarters so that each building is supposed to accommodate two captains and four lieutenants. The captain's quarters are in the ends, and consist of two rooms (sixteen by fourteen and one-half feet by twelve feet high) and a kitchen (nineteen by ten feet), from which opens a servants' room. The two rooms communicate by folding doors and the kitchen opens into the back or bedrooms. Under the kitchen is a cellar that has been transformed into a kitchen, leaving the kitchen proper for use as a dining room. On the opposite side of the hall two lieutenants live in one room each, without kitchens.⁸²

79. *Harper's Weekly*, v. 11 (June 8, 1867), p. 357.

80. "Report on Barracks and Hospitals," *Report of the Surgeon General, 1870*, pp. 290,

300.

81. *Ibid.*

82. *Ibid.*

Additions to these subalterns' quarters were made in 1870 to provide them with kitchens, dining rooms, and additional room for servants.⁸³ Today, excluding repairs and modernization, these two buildings are practically as they were when constructed in 1867.

The hospital at Fort Larned, an adobe structure, was erected in 1860. It contained four rooms, two for use as wards with four beds in each ward. In 1866 a shingle roof was added and in 1867 the bare ground floor was covered with planks; the ceiling was of canvas.⁸⁴ The medical officers made repeated requests for a new, more permanent hospital. The following excerpts from a letter give an example of one of these requests:

FORT LARNED
October, 1868

WAR DEPARTMENT
Washington D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to request that I may be furnished with one hospital in good order, for use of the sick at this post. The adobe building now used for this purpose is about worn out, and in a condition which renders it liable to fall down on the sick at every storm that comes. . . . It was custom in former times to look after the comfort of the sick as one of the first things in building a post, but here it seems to have been left to the last, and, finally, by some oversight, neglected altogether. . . .

Very respectfully

Your obedient servant,

W. H. Foswood
Brevet Major and
Assistant Surgeon⁸⁵

This request was not granted. After a storm in 1869 destroyed one of the walls, another request for a new hospital was sent to Washington, but this was turned down also.⁸⁶

By 1874 the fort had become less important, as reflected by the smaller garrisons stationed there.⁸⁷ Since a substantial part of the enlisted men's barracks was empty, the eastern part of the east barracks was converted into a hospital. This new hospital had two wards, a mess room, dispensary, kitchen, storeroom and attendants' rooms. A portico was added to the front to give it a more attractive appearance. The old adobe hospital (which has long since disap-

83. *Ibid.*

84. *Ibid.*

85. *Ibid.*

86. *Kansas City (Mo.) Star*, April 11, 1928.

87. Official garrisons of Fort Larned are found in *Report of the Adjutant General*. The reports begin in 1867 and end in 1878.

peared) was converted into an ordnance shop, with the cellar as a magazine.⁸⁸

The blockhouse erected in 1865 was a hexagonal building located about 50 feet southeast of the southeastern corner of the parade grounds. It had a strategic location, since it protected that side of the fort which had no natural means of protection. This blockhouse was taken down some time after 1886, since a photograph of that year shows it intact.

In 1866 the commissary building was constructed.⁸⁹ Located on the eastern end of the south side of the parade grounds, this building today measures 160 feet by 28 feet and it was used primarily to house the livestock. Just west of the commissary building is located the quartermaster building, constructed in 1867.⁹⁰ The measurements of this building are 158 feet by 40 feet. These two buildings guarded the south side of the quadrangular fortification, the side that faced the vast open prairie. Both were constructed of sandstone blocks nearly two feet thick and it is interesting to note that the south wall of the quarter-master building has gun slits, similar to openings found in blockhouses.

Other buildings constructed during the years 1866-1868 were a bakery in 1868⁹¹ and a utility shop which was used by the blacksmith, wheelwright, and harness repairmen. Both of these buildings, located on the east side of the parade grounds and forming the final side of the quadrangle, measure 84½ feet by 30 feet and they also were constructed of sandstone. They are still standing today.

A stone sutler's store was built at Fort Larned in 1861 and it was termed "the first stone building west of Fort Riley."⁹² There was either another sutler's store built the following year or an addition to the existing one, since John K. Wright was reported to have built the foundation for a sutler's store in 1862.⁹³ The exact location of this building or these buildings is not known.

Other civilian buildings at Fort Larned included a saloon,⁹⁴ a dry goods store,⁹⁵ a trading post operated by Dave Butterfield,⁹⁶ and a

88. "Report on the Hygiene of the United States Army," *Report of the Surgeon General*, 1875, p. 272.

89. This date appears on a concrete block on the north wall.

90. This date appears on a concrete block on the north wall.

91. This date appears on a concrete block on the west wall.

92. *Larned Eagle-Optic*, November 3, 1899.

93. "Statement of Theodore Weichselbaum," *Collections of the Kansas Historical Society*, v. 11 (1909-1910), p. 567.

94. *Larned Chronoscope*, September 4, 1947.

95. *The Tiller and Toller, Larned*, May 21, 1936.

96. Henry M. Stanley, *My Early Travels and Adventures in America and Asia* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons), v. 1 (1895), p. 28.

corral and some additional civilian buildings constructed in 1872.⁹⁷ Regular mail service to Fort Larned was begun in 1863 and as a result a stage and mail building was erected that year.⁹⁸ The government put up a power sawmill in 1861; it was located about 15 miles west of the fort on the banks of the Pawnee.⁹⁹

Probably the pride of the commander of Fort Larned was a 100-foot flagpole that was erected in the exact center of the parade grounds. It had been hauled to Fort Larned from Fort Leavenworth in 12-foot sections some time prior to June, 1867, and was reported destroyed by lightning in 1878.¹⁰⁰

The water supply for Fort Larned was obtained by hauling water from Pawnee creek and placing it in huge barrels that were located in the yards adjacent to the barracks. Wells were drilled down to 40 feet, but the water was too sulphurous for human consumption.¹⁰¹ The great importance placed on the water supply for a military post is exemplified by the construction of a tunnel from the fort to the creek bed, probably used in time of siege.¹⁰²

Whisky consumption seems to have been quite prevalent at Fort Larned. A Santa Fe freighter related how he sold a barrel of whisky to the director of the stage station. Since whisky was considered contraband at United States military posts, the spirits were smuggled into the fort under a load of hay.¹⁰³ H. T. Ketcham, who visited Fort Larned in April, 1864, had this to say concerning the morals of that post, "Dissipation, licentiousness and venereal diseases prevail in and around [the fort] to an astonishing extent."¹⁰⁴

Fort Larned experienced a mild cholera epidemic in the summer of 1864. It was brought to the fort by the 38th infantry, en route to New Mexico territory. The commander of the fort knew that the detachment carried the dreaded disease, but contrary to the request of the surgeon general he allowed the men to stop there. The first case broke out on July 6 and the victim died ten hours later. Two more cases occurred on the 10th and 11th; one died in six hours and the other recovered.¹⁰⁵

97. *Report of the Surgeon General, 1875*, p. 272.

98. *Larned Eagle-Optic*, November 10, 1899.

99. *Ibid.*, November 3, 1899.

100. *The Tiller and Teller, Larned*, October 23, 1947.

101. "Report on Barracks and Hospitals," *op. cit.*, p. 299.

102. O. P. Byers, "When Railroaded Outdid the Wild West Stories," *Kansas Historical Collections*, v. 17 (1926-1928), p. 339.

103. Charles Raber, "Personal Recollections . . .," *ibid.*, v. 16 (1923-1925), p. 322.

104. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1864*, p. 401.

105. "Report on Epidemic Cholera and Yellow Fever," *Report of the Surgeon General, 1863*, p. 46.



Upper: Fort Larned as sketched by Theodore R. Davis in *Harper's Weekly*, New York, June 8, 1867.
 Lower: Fort Larned, looking northwest, from a photograph of 1886.

THE PLAINS.

"WESTWARD THE STAR OF EMPIRE TAKES ITS WAY."

VOL. I FORT LARNED, SATURDAY, NOV. 25, 1865. NO. 1

THE PLAINS.
Published every Saturday at Ft. Larned, Kas.
BY THE OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS
OF THE UNITED STATES SERVICE,
STATIONED ON THE PLAINS.

SELECTED POETRY.

The Wives.
God bless the Wives,
They fill our lives
With little joys and honey
They ease life's shocks.
They mend our socks,
But—don't they spend the money?
When we are sick,
They heal us quick—
That is, if they should love us;
If not, we die,
And yet they cry.
And place tenderness above us.
Of roguish girls,
With sunny curls,
We say in fancy dream:
But wives—true wives—
Throughout our lives,
Are everything they seem.

"Oh for a Home Beside the Hills."
"Oh for a home beside the hills—
Where gladly leap the foaming rills—
Where sunlight dwells 'mid fiery flowers,
Which bloom, and leaf 'mid green-wood
groves—
There I would look on green vale wide,
'Mid which the gay wild waters glide,
Oh for a home beside the hills,
Where ever glide the laughing rills,
A home that's bright with birds and
flowers—
'Tis there I'd live life's happy hours."

DR. HALL'S JOURNAL OF HEALTH.
DR. HALL'S JOURNAL OF HEALTH,
which claims to be the highest authority in
medical science, has taken a stand against
suffered people sleeping together, for
Halls they had better sleep in adjoining
rooms. It says that layers and greases do
not sleep together, and why should other
people? Think of separating a truly
suffered pair on a cold winter's night, be-
cause Hall's Journal of Health says so.
Verily you go to sleep, Sir, Hall.

Military.

THE FORTY-NINTH WISCONSIN INFANTRY.
We learn that companies B, C and
D, of the 49th regiment, have been dis-
charged and paid. The Colonel of the
regiment, Col. SAMUEL FLETCHER, has had
the rank of Brigadier-General, by brevet,
conferred upon him, for gallant and effi-
cient services. Who's next?

Promoted.

Capt. M. V. R. McKEEVER, Co. E,
49th Wisconsin Infantry, Post commandant
at Fort Zarah, and Lieut. WHEELER,
A. A. Q. M., at that Post, came up to this
post on Monday last. They report the
boys all well and everything lively.

Second Lieut. CHAS. A. JENNISON,
Co. I, 49th Wisconsin Infantry, has been
ordered to appear before the Military Com-
mission at Washington, within three days
from Nov. 26th, in answer to the charge of
"absence without leave," or must dis-
missed the service. He has been commis-
sioned and numbered as 2nd Lieutenant of
Co. I, 49th Wisconsin, but has never
joined the regiment.

Promotions in the 49th Wis. Infantry.
Capt. Peter Truitt has been promoted
from 1st Lieutenant of Co. H, vice O. F.
Waller resigned. Date of commission
Oct. 26th, 1865.

First Lieutenant J. S. Briggs from 2d
Lieutenant, Co. H, vice Peter Truitt
promoted.

Second Lieutenant Chas. Fowler from
1st Serg't vice J. S. Briggs promoted 1st
Lieutenant.

Lorenz To. Otto, as Captain of Co. C,
vice K. A. Bolton resigned.

Second Lieutenant John S. Kendall 1st
Lieutenant Co. C, vice L. B. Otto pro-
moted.

First Serg't Theophilus Dimes to be 2d
Lieutenant Co. C, vice John S. Hendrick
to be 1st Lieutenant Co. K, vice Carter re-
signed.

First Serg't Peter Mullinger, Co. K,
to be 2d Lieutenant vice Hendrick promoted.

First Serg't Chas. E. Post to be 2d
Lieutenant, vice Christian Jensen re-
signed.

How we started.

The purchase and promulgation of our
little paper was the result of a social con-
versation on the evening of 14th of October,
when a number of us were enjoying "one
smoke," soon after supper at the state of
our worthy suffer. A subscription paper
was immediately started, which, up to the
present time has fully realized our most
optimistic expectations.

The following is our subscription list:
Col. U. R. Fennell, \$20.00
Capt. Chas. M. Walker, 10.00
First Lieut. S. J. Conkling, R. Q. M., 10.00
C. P. Danks, 10.00
John F. Danks, 10.00
Henry Bradley, Interpreter, 10.00
Frank D. Crane, 10.00
John W. Crane, 10.00
Jesse H. Crane, 10.00
Capt. J. F. Hamilton, 10.00
Major J. D. Bate, 10.00
Lieut. J. G. Hall, 10.00
Lieut. J. S. Briggs, 10.00
Capt. R. Baker, 10.00
Chas. H. McKeever, 10.00
James Beyer, 10.00
Sergeant L. S. Armstrong, 10.00
1st Lieut. A. V. Amel, Post Ad't, 10.00
Capt. Cyrus Hamilton, 10.00
1st Lieut. Peter Truitt, 10.00
1st Lieut. A. R. Galy, Adjutant, 10.00
W. A. Cook, Jr., 10.00
Capt. R. Lawrence, A. Q. M., 10.00
Br't. Maj. W. F. Martin, C. S., 10.00
T. E. Curtis, Interpreter, 10.00
Lieut. M. J. Briggs, 10.00
Capt. M. V. R. McKeever, 10.00
Lieut. Henry Feltner, 10.00
1st Lieut. Van A. Winchell, 10.00
1st Lieut. H. W. Black, 10.00

Total, \$200.00
The cost of press, type, &c.,
at St. Louis, Mo., 10.00
Expenses charges, 10.00

Total, \$220.00

By the above it will be seen THE PLAINS
is almost a solvent institution, and unlike
many Western enterprises, is founded on
real capital. Our thanks are due to Chas.
H. McKeever, Editor, of the 49th Wis.
Inf'ty., for looking his efforts to secure
such a beautiful little Press. Also, to
Messrs. M. S. Mapham & Bro., of 31, 33
Street, St. Louis, through whom the
Little Type Foundry, located at No. 8,
Third Street, were engaged to furnish us a
solid Press. The pressman with which
it was dispatched reflects credit on the
enterprise of that company.

THE FIRST NEWSPAPER OF WESTERN KANSAS

The first page of *The Plains*, a three-page newspaper published at Fort Larned November 25, 1865. There was no fourth page, for it was intended that this space should be used by soldiers for letter writing. The size of the original page is approximately 8x10 inches.

Diarrhoea was a common malady in such places as Fort Larned, where the drinking water was not overly sanitary. The official treatment used by the medical officers in 1868 was described as follows, ". . . large doses of calomel, injections of starch, strong tea, brandy, acetate of lead, sinapisms, frictions and ice sucking."¹⁰⁶

In the late fall of 1865 a printing press was purchased by the officers, the purpose being to print a weekly newspaper. The press was ordered from St. Louis, at a price of \$239.55. First subscription sales brought in \$300, so the venture started on a sound financial basis. The first edition was published on November 25, 1865, and a short editorial stated the motive for printing *The Plains*, as the paper was called:

We are running a paper for our own amusement—for the fun of the thing. That's all—and why not, pray tell? Why not run a paper for fun, as well as play cards or billiards, or go to a saloon or a horserace, or to hear Beecher preach, all for fun?¹⁰⁷

The paper was to be published every Saturday and the motto on the front page reflected the idea of manifest destiny, "Westward the Star of Empire Takes Its Way." The following are examples of want ads that appeared in the first edition:

WANTED—At this office, a half dozen young ladies to learn printing business. The foreman of this office will render all the assistance possible. None but good looking ones need apply.

JOE WONE—We are prepared to print visites, ball tickets, wedding cards, bills of fare, stage, railroad and toll tickets, programmes, posters and show bills; in short, everything in the line of letter press printing from a primer to a bible.

It is not known how long this paper was published, but since later literature concerning Fort Larned makes no mention of *The Plains*, it is reasonable to assume that it did not remain in publication for long. Considering the rapid turnover of troops at Fort Larned, the founding group of this paper may have left soon after the first publication, with the result that only one edition may have been published.

Two major freighting firms monopolized the supplying of the military posts on the Plains. They were Irwin, Jackman and Company and Russell, Majors and Waddell; in 1860 they loaded 863 wagons for Forts Larned, Garland, Wise, and Union. The distribution of annuities to the government posts was the job of Bent and Campbell, who, in one year, sent out 57 wagons.¹⁰⁸ In August, 1872,

106. *Ibid.*

107. *The Plains*, Fort Larned, November 25, 1865. A copy of this first edition is in the possession of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

108. W. D. Wyman, "Kansas City, Mo., A Famous Freighter Capital," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, v. 6 (1937), p. 11.

the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad was completed to Larned with the result that these freighting firms handled a much smaller volume of business.¹⁰⁹

During the 1860's very few of the frontier military posts were supplied with decent food. Dishonest contractors, distance from the main depots and the Civil War brought about this situation. One report in 1867 told of some bacon that was sent to the frontier after having been stored in dugouts for two years.¹¹⁰ An establishment such as Fort Larned could easily provide fresh meat for the troops, since large herds of buffalo roamed that vicinity. Lt. C. A. Campbell related how he and two other soldiers brought in, at one time, 52 buffalo hind quarters. They were hung to dry on the walls of the enlisted men's barracks.¹¹¹ Albert H. Boyd and Al and George Cox, pioneer ranchers near Fort Larned, supplied Forts Larned, Hays, and Dodge with fresh beef.¹¹²

Fresh vegetables were a luxury. *The Plains* stated that, "The arrival of a train loaded with antiscorbutics, is a subject of congratulations for everybody . . ." ¹¹³ Potatoes were reported to have sold for \$2.50 per bushel and tomatoes for \$1.00 per peck. Gardens were attempted by the soldiers on several occasions, but their efforts were futile, the causes of failure being, ". . . deficient rains, intense heat, poor soil, grasshoppers and hailstorms." ¹¹⁴

Frontier posts were poorly supplied in the quartermaster and commissary stores due to an intricate system of regulations badly adapted for posts many miles from the main source of supply. There seemed also to exist a good degree of corruption in these departments of supply.¹¹⁵

The supply of hay for Fort Larned was derived from native fields that existed along the bottomlands. Theodore Weichselbaum, who was the sutler at Fort Larned, arranged a contract for hay in 1860. Hauling from south of the Arkansas river in wagons, he reported profits of \$20.00 a day for a 30-day period.¹¹⁶

The sale of buffalo robes amounted to big profits for the traders. Bands of six different Indian tribes sold, during the season of 1863-1864, 15,000 robes worth nine dollars by the bale wholesale (the

109. Bradley, *loc. cit.*, p. 25.

110. Raymond Welty, "Supplying the Frontier Military Post," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, v. 7 (1958), p. 163.

111. *The Teller and Teller*, Larned, September 27, 1923.

112. *Ibid.*, October 23, 1947.

113. *The Plains*, November 25, 1865.

114. "Report on Barracks and Hospitals, 1870," *loc. cit.*, p. 300.

115. Welty, *op. cit.*, p. 169 (citing *House Ex. Doc. No. 20, 39th Cong., 2d Sess.*, pp. 5, 13, 14).

116. Weichselbaum, *loc. cit.*, p. 568.

average bale contained three 50-pound robes). The Indians, not able to realize the economic value of these goods, traded them for trinkets whose value amounted to 75 cents per robe.¹¹⁷

Society of the Plains centered around the fort. Capt. Henry, Booth, who was stationed at Fort Larned, described the full-dress dinner parties that were given when notables visited there. The Indians enjoyed harrassing the guests who were en route to these celebrations. On one occasion some prospective party goers were obliged to toss to the Indians a suitcase containing their best party clothes in order to divert their attention.¹¹⁸

In the spring of 1867, when General Hancock's force was at Fort Larned, the life of a soldier stationed there seemed to follow the military code to a strict degree. Henry M. Stanley, who visited the fort at that time, described it as follows:

Fort Larned . . . is a model of neatness. Everything is carried on according to the strict letter of the military code. Guard mounting, inspection, and dress parade are announced by the familiar sounds of the fife and drum, accompanied by all the pomp and circumstance of military form. The officers are affable with their equals and gracious toward their subordinates.¹¹⁹

This, it should be remembered, was the situation when notables visited at the fort, and was probably the exception, rather than the rule. At any rate, it is quite the opposite of a Fourth of July (1863) celebration, which was notable for the drinking of "rot" and running of foot races.¹²⁰

Many of the soldiers kept gamecocks and cockfighting became a very popular sport before the area came under local civil law.¹²¹ Dave Butterfield, of the express company, not only entertained soldiers with "comical pictures," but on one occasion, delighted Satanta, the Kiowa chief, with "parlour scenes."¹²²

Horse racing seemed to be one of the most popular forms of entertainment not only for the soldiers, but for the Indians as well. For the race track, they dug ditches about four feet apart; the ditches, which ran parallel to one another, were separated by a sod embankment. Betting was heavy: The Indians would put up ponies, buffalo robes, and deer skins against the silver dollars of the soldiers.¹²³

In 1863 some Comanches and Kiowas from Texas brought a black stallion to Fort Larned. This horse was considered by the Indians

117. Melroe, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

118. *The Tiller and Toller*, August 28, 1919 (Wheat edition).

119. Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

120. Letter of Capt. A. W. Burton, *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, v. 7 (1938), p. 100.

121. *The Tiller and Toller*, March 4, 1943.

122. Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

123. Ryus, *op. cit.*, pp. 57, 58.

to be the best race horse on the Plains. People from as far as 300 miles came to witness a match race, which also included a barbecue for the several thousand spectators. The race was won by the Indians' horse, which obliged the soldiers to pay off a \$300 purse. The Indians, in the joy of their victory, spent the money buying candy, canned goods, etc., from the sutler, most of which was given away. Some soldiers from Fort Riley were greatly impressed with the performance of the black stallion and they purchased him from the Indians.¹²⁴

Among unusual incidents at the fort was a snowstorm in December, 1863, when nearly 15 inches of snow fell. A coach en route from Santa Fe became stranded and the lives of its passengers were saved when the soldiers at Larned from their watchtower spied a passenger attempting to get to the fort for help.¹²⁵ On January 3, 1869, a fire broke out in one of the barns. Thirty-nine horses, 30 tons of hay, 500 bushels of grain, 40 saddles, and 6,000 rounds of ammunition were destroyed. Company M of the 19th Kansas regiment, under the command of Capt. Sargent Moody, discovered the fire and was credited by the Manhattan newspaper for bringing this near disaster under control.¹²⁶

THE ABANDONMENT OF FORT LARNED

As early as 1870 it became apparent that it was only a matter of time before Fort Larned would be abandoned. It will be remembered that the Indian annuity distribution station had been moved from Fort Larned to Fort Cobb in the fall of 1868. In 1870 a report from Fort Larned stated that commercial traffic on the Santa Fe trail was practically nonexistent, due to the completion of the Kansas Pacific railroad, approximately 50 miles north.¹²⁷ The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad, which reached the area in August, 1872, further reduced the need for troops on the trail, although they were a definite asset during the construction of the road.

In 1872 General Sheridan stated that due to lack of reports of Indian engagements in the Fort Larned area, the fort should be abandoned. He went on to say that the buildings there were frail and temporary, a statement that was obviously in error, since the buildings today are considered quite substantial for their age.¹²⁸ In that same year General Pope reported that, "Forts Larned, Dodge

124. *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 60.

125. *Kansas Daily Tribune*, Lawrence, December 10, 1863.

126. *Manhattan Standard*, January 16, 1869.

127. "Report on Barracks and Hospitals," *loc. cit.*, p. 299.

128. Mrs. F. C. Montgomery, "Fort Wallace and Its Relation to the Frontier," *Kansas Historical Collections*, v. 17 (1926-1928), p. 250.

and Lyon are substantial, well built posts, and will last a long time."¹²⁹

As a result of General Sheridan's statement, Governor Harvey of Kansas made an official appeal to keep troops at Fort Larned. The people, especially the workmen constructing the railroad, were still in need of protection from the sporadic raids of the Indians.¹³⁰ Consequently, the military garrisons remained there.

During the winter of 1873-1874 the main body of settlers came into the area to establish farms on land that had been granted to the Santa Fe railroad. Many of these people were destitute that first winter, which resulted in appeals for supplies stored at Fort Larned, which were refused.¹³¹

On October 3, 1878, General Pope's report to the War Department stated that Forts Larned, Hays, and Lyon were no longer needed. He explained that a large centralized force at Fort Wallace would be adequate to protect the settlements.¹³² The garrisons at Fort Larned were removed to Fort Dodge on October 28, 1878.¹³³ Since an act of congress was needed to dispose of this military property, the government left a small detail of men at the Fort, under the command of Lt. John A. Payne.¹³⁴

The military cemetery at Fort Larned was located about three eighths of a mile northwest of the fort buildings. On May 28, 1896, the cemetery was officially abandoned.¹³⁵ This cemetery contained 68 known graves. The man who removed these bodies to the Fort Leavenworth Military cemetery received ten dollars for each grave he opened. The grave pits were left open and were a spectacle for some years.¹³⁶

Upon the evacuation of the soldiers from Fort Larned, the people in that vicinity began to eye the bottom-land reservation as ideal farmland. As a result a bill to return this property to the public domain was introduced by Sen. Preston B. Plumb of Kansas. The bill was signed by President Arthur on August 4, 1882. It stated that no one individual should be allowed to purchase more than one quarter section, and provided for survey and appraisal. Also included was a clause stating that the section containing the improve-

129. *Report of the Secretary of War, 1872*, p. 48.

130. Marvin H. Garfield, "The Military Post as a Factor in The Frontier Defenses of Kansas," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, v. 1 (1931-1932), p. 54.

131. James C. Malin, "J. A. Walker's Early History of Edwards County," *ibid.*, v. 9 (1940), pp. 266, 267.

132. *Montgomery*, loc. cit., p. 277.

133. *Report of the Adjutant General, 1878*, p. 61.

134. *The Tiller and Toller*, March 4, 1943.

135. *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, v. 20 (1952-1953), p. 171.

136. *The Tiller and Toller*, February 1, 1951.

ments was to be sold at auction or at private sale as deemed best by the commissioner of the General Land Office.¹³⁷

Some of the land came under the federal land grant to the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad. The section which contained the fort improvements was sold to Sage and Jackson representing the Pawnee Valley Stock Breeders Association.¹³⁸ This sale took place on March 13, 1884, at a public auction, at the town of Larned. The final bid received was \$11,056, but the purchasers defaulted on their payment, after which the property was sold for \$4,000. An investigation was ordered by the General Land Office, which resulted in causing the purchasers to make an additional payment of \$7,056 dollars, thus making good the amount bid at the sale.¹³⁹

A portion of the remaining land was sold by direct transaction to the General Land Office. The rest was sold through H. M. Bickel and Henry Booth, who were appointed land receivers, with offices at Larned.¹⁴⁰ The sale of one of the tracts resulted in an official appeal to the General Land Office of the Department of the Interior. This case was known as *Cook v. Wilbur*. Cook's contention was that Wilbur was not entitled to his property, since he had not carried out the residence requirement of the pre-emption law. Wilbur's appeal was based on the phrase of the bill of August 4, 1882, which stated that ownership of Fort Larned land could be obtained by following a plan ". . . as nearly as may be in conformity to the provisions of the pre-emption laws of the United States. . . ." ¹⁴¹ Wilbur lost his claim to this piece of land when Commissioner Vilas upheld Cook's contention. Two laws were cited by the General Land Office to support the decision. They were the Osage act of May 9, 1872, which stated that pre-emption laws must be followed ". . . in every respect" ¹⁴² and Section 2283 of the *Revised Statutes*, which stated that any land settlement must accord ". . . with the general provisions of the pre-emption laws. . . ." ¹⁴³

In 1902 E. E. Frizell bought the Fort Larned ranch from a man by the name of Fohrer of Illinois. The purchase involved approximately 3,000 acres, 250 acres in cultivation, the rest in native grass.

137. For documents concerning the Fort Larned bill, see *Congressional Record*, 46th Cong. 1st Sess., v. 9, p. 63; *Congressional Record*, 47th Cong., 1st Sess., v. 13, pp. 55, 304, 1081, 6096, 6697, 6762, 6800, 6998.

138. "Records" of the register of deeds, Pawnee county, Kansas.

139. "Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office," *Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 1884, v. 1, p. 28.

140. "Records" of the register of deeds, Pawnee county, Kansas.

141. Letter of Secretary Vilas to Commissioner Stocklayer, March 31, 1888.—*Decisions of the Department of the Interior . . . Relating to the Public Lands*, v. 6, pp. 600, 601.

142. *Ibid.*

143. *Ibid.*

In 1956 there were only 200 acres in grass, the rest being devoted to irrigated alfalfa and row crop production. The ranch employed half a dozen families part of whom resided in the officer's quarters. The two enlisted men's barracks have been converted into a huge barn. The buildings on the east side (old blacksmith and bakery) are used as machine shops, and the commissary and quartermaster buildings serve as barns for storing grain, hay, etc. The quadrangular parade grounds have been fenced in and the native buffalo grass still grows there.

During the early 1900's the beautiful ranch along the Pawnee became a favorite picnic ground for the people in that vicinity. According to Charles Welch, early Pawnee county homesteader, a Pennsylvania picnic was an annual affair. Barn dances were frequent, and in one instance the local National Guard unit held a sham battle on the grounds.¹⁴⁴

As time went by, tourists in increasing numbers were attracted to this historic spot. The Frizell family erected signs to welcome visitors, and the Kansas Historical Society and the State Highway Commission erected a historical marker just north of the fort on United States Highway 56. In the early 1950's the late E. D. Frizell was approached by various organizations who discussed with him the possibility of selling the fort buildings and a small tract of land to make the establishment into a type of monument. Frizell stated that he would be glad to move over about a quarter of a mile if he were provided with improvements to match the existing ones.

On January 10, 1955, Sen. Frank Carlson introduced a bill in congress which provided for an investigation and report on making Fort Larned a national monument, similar to Fort Laramie on the Oregon trail.¹⁴⁵ Since the amount of money needed to buy and restore the fort is quite large, it will no doubt have to be derived from some government agency or philanthropic group.

On October 6, 1955, Merrill J. Mattes, regional historian of Region Two, National Park Service, Omaha, made an official tour of inspection at the Fort Larned ranch. He was impressed with the good condition of the original buildings. He stated that factors favorable to designation of the fort as a monument were that the government has established no national monuments along the Santa Fe trail and that the fort has a potential attraction for tourists because of the near-by federal highway.¹⁴⁶

144. *The Tiller and Toiler*, February 1, 1951.

145. *Congressional Record*, 84th Cong. 1st Sess., v. 101, pt. 1, p. 163.

146. *The Tiller and Toiler*, October 7, 1955.

On January 19, 1956, Rep. Clifford R. Hope received a memorandum from Conrad L. Wirth, director of the Department of Interior's National Park Service, stating that of the 11 original historic sites chosen in Kansas for further study, Fort Larned was one of the three given a favorable rating and that further examination by the federal government would follow.¹⁴⁷

At present the National Park Service has no funds for the purchase of sites as expensive as Fort Larned. In some instances congress has appropriated the necessary funds for such a project. State legislatures have been known to appropriate the necessary money, as for example, the state of Wyoming, which purchased 214 acres of land and the buildings at Fort Laramie in 1927.¹⁴⁸ It should be remembered, however, that Western state legislatures are generally conservative and reluctant to authorize the expenditure of state funds for the acquisition of historic sites. It would take several times as much money to purchase Fort Larned as it took to purchase Fort Laramie.

In February, 1957, due largely to the work of Ralph Wallace, Larned newspaperman, the Fort Larned Historical Society was organized. He and the society planned a formal opening of Fort Larned as a tourist attraction, which was held May 19, 1957. The United States Department of the Interior also announced another examination of the property soon. As a result of these movements, this interesting chapter in the history of the West may before long be suitably commemorated.

147. "Correspondence Number L58-H," Conrad L. Wirth to Rep. Clifford R. Hope, January 19, 1956.

148. David L. Hieb, *Fort Laramie* (National Park Service Series No. 20, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1954, p. 33).