

OLD FORT SUPPLY

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PREFACE

Undoubtedly, the history of life on the Great Plains furnishes some of the most interesting reading in American History. The colorful lives of the plains Indians, the ruggedness of the scouts and soldiers, and the dogged determination of the frontiersmen combine to present an unending source of adventure, bravery and endurance.

In this thesis, it has been the purpose of the writer to endeavor to portray the conditions under which Fort Supply was established, the necessity for its continued existence and at the same time to present a few illustrations of life at a frontier post in the seventies and eighties.

In the first chapter, an effort has been made to demonstrate the necessity for the establishment of the post and in chapter two, a brief summary of the famed Washita campaign has been presented. In chapters three and four, it has been the purpose of the writer to present evidence which would necessitate the continuation and improvement of the post.

The final chapter has been devoted to the presentation of a brief picture of living conditions at the post and the great amount of energy and expense involved in maintaining such a military post on one of our last frontiers.

The writer desires to express his sincere thanks to Dr. T. H. Reynolds, Head of the History Department; to the library staff, and especially to Miss Grace Campbell of the Document Department; and to his wife, Alyce Cottom Hughes, for their kindly suggestions and encouragement in the production of this thesis.

September, 1940

W.H.H.

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CHAPTER I

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CAMP SUPPLY

Camp Supply, later to become Fort Supply, came into being as a result of an emergency campaign against various tribes of the plains Indians in the fall of 1868. The site of the old fort is now occupied by the Western State Hospital of the State of Oklahoma and a number of the old buildings are in use at the present time. Geographically located at a point near the confluence of Beaver and Wolf creeks in Latitude 36° 30' and Longitude 99° 30',¹ it was approximately fifteen miles northwest of the present city of Woodward, Oklahoma.

With the close of the Civil War, thousands of young men, especially of the Union Army, were mustered out of service only to find a scarcity of opportunities for securing a livelihood. Furthermore, they were now possessed of a feeling of unrest. The lure of buffalo-hunting and its remunerative possibilities brought thousands of them to the region of the Great Plains where began a wanton slaughter of these animals. Literally, millions were killed, the hides removed and the carcasses abandoned to the vultures.

What was the effect of this upon the Indian of the plains? The buffalo was his source of food, his source of shelter, his source of fuel and his source of clothing. In a word, this peculiar looking animal was the very foundation of his existence in that treeless region. It is not unusual then, that he should fight to retain that which he found so absolutely necessary to his existence.

1

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1894, I, p. 337.

More than this, the Indian regarded land as "free goods." Land was something common to all humanity as air and sunlight, and the aggressive manner of these settlers from beyond the big river was a cause for retaliation. So began a series of depredations, murders and robberies along our western frontier that to us seem terrifying yet did not long stay the powerful advance of that sturdy group of pioneers on the western fringe of our advancing civilization.

The extension of railway development in western Kansas and the resultant influx of settlers along the Arkansas and other rivers to the north added further impetus to the difficulties and soon the Federal government launched a new program destined to place these nomadic tribes of the plains upon permanent reservations. When that colorful gathering of soldiers, government representatives, and Indians met at Medicine Lodge in 1867, little did they realize the length of time required to convert these wild people to a sedentary life. The lodge fires of that meeting had barely cooled before many of the younger warriors evidenced their dissatisfaction with the new arrangement and a new series of outbreaks brought death and destruction to the frontier settlements.

General Sheridan reported, in a tabulated statement to the Secretary of War, a series of more than sixty depredations, murders and robberies that occurred during the year of 1868 in the Department of the Missouri. ² In one of these, which occurred at Spanish Fort, Texas, on September 1, 1868, four people were murdered, eight were scalped and three women were outraged. He reported that:

²

House Executive Document, 1869, I, p. 52.

One of these women was outraged by thirteen Indians, who afterwards killed and scalped her--leaving a hatchet in her head; they then killed her four little children.³

On September 8, 1868, General Sheridan reported the murder of seventeen white people at Cimarron crossing a few miles west of Dodge City, Kansas. Fifteen of these people were burned to death by the
4
Indians.

Perhaps the most notable engagement of that summer occurred a few days later early in the morning of the 17th day of September on the Arickaree, a branch of the Republican River. The site of this bloody fight was a few miles west of the present Colorado-Kansas line. Colonel Geo. A. Forsythe was in command of a company of fifty scouts, who were endeavoring to overtake a band of the marauders. At the beginning of the Indian attack, the scouts, who had camped on the north bank of the river during the night, hurriedly made their way to a sandy island in the river, tying their horses to some trees growing on the island. Apparently the scouts had underestimated the number of Indians in the vicinity for hundreds of Cheyennes, Arapahoes and Sioux bore down upon them wounding many of the men and killing all the horses within the first hour. Many brave Indian chiefs were killed in this first encounter. The attack became disorganized when about ten o'clock in the morning the famed chief Roman Nose appeared, reorganized and renewed the attack. He was mortally wounded but the warriors held him upon his horse and he retreated from the field. At two o'clock in the afternoon, a new band appeared under Dull

3

Ibid., p. 53.

4

Loc. cit.

Knife and the attack was renewed. He was killed and fell from his horse, yet the braves advanced on foot under heavy fire and bore him from the scene of the battle.

At midnight, two scouts volunteered to attempt to reach Fort Wallace. They encountered almost insurmountable difficulties. The country seemed to be alive with Indians and they were forced to go in hiding during the day but successfully reached Fort Wallace, eighty-five miles distance on the 20th day of September.

In the meantime, another band of Indians, who were ignorant of the battle came down the Arickaree from the west and these were fired upon and repelled. After days of eating horseflesh, drinking brackish water from a dug pit and suffering from wounds, the men were rescued by a troop of cavalry sent to their relief. It is estimated that perhaps 700 Indians took part in this fight.

This demonstrates the fact that the pursuit and punishment of the Indians after these raids was a difficult problem, especially with the limited number of men available. In 1868, General Sheridan reported that he had 1400 foot troops and 1200 mounted troops east of New Mexico with which to attempt to control 6000 hostile Indians. Furthermore, it was estimated that there were on the plains 3,000,000 head of buffalo which supplied the Indian his necessary subsistence.

5

Winfield Freeman, "The Battle of the Arickaree," Kansas State Historical Society, VI, p. 346.

6

P. H. Sheridan, Personal Memoirs, II, p. 304. (Hereinafter cited as Sheridan's Memoirs).

7

Ibid., p. 297.

5

It was with this thought in mind that General Sheridan transferred his headquarters to Fort Hays⁸ where he immediately inaugurated plans for a winter campaign against the Indians at a time when it would be very difficult for them to travel and "their ponies would be thin, and weak from lack of food"⁹.

It was the custom of the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas and Comanches to establish winter camps along the rivers in the South Great Plains region and especially along those affluent to the Red River. General Sheridan was cognizant of the fact that the distance was too great to use any of the established forts of Kansas as a supply base and with this thought in mind, he planned the establishment of a supply base at a suitable place within the boundaries of the Indian country.

During the series of depredations which had occurred in recent months, General Sully had pursued a band of Comanches and Kiowas into this region but had been forced to retreat after three severe flights.¹⁰ He had crossed the tongue of land above the confluence of Beaver and Wolf creeks and had recognized its possibilities as a campsite. General Sully was, therefore, ordered to select and establish a temporary camp at a suitable point which would serve as a supply base for the troops in the field.

It is quite apparent that the establishment of Camp Supply was definitely a temporary procedure. There was no intention, at the time, of making this a permanent camp, yet it is interesting to note that all the forts of Oklahoma that have been abandoned, Fort Supply was the last to be turned over to the Department of the Interior.

⁸
Ibid., p. 295.

⁹
Sheridan, op. cit., p. 297.

¹⁰
Sheridan's Memoirs, p. 294.

It should be further noted that the fort was occupied continuously
from its inception in the fall of 1868, until a short time¹¹ before its
relinquishment by the War Department on November 5, 1894.¹²

11

House Executive Document, I, p. 94, 1893. (According to the report of the Adjutant-General dated September 27, 1893, there were 244 men stationed at the post that year.)

12

Land Office Reports, 1895, p. 111

CHAPTER II

THE WASHITA CAMPAIGN

Many pages have been written relative to the Washita campaign which was conducted during the winter of 1868-69. General Sheridan, in his "Personal Memoirs", has given us a clear and concise account, yet a historical study of old Fort Supply would be incomplete without a chapter dedicated to this important movement.

As has been previously stated, Camp Supply was established as a base of supplies to support General Sheridan's forces in the field. General Sully and General Custer, with eleven troops of the United States Cavalry, had reached the site several days prior to the arrival of General Sheridan on the 21st day of November.¹

The Nineteenth Kansas Volunteer Cavalry, commanded by Colonel Crawford, had not arrived as had been expected but General Sheridan had recognized a fresh Indian trail a short time before reaching Camp Supply and was of the opinion that it probably would lead them to the Indian villages. He, therefore, ordered Custer to pursue them with all haste.²

A snow-storm had occurred the day of Sheridan's arrival which made Custer's pursuit quite difficult when he moved out on the 23rd yet they were able to locate the trail at points of high land where the wind had swept the snow away. With the aid of friendly Osage guides, Custer moved fast and on the 26th struck a fresh trail in the snow leading south.³ The column pushed on during the night of the 26th and shortly before daybreak of the 27th, came in sight of the

¹ Sheridan's Memoirs, p. 312.

² Loc. cit.

³ Sheridan's Memoirs, p. 313.

Indian village on the Washita river.

It was decided to attack from all four sides at the same moment.

Sheridan describes the action in these words:

As the first light grew visible in the east, each column moved closer into the village, and then, all dispositions having been made according to the prearranged plan, from their appointed places the entire force--to the appointed notes of "Garry Owen," played by the regimental band as the signal for the attack--dashed at a gallop into the village. The sleeping and unsuspecting savages were completely surprised by the onset; yet . . . they seized their weapons . . . and kept on fighting with every exhibition of desperation. In such a combat mounted men were useless, so Custer directed his troops to fight on foot, and by 9 o'clock the entire camp was in his possession and the victory complete. Black Kettle and over one hundred of his warriors were killed, and about fifty women and children captured.⁴

Custer planned to keep the herd of ponies but after being surrounded most of the day by hostiles, he decided to kill all the ponies and return to Camp Supply under cover of darkness. The command arrived back at Camp Supply on the 30th, having lost nineteen men.

A very unfortunate occurrence of the affair was the disappearance of Major Elliott and fifteen men who became separated from the main command and were all killed about two miles south of the village.

General Sheridan immediately prepared to follow up this successful stroke against the Indians by following them deeper into this southwest territory. The Kansas volunteers had not yet arrived. Search parties located them in a bad plight in the rough breaks of the Cimarron probably near the present town of Freedom, Oklahoma. The snow-storm had prevented their further advance and over 700 of their horses had perished. The men had existed on buffalo meat

4

Ibid., p. 315.

and eventually were brought to Camp Supply without loss of life.

Due to this delay the start of the expedition was retarded until the 7th of December. General Sheridan described the force in the following words:

The column was made up of ten companies of the Kansas regiment, dismounted, eleven companies of the Seventh Cavalry, Pepon's scouts, and the Osage scouts. In addition to Pepon's men and the Osages, there was also "California Joe," and one or two other frontiersmen besides, to act as guides and interpreters. Of all these the principal one, the one who best knew the country, was Ben Clark, a young man who had lived with the Cheyennes during much of his boyhood, and who not only had a pretty good knowledge of the country, but also spoke fluently the Cheyenne and Arapahoe dialects.⁶

A headboard, which carries the date 1876, rests in the cemetery at the Western State Hospital and bears the name of Tachomeah, an Indian woman who was the wife of Ben Clark, the guide.

The new expedition followed General Custer's route to the site of the battleground on the Washita, located and buried the frozen and stripped bodies of Elliott's men. It is interesting to note that Louis McLane Hamilton, a grandson of Alexander Hamilton was killed in the Battle of the Washita.⁷ Traveling down the Washita, the expedition came up to the Kiowa camp. Satanta and Lone Wolf promised to move to Fort Cobb. The Kiowas and Comanches came in and the Arapahoes under Yellow Bear.⁸ Only the Cheyennes now remained at large.

5

Ibid., p. 322.

6

Ibid., p. 324.

7

Clarence Wharton, Satanta, the Great Chief of the Kiowas and his People, p. 131.

8

H. L. Moore, "The Nineteenth Kansas Cavalry," Kansas State Historical Society, VI, p. 43.

General Sheridan placed General Custer in command of the pursuit and returned to Camp Supply with the intention of joining General Custer later by a more direct route with an additional train of supplies. Upon his arrival at Camp Supply on the 2nd day of March, General Sheridan found orders awaiting him to return to Washington, however, the supply train was dispatched according to the prearranged agreement.

On the 2nd of March, the Nineteenth Kansas Volunteers and the Seventh United States Cavalry under General Custer began their westward march across the North Fork of the Red River to the Salt Fork of the same stream. Here the command was divided, the majority being ordered to follow the Texas boundary northward to the Washita and there to go into camp.

The balance ascended the Salt Fork to its headwaters thence along the Llano Estacado. The rations were greatly reduced, mules died and the wagons were burned. On the 20th, they came upon a village of 250 Cheyennes lodges on the Sweetwater. Following a parley, General Custer demanded the return of two captive white women and took six chiefs captive. He threatened to hang the chiefs if the women were not returned within twenty-four hours. The following afternoon, Mrs. Morgan and Miss White of Minneapolis, Kansas were delivered to General Custer. The chiefs were held captive until later when the Cheyennes came in to the reservation. General Custer's command, now moved toward the
rendevous on the Washita and from there returned to Camp Supply.

9

Sheridan's Memoirs, p. 344.

10

Moore, op. cit., p. 45.

Here they enjoyed a short rest and quickly moved on to Fort Dodge.

They Cheyennes had promised to come into Camp Supply but it was later learned that they divided. About 250 went north and joined a band of Sioux on the Republican. The remainder of the tribe under the head chief, Little Robe, remained in the Indian territory. These sent delegates to Camp Supply to talk of submission but finally Little Robe declared his intention of remaining at large.

The band that went north met an ill fate during the summer at the hands of General Carr in an engagement on the Republican. As soon as their brothers of the Indian territory learned of this, they submitted to the government. Their protection was assured by the United States Indian Commission, then at Camp Supply. With the exception of a small group that made their way north from Kansas and joined the Sioux, it was thought that the entire Cheyenne tribe were located near Camp Supply during the autumn and winter of 1869.¹¹

The Nineteenth Kansas Volunteers returned to Fort Hays where they were mustered out. Lieutenant-Colonel H. L. Moore reported that "the expedition resulted in forcing the Kiowas, Comanches, Cheyennes and Arapahoes onto their reservations."¹²

Carl Coke Rister reported the results of the campaign in the following words:

By the midsummer of 1869, Little Robe's and Medicine Arrow's Cheyennes and Little Raven's and Yellow Bear's Arapshoes, had accepted their reservation, and soon thereafter their captured women and children were restored, as well as the hostage chiefs whom Custer had seized on the Sweetwater.¹³

¹¹

Report of the Major-General Schofield, Department of Missouri, October 23, 1869, House Executive Document, I, p. 67.

¹²

Moore, op. cit. p. 43.

¹³

Carl Coke Rister, Border Captives, p. 161

CHAPTER III

A PERMANENT POST

Camp Supply was originally established for the purpose of supplying the troops in the field during the Washita campaign. It is not unusual then to find records of recommendation to abandon the post. General Pope, commander of the Department of the Missouri reported in 1870 in the following words:

Camp Supply was first established as a depot of supply for General Sheridan's campaign against the Indians in 1868. It has been retained as a position half way on the road to Sill. It is in an entirely unsettled region, not even in the vicinity of the Indians, and seems to me to serve no purpose whatever. It simply invites travel into a part of the country where it would never go except for the existence of the post and for its service, and this travel is a constant temptation to the Indians to attack trains or small parties. If there were no post there would be no travel, and consequently no Indian hostilities. I recommend its abandonment in the early spring.¹

General Pope also recommended that all the smaller forts in the Department of Missouri be abandoned and the troops concentrated in larger posts. He reasoned that it would then be possible to operate summer field camps to patrol the plains region during the season when the Indians were on the move.

General Sheridan, on the other hand, hesitated to accede to the recommendations of General Pope concerning the abandonment of certain posts and voiced his opinion in these words:

¹
Report of General Jno. Pope, Department of Missouri, October 31, 1870, House Executive Document, I, p. 14.

I do not fully agree with General Pope in the proposed concentration of troops. I consider that the necessity for active operations against Indians in his command--except, perhaps, a small number of Apaches--to be at an end. His duties will therefore be simply to give protection to the general line of the frontier and the commercial lines of travel, and to form here and there a nucleus for the youthful settlements constantly springing up.

As soon as active operations against Indians cease, our duties change from administering punishment to giving protection.²

Thus, the temporary camp became a permanent post and eventually attained the status of a fort.

The maintenance of an army post on the plains frontier was a difficult and expensive endeavor. In previous years, the frontier was a single line which moved westward at all points. In 1869, it was necessary to scatter the army over a wide expanse of territory. Furthermore, it was necessary to transport the supplies great distances in wagons which increased the cost of maintenance two or three times.³

Camp Supply received the major portion of its supplies by rail to Dodge City, Kansas, and then by wagon train to the post, a distance of eighty-six miles.⁴ The freight was hauled by private contractors. A contract with Edward Fenlon, dated June 23, 1876, stipulates a price of eighty-six cents per hundred weight.⁵

²

Report of Lieutenant-General P. H. Sheridan, Division of Missouri, November 4, 1871, House Executive Document, I, p. 24.

³

Report of General Sherman to the Secretary of War, 1869, House Executive Document, I, p. 30.

⁴

Report of the Quartermaster-General, 1877, House Executive Document, I, p. 304.

⁵

Loc. cit.

The post, as originally constructed, was of the stockade type with logs which stood on end and enclosed log buildings within the stockade, but as the years passed, lumber was hauled and frame buildings constructed. One of the old log buildings is yet in use and, according to Dr. J. L. Day,⁶ probably dates from 1869. Many cedar logs have been found on the grounds and cedar trees are quite plentiful in the canyons to the northeast.

Since the post was situated on the tongue of land between Wolf and Beaver creeks, both fresh water streams, a water supply was easily obtainable by sinking shallow wells in the immediate vicinity and it is apparent that such a supply was used until the later years of its existence.

The Cheyenne and Arapahoe agency, which had formerly been at Fort Larned, Kansas, was temporarily transferred to Camp Supply and, in 1870, permanently located at Darlington, where the Chisholm trail crossed the North Canadian river.⁷

Since the Indians were now to be confined to reservations, it now became obligatory for the Federal government to furnish them with food especially during the winter season.⁸ Many times these rations were of

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Dr. J. L. Day is the present superintendent of the Western State Hospital at Supply, Oklahoma, 1940.

7

John Murphy, "Reminiscences of the Washita Campaign and the Darlington Indian Agency," Chronicles of Oklahoma, I, p. 269.

8

Report of Wm. W. Belknap, Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1869, I, p. 5.

poor quality and were distributed at unsuitable periods of the year. Mr. R. M. Wright of Dodge City, Kansas, who with his partner Mr. Anthony were working a hay contract near Camp Supply, describes such an issue in the following words:

It was issuing day to the Indians; I think the first time that live beef was ever distributed to them. Several hundred big wild Texas steers were turned over to them, but the Indians didn't care for the meat; they could always get plenty of buffalo, which they infinitely preferred but they took great delight in the sport of killing them after their manner of hunting buffalo. They ran the frightened creatures on horseback, lanced them with their spears, and shot them full of arrows, until the last one was dead. The whole trail was strewn with dead steers, though scarcely one of them was touched for food. Occasionally, I would notice one whose skin was covered with pretty white spots, and this fact having struck the savage fancy, they had peeled off the most beautiful of them to make quivers for their arrows.⁹

Throughout these early years, the troops were concerned chiefly in watching the movements of the Indian tribes, to the south. Every effort was made to keep them on their reservations. General Pope, in his report of 1870, stated that "there has been little trouble with the Indians during this season . . . these Indians have been fed and furnished with nearly everything they have asked for."¹⁰

Camp Supply was garrisoned at that time by two companies of the Sixth Infantry, two companies of the Third Infantry and four troops of the Tenth Cavalry.¹¹ A very serious obstacle confronted the troops

9

R. M. Wright, "Address before the Kansas State Historical Society," January 15, 1901, Kansas Historical Collections, VII, p. 71.

10

Report of General Jno. Pope, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1870, I, p. 6.

11

Loc. cit.

in maintaining order. The regulations of the Indian Bureau stated that the troops could not enter the reservation in pursuit of the Indians. General Pope reported that it had become customary for the Indians to organize and carry out a raid and when danger of pursuit was eminent, rush back to the reservation.¹² The commanders of the various military posts received much criticism from the public for the conduct of the Indians and it can readily be understood how their hands were tied.¹³

It is quite apparent that the military authorities were far too optimistic concerning the reservation system. General Pope, in his October report of 1871, remarked that, "the danger from these tribes may be considered substantially at an end."¹⁴ Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. Davidson, commanding Camp Supply, proved very capable in forestalling any hostile action of the Cheyennes, Arapahoes and Kiowas who ranged in the country around the post during the year. He was highly commended by General Pope for his successful supervision of the area.¹⁵

Notwithstanding the fact that the Indians were quite peaceful during this period, it was necessary that the military be constantly on the alert to prevent minor depredations and murders. In March, 1873,

12

Ibid., p. 8.

13

Ibid., p. 9.

14

Report of General Pope, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1871, I, p. 34.

15

Ibid., p. 44.

three surveyors were murdered on the Cimarron by a party of Cheyennes. In the late fall, a party of some two hundred Cheyennes left their reservation and passing far to the west of the military posts went as far north as the Kansas Pacific railroad at Riverbend, Colorado.

17

They killed a few cattle and stole some cooking utensils.

By March, 1874, the depredations became more numerous. Several persons were killed along Medicine Lodge Creek. A small detachment under Major Compton, Sixth Cavalry, returning north from Camp Supply was attacked but the Indians were soon dispersed. General Pope was of the opinion that the difficulties were caused by white traders at Adobe Walls, who had been secretly selling the Indians whisky, arms

18

and ammunition.

Other serious depredations occurred. The agent at Darlington was compelled to abandon his post and many lives were lost in the vicinity of the agency. A determined attack was made on the traders at Adobe Walls but after several days fighting, the Indians were

19

repulsed.

In the meantime, the military had urgently requested permission to enter the reservations and punish the marauders. This authority

16

Report of General Pope, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1873, I, p. 42.

17

Loc. cit.

18

Report of General Pope, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1874, I, p. 29.

19

Report of Lieutenant-General Sherman, House Executive Document, 1874, I, p. 26.

was received on the 21st of July, 1874, and soon an expedition was in the field under the command of Colonel N. A. Miles. He organized his campaign and proceeded southward from Camp Supply. Major W. R. Price moved down the Canadian from Forts Bascom and Union to join Miles near the Antelope Hills on the Washita. Colonel Miles encountered the Indians on the Washita and after a series of running fights, drove them out across the Red River on to the Staked Plains.

He was then forced to return to the Washita for supplies which were to be conveyed from Camp Supply by Captain Lyman and Lieutenant Lewis with a small train-guard of about sixty men. This train was attacked before reaching the Washita. Their plight is well described in the following letter from Captain Lyman to Lieutenant-Colonel W. H. Lewis, the commanding officer at Camp Supply.

20

In the field, near Washita River
3 O'clock P.M. Sept. 10, 1874

Sir:

I have the honor to report that I am corralled by Comanches two miles north of the Washita, on General Miles' trail. We have been engaged since yesterday morning having moved since the first firing about twelve miles. I consider it injudicious to attempt to proceed farther, in view of the importance of my train and the broken ground ahead. It was nearly stampeded yesterday. Communication with General Miles is closed. My scout very properly will not return.

Lieutenant Lewis is dangerously wounded through the knee, and I think will die if he has no medical assistance. The assistant wagoner, McCoy, is mortally wounded. I fear Sergeant De Armon, Company I, Fifth Infantry, is killed. A dozen mules are disabled.

I think I may properly ask quick aid, especially for Lieutenant Lewis, a most valuable officer. I have only a small pool of rain-water for the men, which will dry up today.

I estimate the Indians vaguely at several hundred (as Lieutenant Baldwin did,) whom we have punished somewhat. Scout Marshall, who left Camp Supply, I am told, has not reached me.

20

Report of General Pope, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1874, I, p. 86.

I have but twelve mounted men. West made a pretty charge with them yesterday.

Very respectfully,
your obedient servant,

To the
Commanding Officer,
Camp Supply.

W. Lyman
Captain Fifth Infantry,
Commanding Train-Guard

Lieutenant-Colonel Lewis immediately responded to the request of Captain Lyman and ordered out all the available men at the post. The following letter in which he made his report to the Department of Missouri demonstrates the ready response.

Hdqrs. Camp Supply, Ind., T.,
September 12, 1874

Sir:

At 8:30 A.M. this morning a courier from Captain Lyman, Fifth Infantry, who was in charge of Colonel Miles' supply-train, reached me, bringing a letter from him stating that he was "corralled" by a strong force of Comanche Indians in the vicinity of the Washita River, and asking for assistance. I got together all the mounted men at this post, from the cavalry and scouts, and started to his relief at 12 M.

The command sent consists of one lieutenant and acting assistant surgeon, and fifty-one soldiers and scouts, and seven quartermaster's employees, making a total of fifty-eight armed men in the party. I should have sent a larger force had it been possible to mount it, but to get this together required that all the serviceable horses, both from the cavalry and Quartermaster's Department, should be used,

I understand, unofficially, that Captain Lyman's command consisted of two officers and thirty-six infantry, and one officer and twenty cavalry, a total of fifty-six enlisted men. He had, besides, thirty-six quartermaster's teamsters, ten of these being armed. This would make his total of armed men sixty-six.

I have intrusted the officer in charge of my party to reach him as soon as possible, and, if necessary, to accompany him to Colonel Miles' command. Owing to this delay, the expedition will be out of rations before Lyman's train reaches it, and I presume that Lyman's command will meet Colonel Miles before reaching the Red River.

I send enclosed with this a copy of Lyman's note which will give you the extent of his casualties at the time of his writing. I am somewhat short of men here and in order to do the ordinary guard-duty and labor of the post have been

21.

Loc. cit.

compelled to order in a small guard that I have heretofore furnished to the hay-contractors at their hay-field. The infantry companies are small, and taking out the guard at the mail-station and the mail-escort, a small number of men is left for duty.

The scout "Marshall" referred to by Captain Lyman, is all right, having started with the command today.

Very respectfully,
your obedient servant,

To Asst. Adj-Gen.
Dept. of the Mo.
Ft. Leavenworth, Kans.

W. H. Lewis
Lieutenant-Colonel Nineteenth
U. S. Infantry Commanding

General Sheridan did not agree with General Pope concerning the causes of the outbreaks. He expressed his conception of the difficulties in the following words:

I attribute it to the immunity with which these tribes have been treated in all their raids into Texas for the past three years. Their reservations have furnished them supplies with which to make the raids, and sheltered them from pursuit when they returned with their scalps and plunder . . . This outbreak does not look to me as being originated by the action of bad white men, or the sale of whisky to Indians by the traders. It is the result of the restless nature of the Indian, who has no profession but arms and naturally seeks for war and plunder when the grazing gets high enough to feed the ponies.²²

From July 21, 1874, until February 12, 1875, the Indians were kept continually on the move. The troops were well supplied and kept the field. The Cheyennes under Stone Calf surrendered themselves in March, 1875, the Kiowas and Comanches went into Fort Sill and in June the Quahade Comanches surrendered to Colonel Mackenzie. Following an extended questioning of the leaders of the various tribes, about seventy-²³ five Indian prisoners were sent to Saint Augustine, Florida.

22

Report of General Sheridan, Division of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1874, I, p. 26.

23.

Report of General Pope, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1875, I, p. 73.

It should be noted that the Cheyenne prisoners who were taken to Florida were returned to the agency in the spring of 1878, with the exception of a few of the younger men who wished to remain there and attend school.²⁴

Following this series of outbreaks, the Indians again settled down on their respective reservations and the troops at Camp Supply again returned to their routine work. They were, however, called upon to perform numerous duties. General Sheridan outlined the work to be performed in his report of 1874. The military were to protect the frontiers from the depredations of Indians, to assist the Department of the Interior in maintaining order on reservations, to explore and survey unknown territory, to aid civil authorities in ourlying districts, to escort National Boundary, State and Territory surveying parties²⁵ and to protect the railways of the west.

24

C. E. Campbell, "Down among the Red-Men," Kansas State Historical Society, 1928, XVII, p. 674.

25

Report of Lieutenant-General Sheridan, Division of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1874, I, p. 23.

CHAPTER IV

THE LATER YEARS

It would seem that, following the chastisement given them in 1874-75 and the subsequent imprisonment of their leaders, that the Indians might settle down and endeavor to make the best of an undesirable situation. There was some feeling that it might be possible to abandon Camp Supply in the not too far distant future. Such anticipations were soon foreshadowed by the development of new difficulties and before many years Camp Supply became Fort Supply and a large reservation was set aside for its use.

Even when there were no disturbances in the immediate vicinity of the post, the troops might be called to duty in another section of the department. General Sherman, in his November report to the Secretary of War, in 1876, stated that the Fourth Cavalry from Fort Sill, Camp Supply, Fort Dodge and Fort Elliott were withdrawn to assist in suppressing the uprising in the northern plains region, in which General Custer and his men lost their lives at the Battle of the Little Bighorn.¹

One new source of friction originated as a result of the effort to place the Northern Cheyennes on the reservation with the Southern Cheyennes to the south of Camp Supply. General Pope reported the arrival of "about a thousand northern Cheyennes" in 1877. There was some dissension due to insufficient rations. Both the military and the agent endeavored to interest the Indians in sheep-raising but with little success. Cattle-raising was then introduced and the results

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Report of General Sherman to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1876, I, p. 35.

2
 were more satisfactory. It is interesting to note, that by the year 1877, the importance of maintaining military posts in the Kansas area was greatly diminished. General Pope stated that "The only important posts. . . are . . . Forts Sill, Reno, Elliott, and Camp Supply."³

Many of the northern Cheyennes were displeased with their new location. The climate did not agree with them. They had been given arms, ammunition and horses in the Department of the Platte and now there was an effort to take these from them. Finally, the northern Cheyennes ran away to the north and the Cavalry at Camp Supply and Fort Reno were sent in pursuit but after several skirmishes gave up the chase.⁴ General Pope urged that the Indians must be completely disarmed and dismounted and fully fed.⁵

There now developed another new responsibility of the military. Numerous outlaws and horse thieves had been taking refuge in the Indian territory. These were now greatly increased in numbers and the men at Camp Supply were called upon to hunt them out. In addition to this problem, another of even greater consequence, developed in the spring of 1879. A group of white people under a man by the name of Carpenter, organized for the purpose of occupying and settling in the

²
 Report of General Pope, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1877, I, p. 59.

³
Loc. cit.

⁴
 Report of General Pope, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1878, I, p. 39.

⁵
Ibid., p. 40.

territory and forces were called out to protect the Indian lands
 from the invasion of white settlers.⁶

Although the need for military posts in western Kansas had very greatly diminished, their importance in the Indian territory became greater than ever. General Pope urgently requested the establishment of a cantonment on the North Canadian river between Fort Supply and Fort Reno and asked an appropriation of \$50,000.00 for this purpose.⁷ In the report of the Quartermaster-General for the year 1879, \$4,600.00 was authorized for shelter at this canton-⁸ ment. During the year following the establishment of this cantonment, there were 192 men stationed there under Lieutenant Colonel⁹ R. I. Dodge. At the same time there were 227 men at Fort Supply.¹⁰

On the 12th of February, 1880, the President of the United States issued a proclamation forbidding the intrusion of whites into the Indian territory and thereafter until the opening of Oklahoma in 1889, the troops from Fort Supply were called constantly to¹¹ police the northern boundary.

6

Report of General Pope, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1879, I, p. 79.

7

Loc. cit.

8

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1879, I, p. 79.

9

Report of the Adjutant-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1880, I, p. 10.

10

Loc. cit.

11

Report of General Pope, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1880, I, p. 38.

The dissatisfaction among the remaining northern Cheyennes and the unusual amount of sickness eventually aroused the military commanders to urge that they be allowed to return to their former home in the north and by the fall of 1883, this transfer had been completed.¹²

The troops were called out from Fort Supply to protect the rights of the Indians on several occasions in 1882. Large herds of cattle were being driven through from Texas. Some of the owners paid a herd tax while others paid nothing. This mixed condition of affairs made it necessary to call out the military to quell the difficulties.¹³

For some reason, the importance of the new cantonment between Fort Supply and Fort Reno was not as great as was anticipated and by 1882, the post had been abandoned and was turned over to the Indian Bureau to be used as a school.¹⁴

By 1882, most of the wild game had disappeared from the reservations and trouble resulted on account of the short rations distributed by the government. More and more cattle were being driven through the Indian lands. In addition, cattlemen from Kansas and even St. Louis and Chicago, were not introducing herds to

12

Report of General Pope, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1883, I, p. 130.

13

Report of Lieutenant-General Sheridan to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1882, I, p. 79.

14

Loc. cit.

pasture, offering the Indians live beef in payment for the leases. Permission to do this had been refused by the Indian Bureau but General Pope reported that "The herds were nevertheless there, and unless the military forces are converted into herders of cattle, it is not practicable to keep them out."¹⁵

General Pope also reported that the "Notorious Captain Payne" had made another attempt to settle in Oklahoma but had been arrested and taken to Fort Reno and later to Fort Smith for trial.¹⁶

The reservation for Fort Supply was declared by the President of the United States on April 18, 1882, and was later enlarged by Executive Order on January 17, 1883. In the annual report of the Department of the Interior of 1899, it was described in the following words:

Fort Supply, situated in Woodward County. Embraces all of T. 24 N., R. 22W., the S. $\frac{1}{2}$ of T. 25 N., R. 22 W., and the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of T. 25 N., R. 21 W. Established by Executive Order of April 18, 1882. Enlarged by Executive Order of January 17, 1883. Relinquished, with improvements, for disposal under act of July 5, 1884, by authority of Executive Order of November 5, 1894. Surveyed. Area 39,356.63 acres. Appraised. Act February 8, 1899 (30 Stat. L., 822) permits use of buildings, and so much land as is necessary, by Territory for insane asylum.¹⁷

15

Report of General Pope, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1882, I, p. 97

16

Loc. cit.

17

Annual report of the Department of the Interior, 1899, p. 158.

General Pope reported in 1883, that Forts Reno, Sill, Supply and
18
Elliott would need to be maintained for some years to come.

Captain Payne continued to be very active and on August 7, 1884 was
arrested by the military again, taken to Fort Smith where he was
later released and by October was again making an attempt to enter
19
Oklahoma. ✓

In the meantime, many of the Cheyenne Indians had become very
displeased concerning the occupation of their reservation by herds of
cattle. The agent at Darlington, Jno. D. Miles, had gone so far as
to secure permission from some members of the tribes to lease their
lands to cattlemen. A total of 3,117,880 acres were leased to E.
Fenlon, W. E. Malaley, H. B. Denman, J. S. Morrison, L. M. Briggs,
A. G. Evans and R. D. Hunter at two cents per acre making a total of
20
\$62,357.60.

In a letter dated July 18, 1883, Colonel J. H. Potter, commanding
Fort Supply, states that a party of Cheyenne Indians arrived at the
post and through the guide and interpreter, Amos Chapman, requested
permission to make some statements regarding their affairs. Colonel
Potter refused the request at first but after two or three days had
passed, he eventually received them in his office. A few minutes after
they had left, Colonel Potter received a telegram from agent Miles

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Report of General Pope, Department of Missouri, House
Executive Document, 1883, I, p. 130.

19

Report of Brigadier-General C. C. Augur, Department of Missouri,
House Executive Document, 1884, I, p. 118.

20

Senate Executive Document, No. 54, 1883-84, p. 92.

who was at Lawrence, Kansas. Miles had learned that the Indians were intent on leaving the reservation and asked Colonel Potter to arrest them. The commanding officer read this message to the Indians who then agreed to return to the reservation on the 17th. Colonel Potter then reported the entire affair to the Department of Missouri and included the statements made by the various Indian chiefs present.²¹

The feelings of this particular group of Indians were expressed in the following words:

"Little Robe" said: I have come here to know why they (the parties alleged to have improperly leased the land) took this land. I have done nothing to make them do so; am getting old, and was present when the treaty was made, and now they have taken the land that was given us away. By the treaty the land belonged to us (meaning the Southern Cheyennes). The agent has come to us. Bob Bent, George Bent, and Ben Clark, all have come with money to give up the land to be leased for ten years. The half-breeds, John Parsell, Jack Fitzpartick and Mary Keith, have come. I live on the Washita; have a place so fixed up that in a few years I shall be able to support myself, and now these white men the leasers of the lands have come upon the land. The agent told me that it was my land to settle on. I have been to him time and again to know what right he had to give this land away; have never taken any money or agreed to lease it away.

Stone Calf said: I have complained to the agent, but he would say nothing and he gave us no satisfaction and since then I have not gone back to him. He, the agent, offered us money for our land, but we would not take it. The agent said if we did not take the money we would get no rations, and I have not been back to him since and have not received rations.²²

The dispute became very serious and General Sheridan was ordered to investigate the situation. He arrived at Fort Reno on July 15, 1885, and after interviewing many of the Indians who had agreed to the leases, he concluded that practically all of these were sick of their bargain.²³

²¹

Ibid., p. 115.

²²

Senate Executive Document, No. 54, 1883-84, p. 115.

²³

Report of General Sheridan to the President of the United States, House Executive Document, 1885, I, p. 66.

While General Sheridan was engaged in making the investigation, an order was issued by the President cancelling the leases and ordering the cattle and fences removed entirely from the reservations.

Immediately, the Indians became more peaceful and the crisis passed. 24

On December 26, 1884 a telegraphic report from Fort Reno stated that "225 intruders, armed with shot-guns and Winchester rifles, had effected their entrance into Oklahoma." Colonel Hatch, who was in command of the area desired by these white people, called for more troops. These were furnished from Forts Elliott, Riley and Supply. 25

The Oklahoma country proved a constant temptation to the adventurous population of the frontier thereby requiring constant alertness on the part of the military to prevent their intrusion. A permanent camp was established about sixteen miles south of Arkansas City, Kansas, and was known as Camp Martin. 26

The report of General W. Merritt, dated September 12, 1888, stated that the cattle traffic with the north was immense requiring the maintenance of Forts Supply, Reno and Sill and possibly Elliott. 27

24

Report of General Sheridan to the President of the United States, House Executive Document, 1885, I, p. 66.

25

Report of Brigadier-General Nelson A. Miles, Department of the Missouri, House Executive Document, 1885.

26

Report of Brigadier-General W. Merritt, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1887, I, p. 149.

27

Report of General Merritt, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1888, I, p. 163.

When the Oklahoma country was finally opened to settlement in the spring of 1889, troops were sent from Fort Supply to assist in enforcing the regulations relative to the opening. General Merritt reported that the event proceeded very smoothly in so far as any friction was concerned. ²⁸ In the same report, he recommended that funds be obtained to improve Forts Sill, Supply and Elliott, however, it was decided that the time had arrived when the expenditure required to improve Fort Elliott was hardly justifiable and on October 14, ²⁹ 1890, it was relinquished to the Department of the Interior.

Gradually, the various duties and responsibilities of the military in the area were considerably reduced. The Indians had, as a whole, settled down on their reservations, the cattle drives had been greatly diminished by the extension of railroads and the Oklahoma country had been opened to settlement. The Cherokee Outlet, however, was under lease to the Cherokee Strip Livestock Association and in ³⁰ 1890, the troops were called upon to enforce regulations there. This country was opened to settlement in the fall of 1893. In 1894, General Nelson A. Miles reported the activity of the troops in the area in these words:

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Report of General Merritt, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1889, I, p. 164.

29

Report of the Quartermaster-General, House Executive Document, 1891, I, p. 524.

30

Report of General Merritt, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1890, I, p. 196.

As in previous years, the troops in the Indian and Oklahoma territory have been occupied in . . . removing trespassers from the public lands, in preserving order in the newly settled region, and in keeping peace between hostile factions of the semi-civilized Indian tribes . . . the troops stationed at Forts Reno, Sill and Supply were called on for the purpose of protecting the United States mails, guarding railroad bridges, and supporting the United States marshal in making arrests.³¹

Following the opening of the Cherokee Outlet, the importance of Fort Supply as a military post was greatly diminished and on November 5, 1894, the military reservation was relinquished to the Department of the Interior. There were ninety-two buildings, whose value was unknown, and a land area of 39,356.63 acres.³²

³¹

Report of General Miles, Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, 1894, I, p. 108.

³²

Land Office Reports, 1895, p. 111.

CHAPTER V

LIFE AT A FRONTIER FORT

Undoubtedly, the history of Fort Supply is typical of many such posts established in the plains region during the middle of the nineteenth century. As previously mentioned, the fort came into being as a result of an emergency campaign against certain Indian tribes of the plains region. Despite the fact that its establishment was to have been temporary, it was continued and improved from year to year throughout the twenty-six years of its existence.

During the years from 1868 to 1894, a considerable force of men were stationed at Fort Supply. The average number, according to the available reports of the Adjutant-General, was almost 300. The greatest number in any one year was in 1870 when there was a total of 638,¹ and the smallest number was recorded in 1876, when there were only eighty-six.² The unusual low figure recorded here was due to the withdrawal of troops to aid in the subjugation of the uprising in Wyoming in which General Custer and his men lost their lives.

As a rule, the commanding officer held the rank of Colonel or Lieutenant-Colonel although there were years when a Major or even a Captain commanded the Fort. Other officers included a medical officer, two to seven captains, three to eleven subalterns and in some years a post chaplain, regimental adjutant and regimental quartermaster.³

1

Report of the Adjutant-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1870, I, p. 68.

2

Report of the Adjutant-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1876, I, p. 42.

3

Reports of the Adjutant-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Documents, 1869-94.

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INDIAN COLLEGE

The least number of companies was three and the greatest was
many cases, there were divided equally between the infantry and
however, there were years when there were more infantrymen than
4
cavalrymen.

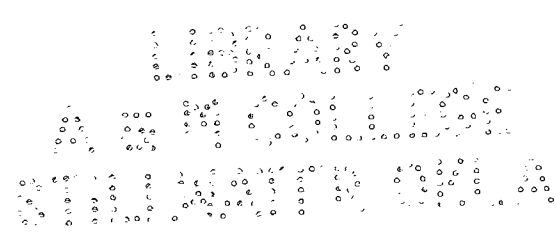
Because of the isolation, there were certain difficulties in
maintaining the proper morale among the men. One outstanding source
of complaint among the troops was the lack of something to do. There
were many days during the winter months when the weather was inclement
and on such days the usual drills could not be conducted. General
Merritt recommended in his report of 1888, that shelters be constructed
in which the drills could be held and these could also serve as a
gymnasium where some form of athletics could be enjoyed.

Drinking was quite common among the troops, although the sale
of intoxicating liquors was prohibited within the Indian territory.
In 1884, Inspector-General D. B. Sackett reported the situation in
these words:

At frontier posts, where the reservations are large, men
will go until they find a place from which to obtain liquor;
they get intoxicated upon the vilest of compounds, and the
result is often utter incapacity to return . . . In my opinion
the sale of liquors of such quality and quantity as post
commanders, guided by the post council, may dictate, would
be far better than prohibition.⁵

4
Loc cit.
5

Report of Inspector-General to the Secretary of War, House
Executive Document, 1884, I, p. 83



Desertion was, of course, quite common. There were many contributing factors to this condition of affairs. Captain Arthur Murray, acting Judge-Advocate of the Department of Missouri, reported in 1888 that:

Three-fifths of the desertions were from no apparent cause or from dissatisfaction with the service; also that about four-fifths occurred in the 1st and 2nd years of enlistment. From this it would seem that the majority of the deserters were men who enlisted without fully comprehending what a soldier's life is, and who, after giving it a trial and finding it unsatisfactory, concluded to desert rather than serve out a five years enlistment.⁶

Very little effort was made to retake these deserters. Out of 257⁷ desertions recorded in the report, only twenty-three were retaken.

Major J. J. Coppinger, acting assistant Inspector-General stated in his report of October 27, 1883, that there was "too much labor imposed upon the men." They worked alongside civilian laborers who received two or three dollars per day and with mechanics who received⁸ four. Major Coppinger also stated that the system of paying the men every two months was conducive to "thriftless lavishness" which encouraged drunkenness which in turn caused desertion.⁹

⁶

Report of Captain Arthur Murray, Acting Judge-Advocate of the Department of Missouri, House Executive Document, I, p. 289.

⁷

Loc. cit.

⁸

Report of Major J. J. Coppinger to the Inspector-General of the Army, House Executive Document, 1883, I, p. 101.

⁹

Loc. cit.

Attempts were made on various occasions to interest the enlisted men in attending school but with little success. After the men had completed their day's work, they had little inclination to attend classes. The instructors were generally soldiers who were always subject to military duty and when called out, school was temporarily dismissed. In 1880, an appropriation of \$2323.00 was set aside to construct a building at Fort Supply to be used as a chapel, school and reading room.¹⁰ In 1890, the attendance report of the twelve post schools in the entire department of Missouri only totaled 426 of which 316 were enlisted men, nine were children of officers, sixty were children of enlisted men and forty-one were children of civilians. The rooms, as a rule, were quite inadequate and the students furnished their own books.¹¹ In 1886, the Quartermaster-General reported an expenditure of \$276.00 for school-teachers at Fort Supply¹² and, in 1888, \$212.00.¹³

The health of the men stationed in the various posts in the plains region was apparently good. In his report of 1886, Surgeon-General JI H. Baxter reported that, in the Department of Missouri, "The only diseases showing any special prominence were the malarial fevers, diarrheal diseases, tonsillitis, and other digestive diseases."¹⁴

10

Report of A. McCook, Colonel and aide-de-camp in charge of Education in the Army, House Executive Document, 1880, I, p. 295.

11

Report of Chauncey McKeever on Education in the Army, House Executive Document, 1890, I, p. 61.

12

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1886, I, p. 360.

13

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1888, I, p. 329.

14

Report of the Surgeon-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1886, I, p. 599

It is quite apparent that, in their isolated position, a balanced diet was difficult to maintain. In 1873, an expenditure of \$4,824.00 was authorized for the construction of a hospital at Fort Supply¹⁵ and in the following years, additional appropriations were made for its repair and improvement. Additional reports of the Quartermaster-General show an expenditure of \$1780.00 in 1875, \$415.00 in 1876, \$766.00 in 1879, \$346.00 in 1886, and \$379.71 in 1888. In 1888, Assistant-Surgeon J. L. Powell reported the following concerning the water supply at the post:

For the past three years or more this supply has been obtained from driven wells situated in close proximity to the post corral and cavalry stables, and in the midst of various quartermaster's buildings, etc. These wells are pumped by an engine, which collects the water in a reservoir on a neighboring elevation, from which it is distributed in pipes throughout the garrison. It is hardly possible to conceive of a site within the garrison or its vicinity that would have been more unsuitable for the purpose for which it was selected. With a view to obtaining the safest and best water supply for all purposes in the garrison, I have made an examination into all the sources in the neighborhood, and have found a short creek, about one and a half miles distant, which yields the least amount of solid residue, of all the samples examined, and is, at the same time, less liable to pollution than any water in the neighborhood of the post. On evaporation this water yielded but 14 grains of solid residue to the gallon. The source consists of a number of springs, in close proximity to each other, which emerge from a bed of siliceous sand, and unite to form a bold and rapid stream that has never been known to go dry.¹⁶

The Quartermaster-General's report in 1890, stated that a water supply¹⁷ and sewer system was under construction at the post. The report

¹⁵

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1873, I, p. 115.

¹⁶

Report of the Surgeon-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1888, I, p. 727.

¹⁷

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1890, I, p. 852.

of 1891 records its completion, and refers to the source of water supply
 18
 as Water Cress Canon. An additional report in 1894 stated that the
 19
 capacity of the reservoir was 80,000 gallons.

The expense involved in maintaining Fort Supply was quite large, especially during those many years preceding the projection of the Southern Kansas Railroad into the Indian territory in 1885-86. The post was supplied by way of Fort Dodge and Dodge City, a distance of
 20
 approximately eighty-six miles. It was necessary to let contracts to private concerns to haul the freight. Comparatively little material was available in the immediate neighborhood of the fort, however, immense quantities of hay were cut in the valleys of Wolf and Beaver creeks. Firewood and some building logs were obtained along the streams in the area.

The report of the Quartermaster-General of 1836, gave a list of skilled workmen stationed there permanently. Included in the group were one forage-master at seventy-five dollars per month, one guide and interpreter at one hundred dollars, one farrier at fifty dollars, one blacksmith at sixty dollars, one engineer at sixty dollars, one saddler at sixty dollars, four teamsters at thirty dollars, and one
 21
 wheelwright at sixty dollars.

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Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1891, I, p. 548.

19

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1894, I, p. 337.

20

Report of the Adjutant-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1884, I, p. 75.

21

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1886, I, p. 394.

In addition to these men, it was customary to engage additional men for extra duty. These included school-teachers, mechanics and laborers. Immense quantities of coal and wood were hauled for fuel. A contract with J. M. Ferguson, dated June 6, 1888, showed a total of 360 cords of wood delivered at \$14.34 making a total of \$5,162.00.²² Another contract of the same date with Mr. Ferguson reported the delivery of 480 tons of coal at \$11.48 making a total of \$5,510.00.²³ Other contracts of a similar nature included one with S. C. Douglas, dated May 1, 1889, for 450 cords of wood at \$9.75 totaling \$4,287.50 and one with W. E. Thomas for 2,500,000 pounds of coal at thirty and four-fifths cents per hundred weight totaling \$7,700.00.²⁴ One other contract dated June 9, 1883, with W. M. D. Lee reported the delivery of 2,500 cords of wood at \$15.48 making a total of \$27,616.32.²⁵

The expense incurred in maintaining troops of cavalry at one of these frontier posts was another important financial item. The average cost of a cavalry horse in the Department of Missouri, in 1890, was \$133.24 and a mule \$158.32.²⁶ Once the animals were obtained, the

22

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1888, I, p. 556.

23

Loc. cit.

24

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1889, I, p. 619.

25

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1884, I, p. 595.

26

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1890, I, p. 742.

supplying of feed was a matter of great import. Although the hay was obtainable nearby, the expense was yet very high. \$5,107.00 was paid²⁷ Owen James Martin for 800 tons of prairie hay in 1889. In the same report \$3,090.00 was expended for oats, \$1,305.00 for bran and²⁸ \$4,600.00 for corn. In 1884, W. M. D. Lee delivered 1,008,000 lbs.²⁹ of hay at \$17.95 totaling \$8,077.50, and in 1886, \$6,546.50 was paid³⁰ for hay at Fort Supply.

Food and clothing for the men, and furnishings and equipments for the post were brought in from the outside. The report of 1886 showed that \$3,105.20 was paid M. F. Weiglien and W. F. Murphy for freight-³¹ ing between November 14, 1885, and June 30, 1886.

New buildings and the repair of previously constructed buildings was another important financial problem. In 1885, \$6,478.45 was³² expended for this purpose, in 1886, \$18,381.00,³³ in 1887,

27

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1890, I, p. 742.

28

Loc. cit.

29

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1884, I, p. 595.

30

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1886, I, p. 350.

31

Ibid., p. 407.

32

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1885, I, p. 480.

33

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1886, I, p. 423.

³⁴ \$769.00 , in 1888, ³⁵ \$3,271.00, in 1889, ³⁶ \$2,331.29, , and in 1890,
³⁷ \$1,270.57. These buildings included quarters for the officers and men,
 as well as bath-houses, a guard house, storehouses, shops, stables,
 corrals, library, schoolhouse and magazine. There were also
 quarters for married men.

It should be noted that some steam power was used ~~at~~ the post.
 In 1888, the Quartermaster-General reported the cost of a steam power
 plant for pumping water to be \$790.00 with a yearly cost of maintenance
 of \$1890.00. A steam plant was also secured for sawing wood at a
³⁸
 cost of \$498.50.

It is thus apparent from the foregoing reports that the maintenance
 of a frontier post was a great responsibility and perhaps the problem
 of keeping the men content was even more difficult. There was, of course,
 constant contact with other posts and the outside by means of the

³⁴

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War,
House Executive Document, 1887, I, p. 348.

³⁵

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War,
House Executive Document, 1888, I, p. 442.

³⁶

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War,
House Executive Document, 1889, I, p. 503.

³⁷

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War,
House Executive Document, 1890, I, p. 692.

³⁸

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War,
House Executive Document, 1888, I, p. 474.

telegraph. This was used for official purposes, however, and the majority of ordinary communication came by way of the stage from Dodge City. Captain Richard T. Jacob was ordered to Camp Supply in the fall of 1870 and stated that they received their mail once each week, however, soon after his arrival, he was sent to Fort Dodge to arrange to have the mail brought to Camp Supply twice each week. There were two relay stations between Fort Dodge and Camp Supply "where a few soldiers were posted with extra mule teams for the mail hack." In time, the stage made a daily trip to the post. In 1885, with the extension of the Southern Kansas Railway, a stage was inaugurated from Kiowa, Kansas, a distance of sixty-eight miles. Eventually, the Dodge City stage was discontinued and the Kiowa stage remained in operation a few months until the railroad reached Woodward. From this date, a stage was in operation between Woodward and Fort Supply until the abandonment of the post in 1893-94. It is interesting to note that the stage fare to Dodge City was \$10.00 per person.

39

Captain Richard T. Jacob, "Military Reminiscences," Chronicles of Oklahoma, March, 1924, II, p. 29.

40

Ibid., p. 30

41

Report of the Adjutant-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1882, I, p. 50.

42

Report of the Adjutant-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1885, I, p. 97.

43

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1894, I, p. 337.

44

Report of the Quartermaster-General to the Secretary of War, House Executive Document, 1885, I, p. 540.

Undoubtedly, life at Fort Supply was quite pleasant during the major portion of the year, especially for those who enjoyed the great outdoors. Wild game was plentiful throughout the years of its history. Mr. J. N. Innis of Supply, Oklahoma, was employed as a teamster in 1891 and remained there at the fort until the last mules and wagons were removed to Fort Sill on December 25, 1895. Mr. Innis stated that antelope and deer were plentiful and occasionally a black bear was killed. In addition, there were many flocks of wild turkeys especially in the canyons to the north and east. It was customary for the soldiers to take frequent hunting trips lasting as long as ten to fourteen days. The climate was very agreeable for the major part of the year. However, the blizzards which are common on the plains during the winter months, proved severe and very destructive in the seventies and eighties when there was very little protection afforded on the prairie. On January 13, 1885, the "Topeka Commonwealth" carried the following news item:

The Fort Supply stage which was due at Dodge City last Wednesday did not arrive until Saturday. The driver encountered the blizzard at a point about two miles south of Appleton, in Clark county. He struck a haystack, which gave food and partial shelter to his four horses. The driver took refuge in an abandoned dugout nearby, where he remained forty-eight hours without food, water or fire. The horses also had to go without water. Near this dugout lived an old lady and two daughters. They attempted on Wednesday night to walk to the residence of a son of the old lady, on an adjoining claim. The daughters perished in the snow. The mother succeeded in reaching the son's, more dead than alive.⁴⁶

45

J. N. Innis, Supply, Oklahoma, September 4, 1940.

46

Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, 1912,
XII, p. 117.

Another blizzard, of even greater intensity, occurred the following winter. O. P. Byers of Hutchinson, Kansas, wrote the following report for the Kansas State Historical Society:

Numerous stage routes were still in operation at that time. A number of stages became lost and wandered miles from their routes. A stage came into the military post at Camp Supply, Indian territory, with the driver sitting on the box frozen to death. The passengers inside knew nothing of the death of their driver until after they had alighted at their destination.⁴⁷

Thus, the record reveals a few of the interesting events that occurred in or near the old fort. In a personal interview with Dr. J. L. Day, the present superintendent of the hospital, it was learned that the land occupied by the Western State Hospital of Oklahoma now totals 3,760 acres and the state has an investment of well over \$1,500,000.00. There are thirty major buildings, housing 1500 patients and 135 employees.⁴⁸ In addition to the old log building, previously mentioned, the old headquarters building, the guard house, and five sets of officers quarters are yet in use.

47

O. P. Byers, "Personal recollections of the terrible Blizzard of 1886," Kansas State Historical Society, 1912, XII, p. 104.

48

Dr. J. L. Day, Supply, Oklahoma, August 31, 1940.

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