A History of Fort Larned

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A HISTORY OF FORT LARNED

being

A thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

by

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Fort Hays Kansas State College

1932

Approved:  

MAY 16 1932

R. L. Parker
A HISTORY OF FORT LARNED

Fort Larned Kansas
Sketched by Theodore R. Davis,
Artist with General Hancock's Expedition,
1867
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HISTORY OF FORT LARNED

Section I

Establishment and Buildings.

The establishment of forts and garrisons along the Old Santa Fe Trail, for the protection of emigrants and freighters to the new lands secured by the United States, as a consequence of the Mexican War, was commenced in the early fifties of the nineteenth century. These forts constituted a chain of defense from the Missouri River to the old town of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The first fort, after leaving Council Grove, was Fort Zarah (now Great Bend) on the Arkansas River. Next in order, to the west and on the line of the trail was Fort Larned. West of Fort Larned was Fort Dodge, about sixty miles distant. The next fort was Bent's Fort near Los Animas, Colorado. This fort was enlarged and the name changed to Fort Lyon.

The three forts, Zarah, Larned, and Dodge were almost within hail of each other; but it was a long gap between Dodge and Lyon.

The reason for protection along the trail lay in the fact that the territory in which these posts are located, was in the very heart of the buffalo country. The Indians came to this region to hunt and thus caused more trouble than was experienced by passing trains over this stretch than on any other of even greater length.
The trains were usually made up at Council Grove. The small outfits were detained there until a sufficient number had assembled to be capable of protecting themselves from Indian attacks during the journey. The greatest danger, however, lay between Walnut Creek and Mulberry Creek,—that is to say—between Fort Zarah and Fort Dodge. This section was the very heart of the buffalo range and as a consequence, the heart of the Indian country.

Wagon trains were constantly besieged on their journey between these two points and generally held there until relief arrived from either of the military posts named. In order to have sufficient strength for protection the government established these posts. Among them was Fort Larned.\(^1\)

Fort Larned was established by Major Henry W. Wessels on October 22, 1859. Major Wessels was sent out from Fort Riley with two companies of United States infantry. The post was named "Camp on the Pawnee Rock," and was about one half mile east of where the fort now stands. At this temporary post, which was moved in about a year, the buildings were of adobe brick, after the Mexican fashion, with a dirt roof.\(^2\)

The present fort is located about eight miles from the confluence of the Pawnee Fork with the Arkansas River. The fort is on the south bank of the Pawnee. Its exact location is Lati-

\(^1\) Lieut. C. E. Campbell's report.

\(^2\) Mrs. Wickwire's Report, in the Larned Chromoscope, Oct. 6, 1927.
tude 36° 10' North; Longitude 99° West, and is 1932 feet above sea level. In 1868 Hays City, Kansas, about fifty miles north, was the nearest town or settlement and telegraph station. 3.

The name of the post was changed, on Feb. 1, 1860, from "Camp on the Pawnee Fork" to Camp Alert. The name was changed again on June 1, 1860, to Fort Larned. This was by order of the military department as a compliment to Col. B. F. Larned, then paymaster-general of the United States army. 4.

The first stone building at the Fort was erected in 1862. This building was not a part of the fort but put up and used by Crane and Weichselbaum, sutlers. This is said to be the first stone building west of Fort Riley.

In 1865 the stone guard house was built by Colorado and Kansas troops. In 1866 the commissary building was erected and in 1867 and 1868 the buildings as they now stand were completed.

The stone to build the quarters at Fort Larned was quarried at a point about two miles down the creek from the fort. To protect the quarrymen from the Indians a guard of soldiers was furnished, and for protection of the sentinel a small stone shelter was constructed. One morning while a heavy mist was hanging over the valley, the Indians crawled up so close under cover of the mist that the sentinel had no time to fall back to the quarry. He gave the alarm, however, and from his cover did

3. Military Report, Department of the Missouri.

valiant service in drawing the attacking party back. A number
of teamsters were killed during the construction of the fort. 5

Lieut. C. E. Campbell, paymaster at Fort Larned said:
"At times when Indian hostilities were so constant and active
that scarce a day passed but that the stone quarters or the
train hauling the stone to the site of the fort was not at-
tacked by hostile Indians." 6

The buildings, remaining at the present time, are nine
in number. They are constructed with sand-stone which was
ashlar; that is the stone was placed in its place by skilled
stone masons. The walls run from fourteen inches to twenty-
two inches in thickness.

The lumber used in the buildings is pine. This material
was brought over-land from the Missouri River. It came from the
white pine forests of Michigan. Much of the lumber is still in
use and is in a perfect state of preservation. The timbers are
all in the "rough."

The one building that has been taken down was the guard
house. This building was thirty-nine feet square, but the cor-
ers were so constructed as to give it the appearance of an
eight-sided structure. It was a two-story building and the only
two-story structure on the reservation. It stood about eighty
feet east of the south-east corner of the parade ground.

5. Henry Booth's paper read at the centennial celebration at
Larned July 4, 1876.

The parade ground is about four hundred feet square. The turf is still covered with buffalo grass, having been kept in its natural state. In the exact center of the ground, the government erected a flag pole. Dirt was brought in to make the surface a little higher, and this small mound is visible at the present time, 1932. The pole was brought from Fort Leavenworth, and erected at a cost of about $1000.00. It was brought overland, by freight wagons. The sections were put together and the pole placed in its proper location. It was 110 feet high and about twenty-four inches in diameter at its base.
The building shown in this picture is perhaps the most important of all the fort buildings. Of the three buildings, used for officers quarters, this is the north one. These buildings all face the east and are built of sandstone. They are each one-story buildings, shingle roof, with a broad portico in front. The above building is 34 feet by 33 feet, and contains four sets of quarters. It has two halls, seven feet wide, each hall being common to two sets of quarters. The captains' quarters are in the ends, and consist of two rooms, each sixteen feet wide, fourteen one half feet deep, and twelve feet high. There was also a kitchen, nineteen feet by ten
feet, from which opens a servants' room. The two rooms communicate by folding doors, and the kitchen opens into the back or bedroom. Under the kitchen is a cellar which, within the past year (1870) has been deepened and floored, and has been thus transformed into a kitchen, leaving the kitchen proper for use as a dining-room. Across the hall, rooms for two lieutenants are available. These rooms do not have kitchens. 7

The reason for the importance of this building is that it is the exact center of the reservation. By general order no. 25, Head-quarters, Department of the Missouri, 1867, a reservation was laid out for Fort Larned, containing sixteen square miles. The northeast corner of the north officers quarters being the exact center. 8

7. Assistant Surgeon W. H. Forwood, United States Army and assistant Surgeon A. A. Woodhull, United States Army, report.
8. Henry Booth's paper read at the centennial celebration at Larned July 4, 1876.
This building is an exact duplicate of the building shown in picture no. I, and stands at the southwest corner of the parade ground. To the rear of each of these buildings is a well. However in 1870 these wells were not in use. Water is drawn in a wagon from the creek and poured into barrels standing in the yard. There are no water-closets or baths in either of these buildings. Each hall opens into a yard common to all the occupants of that side of the building. At the extreme rear of each yard is a small privy. 9

Picture No. III

This building was the quarters of the commanding officer. It has been remodeled somewhat by the present owner and did not appear as it does in this picture. The original building contained a hall, four rooms, each fourteen by sixteen feet, and a kitchen nineteen by ten feet. The servants' room was over the kitchen thus making the only two-story building at the post. 10.

10: Assistant Surgeon W. H. Forwood, United States army and assistant Surgeon A. A. Woodhull, United States army, report.
Picture No. IV

This picture is an eastward view of the officers quarters, taken from the northeast corner of the parade ground. The three buildings are seventy feet apart.
This building is the oldest of the buildings now standing. It is 155 feet long, 27 feet wide and 13 feet high. It was finished in 1866, and at this writing is in almost perfect condition. The shingle roof is the same today as it was when constructed. The interior of the building is in good condition. Much of the plaster is still on the walls and seems to be good for many years to come. This building was used by the commissary department for the storage of supplies. It is at the southeast corner of the parade ground and faces the north.
Picture No. VI

This is a close-up view of the old commissary building shown in No. V. The date over the door is just a reminder of the age of this structure. The picture also shows something of the size and shape of the stone used. As stated before, this is the same roof the building originally had and has had no repair to speak of.
Picture No. VII

We include this picture for two reasons. The first is to show the expert masonry employed in the construction of all these buildings. The second reason is to show the port-holes in the south side of the building. Most of these holes have been filled with brick but a few have been allowed to remain as constructed. The holes are three feet six inches apart and are along the entire length of the old commissary as well as in the building to the west. The holes are the shape of a wedge thus giving a wide range of vision across the level prairie to the south.
Picture No. VIII

This building is at the southwest corner of the parade ground and faces the north. It is 150 feet by 40 feet by 12 feet. Was completed in 1867 and used as the quarter-master building. The walls have been raised and a new roof put on by the present owners. Also the building has been joined to the one on the east making one large building 342 feet long.
Picture No. IX

This shows the two buildings on the south as they appear today. This view was taken from the northwest corner of the parade ground. The opening between the buildings was 29 feet 6 inches and has been closed with the same material as that found in the original structure.
This building was erected in 1868. It is 84 feet by 30 feet by 12 feet. At first it was used for a store house but later was used as the post hospital. It is located at the southeast corner of the parade ground and faces the west. While this building was under construction the post surgeon filed a request for a better building to use as a hospital. He said: "The hospital is an old adobe building erected in 1860. It contains four rooms, each 16 feet square by 8 feet high, two of which are used as wards, each containing four beds, giving a little over 500 cubic feet air space per bed. The building was improved in 1886 by a shingle roof, which leaks, and in 1887 by board floors in the wards and dispensary. One end fell in a storm and was replaced by weather-boarding. The ceiling is of old canvass."
following letter shows its condition in October 1868:

Sir: I have the honor to request that I may be furnished with one hospital in good order, for the 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 has already given away in one wall, and has been propped up. The steward has spent most of the past summer in patching it up to keep out the dust and rain, and still more exertion will be required this winter to keep out the snow. It has been frequently inspected by the post commander, and by other officers, and pronounced unfit for proper treatment of the sick, and this unfitness becomes still more apparent by comparison with the new and commodious stone buildings occupied as store-rooms and offices, and with the comfortable houses of the officers.

It was a 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. It is hoped that these just grounds of complaint may be speedily removed, by giving the matter prompt attention which its importance demands.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. H. Forwood, in charge,

Picture No. XI

This building is to the northeast of the parade ground and faces the west. It was used for more purposes than any other building at the post. The building is 84 feet by 30 feet by 12 feet. It was divided into two parts. The north half was used as a bakery. The old oven was there until a few years ago. In the south half was the blacksmith's, wheelwright's, and saddler's shops. In the south end of the building is the old forge. It is still in use. Most of the tools, anvils, etc., have been carried away by trophy hunters. The roof and chimney are still in fair condition despite nearly three quarters of a century of service.

From pictures No. X and No. XI, one will notice a sheet-iron building joining the old stone structures. This of course
has been added by the present owners. However, the fort cannon was in this opening, and was fired at sunrise and sunset.

Picture No. XII

The long building on the north is perhaps the most fascinating of all the buildings. The one shown above is the east one. It is 161 feet by 43 feet. It has been changed considerable to meet modern needs.
This building is in the northwest corner and faces the south. Both No. XII and No. XIII were used for officers quarters, each containing two sets of company quarters. Three of the four squad-rooms are 40 feet square by 10 feet high. Between the ceilings of these rooms and the roof, there is a free space containing (in each building) about 30,000 cubic feet, and communicating with the external air by a series of openings under the eaves on the south side; said openings having in each building the aggregate area of about thirty square feet. Each squad-room communicates with this loft by three rectangular openings in the middle line of the ceiling, having an aggregate area of 2625 square inches. In December 1869, the air space per man in these dormitories was from
381 to 457 cubic feet. In October, 1869, the post surgeon (Assistant Surgeon Woodhull United States Army) called the attention of the commanding officer to the fact that the ventilation of these barracks was imperfect, that at night the air was perceptibly vitiated, and recommended that ventilating shafts from the ceiling to the ridge of the roof be inserted; that openings be made in the ceilings on the south side for inlet of fresh air, having a sloping shelf underneath to protect the men sleeping below from the descending current; and that trap-doors covering the openings in the ceiling be removed from the control of the men. The commanding officer approved these recommendations but as the post quartermaster did not concur, nothing was done. Besides the dormitories the company quarters contained mess rooms, kitchen, orderly rooms and store room.

The two buildings have been joined together and make one impressive building. Picture No. XIV, taken from the southwest corner of the parade ground shows the building as it stands today.
Picture No. XV

This is a view of the rear of the soldiers' quarters. The two small stone buildings were the company kitchens, joined to the main building by a hall. Each kitchen had a basement under it which was used as a storage room for supplies.

In addition to the building there was a quartermaster's corral, made of timbers and brush, which would accommodate two hundred and fifty animals.
Section II

Officers and the Strength of the Garrison.

At one time (about 1870) there was a company of cavalry and four companies of infantry at the Fort. At no time was there a greater number of soldiers at the Fort except in 1867 when General Hancock's whole expedition was there. 12.

About 1863 Col. Jesse H. Leavenworth was appointed Indian agent. He made his headquarters at Fort Larned and carried on his work from there. Col. Leavenworth was not a member of the army, therefore he had to provide for his own living from the small pay he received for his labors as Indian agent. 13.

The first officers at the Fort were Maj. Henry W. Wessels, and Capt. Julius Hayden. Maj. Wessels and Capt. Hayden commanded companies G and H of the second infantry. F. W. Schauerte had his wife and one child with him. He was stationed there for over a year and used to keep people in his home since there were few quarters at that time. Capt. Hayden, with his wife, remained at the fort until the breaking out of the Civil War. 14.

Fort Larned was a part of the Division of the Missouri. The division was put under the command of Lieut. Gen. W. T. Sherman; after the close of the Civil War, 1865. Lieut. Gen. Sherman and Maj. Gen. W. S. Hancock made the following report on Indian affairs in 1867:

"General Hancock, in the department of the Missouri, has organized a special force of about fifteen hundred men, mostly of the Seventh Cavalry, (a new regiment) and some infantry drawn from the inner posts. He will proceed in person to the country of the Cheyennes and Kiowas, below the Arkansas, and will confer with them, to ascertain if they want to fight, in which case he will indulge them. If, however, they will assure him that they will remain at peace, subject to their treaties and agents, he will not disturb them, but impress on them the imprudence of assuming an insolent manner and tone when they visit our posts. Also he will impress on them that it is to their interest to keep their hunting parties and their young warriors off our mail lines and travel."

General Custer took Command of Fort Riley October 18, 1866, and was there until March 26, 1867. The following day, March 27, he left Fort Riley to join General Winfield S. Hancock, commander of the Department of the Missouri, in his expedition from Fort Harker against the Indians west of Fort Larned. Hancock reached Fort Harker April 1, 1867, and remained there until April 3, when the command moved to Fort Larned with about two thousand men of the following organizations:

Seventh United States Cavalry; under General Custer; Thirty-seventh United States Infantry under Capt. John Rziha; Battery B. Fourth United States Artillery under Capt. Parsons; and an Engineer Corps commanded by Lieut. Micha Brown. General J. W. Davidson accompanied the expedition as inspector general. Wild Bill was attached as a scout and a number of Delaware Indians accompanied the command in the capacity of
scouts, guides, hunters and interpreters. The troops were under the command of General A. J. Smith. They arrived at Fort Larned April 7, while General Custer arrived two days later.

Col. J. H. Leavenworth, the United States agent, at Fort Larned, for the Comanches, and Kiowas, and Col. W. E. Wynkoop, United States agent for the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and Apaches of the plains, joined General Hancock, and he (Hancock) acceded to Wynkoop's request to have a council with the Indians there. The council was to be held near the Fort on April 10, and the agents had asked, or rather requested, General Hancock to remain at the Fort with his command until after that date.

On the 9th of April a terrible snow storm came on while the troops were encamped waiting for the head men of the various tribes to arrive. Of the storm, General Custer, who arrived the same day, says: "It was our good fortune to be in camp rather than on the march; had it been otherwise, we could not well have escaped without loss of life. The cavalry horses suffered severely, and were only preserved by doubling their rations of oats, while to prevent their being frozen during the intensely cold night which followed, the guards were instructed to pass along the picket lines with a whip, and keep the horses moving constantly. The snow was eight inches deep."

The council, which was to take place the next day had to be postponed until the return of good weather. This delay gave the Indians time to display their diplomacy for which the Indian is peculiar. The main group of Indians were camped on the Pawnee Fork about thirty

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15 Kansas Historical Society Collection, vol. XVII, p. 211.
miles west of Fort Larned. They neither desired to move nearer to the troops nor have the troops approach nearer to them. On the morning of April 11, word came to the Fort that the Indians had started to visit the officers and agents but they had discovered a large herd of buffalo near their camp and had to take time to procure a supply of meat. General Hancock didn't like to take such an excuse but finally decided to wait another day. If no word came from the Indians the general was going to move his command to the vicinity of their village. Late in the evening of April 12, two chiefs, accompanied by a dozen warriors of the most troublesome Indians on the plains, came to the Fort and asked for a council with General Hancock. A large council fire was built in front of the general's quarters, and all the officers of his command assembled there. Before the chiefs could feel equal to the occasion and have time to collect their thoughts, they had to have something to eat. When finally ready, they advanced to the council-fire accompanied by their agents and an interpreter. When introduced to the officers the Indians seemed much struck by the flashy uniforms of the few artillery officers.

General Hancock began the conference by a speech in which he explained the purpose of his visit to their country and also told them what would be expected of them in the future. He informed them that he was not there to make war but to promote peace. The general finished by offering his regrets that more of the chiefs had not visited him and said that he would move, on the morrow, near their village and hold another council there.

Tall Bull, a fine warlike-looking chieftain, replied to General Hancock but his speech contained nothing important. He told of the scarcity of buffalo, his love for the white man, but finished by saying
that they, the chiefs, would have nothing new to say at the village.

Rightly concluding that the Indians did not intend to come to the Fort, as they had at first agreed, the general prepared to move nearer their village.

The second night out the army camped within a mile or two of the Indian village which was in a grove of trees. All plans had been made for a council the following day but that day never came as far as the council was concerned. The Indians had made hurried plans to leave their village and by day-break the following morning only two remained in the village. One was an old man that could not keep up with the tribes; the other was a little Indian girl about ten years of age. She was either left on purpose or had been over-looked during the exodus the night before.

The Indians after leaving their village, went up on the Smoky Hill, and committed the most horrible depredations upon the scattered settlers in that region. Upon this news General Hancock issued the following order:

"As punishment of the bad faith practised by the Cheyennes and Sioux who occupied the Indian village at this place, and as a chastisement for murders and depredations committed since the arrival of the command at this point, by the people of these tribes, the village recently occupied by them, which is not in our hands will be utterly destroyed."  

In carrying out the above order the village was destroyed by

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fire April 19, 1867.\(^ {17} \)

During the early days of Fort Larned's existence, the health and sanitation program was in the hands of Assistant Surgeon W. H. Forwood and Assistant Surgeon A. A. Woodhull, both connected with the United States Army. The general sanitary condition of the post was good. There were times when the water supply was low but for the most part there was very little sickness. The drainage of the post was entirely superficial and therefore not good. However, this was of less importance on account of the scanty rainfall.

The following table shows the number of men and the principal diseases of white troops at Fort Larned for the years 1868 and 1869:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>1868</th>
<th>1869</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of men (average)</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases of Malarial fever</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhea and dysentery</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonsillitis</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scurvy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venereal diseases</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rheumatism</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catarrhal affections</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of deaths</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The greatest casualty at Fort Larned occurred in 1866, when some thirty or forty soldiers died of cholera. Due to the nature of

\(^ {17} \) Harper's Weekly, June 8, 1867, p. 357.

\(^ {18} \) Assistant Surgeon W. H. Forwood, United States Army and Assistant Surgeon A. A. Woodhull, United States Army, report.
the disease these men were not buried in the post cemetery. However, they were later moved to the cemetery which was about one quarter of a mile northwest of the post.19.

Father Felix P. Swenberq, an Indian Missionary, and not directly connected with the army, deserves a place in the early history of the Fort. Father Swenberq was a Frenchman, and a Catholic but he gave his time freely to all the soldiers stationed at the post. He was a good writer, speaker, preacher, and conversationalist. In discharge of his duties in the sparsely settled and widely scattered Missions, he suffered frequently from hunger, thirst, and exposure to the weather. He had many narrow escapes from dangers that beset travelers in those distant days. Robert M. Wright, in his book, "Dodge City, the Cowboy Capital," pays a beautiful tribute to the pioneer priest. He says that he had a big heart, with charity for all and malice for none, no matter what the denomination. When the yellow fever broke out in the South, Father Swenberq with more of his confreres, set out for Tampa, Florida to minister to the affected. He soon contracted the terrible malady and died after an active and useful life.20.

Section III
Indian Troubles at Fort Larned.

There has been much romancing about the amount of fighting in the vicinity of Fort Larned. There really wasn't a great deal. There were some murders by the Indians between Ash Creek and Pawnee Rock; also there was very little fighting in the vicinity of Fort Larned. The Indians never were fool-hardy enough to attack the post. Troops were sent out toward Pawnee Rock but only occasionally; but there were very few casualties as a direct result of fighting.²¹

Of the few raids and massacres that occurred along the Santa Fe trail, perhaps the most famous occurred in the summer of 1864. In July of that year a government caravan, loaded with military stores for Fort Union in New Mexico, left Fort Leavenworth for the long and dangerous journey of more than seven hundred miles over the great plains, which at that time were infested by Indians to a degree almost without precedent in the annals of freight traffic. The train was owned by a Mr. H. C. Barret, a contractor with the quartermaster's department; but he declined to take the chances of the trip unless the government would lease the outfit in its entirety, or give him an indemnifying bond as assurance against any loss. The chief quartermaster executed the bond as demanded, and Barret hired his teamsters for the hazardous journey; but he found it difficult to induce men to go on the long journey.

Among those whom he persuaded to enter his employ was a mere

²¹Lieut. C. E. Campbell's article in The Tiller and Toiler, Larned, Kansas, Sept. 27, 1923.
boy, named McGhee, who had come to Leavenworth a few weeks before the train was to leave, seeking work of any description. His parents had died on their way to Kansas, and on his arrival at Westport Landing, (now Kansas City) the emigrant outfit that had extended to him shelter and protection in his utter loneliness was disbanded; so the youthful orphan was thrown on his own resources. At that time the Indians of the great plains, especially along the line of the Santa Fe Trail, were very hostile and continually harassing the freight caravans and stage-coaches of the overland route. Companies of men were enlisting and being mustered into the United States service to go out after the savages, and young McGhee volunteered with many others for the dangerous duty. The government needed men badly, but McGhee's youth militated against him and he was rejected by the mustering officer.

Mr. Barret, in hunting for teamsters to drive his caravan, came across McGhee, who, supposing that he was hiring as a government employee, accepted Mr. Barret's offer.

By the last of June the caravan was all ready, and on the morning of July 1, the wagons rolled out of Fort Leavenworth, escorted by a company of United States troops from the volunteers referred to. The caravan wound its way over the lonesome trail with nothing to relieve the monotony save a few skirmishes with the Indians; but no casualties occurred in these insignificant battles; the savages being afraid to venture too near on account of the presence of the military escort.

On the 18th of July the caravan arrived in the vicinity of Fort Larned. There it was supposed that the proximity of that military post would be a sufficient guarantee from any attack of the savages; so the
men of the train became careless, and as the day was exceedingly hot, they went into camp early in the afternoon; the escort remaining bivouaced about a mile in the rear of the train. 22.

The following account was given by Col. John F. Dodds, but who was known as far back as 1854 by hunters and soldiers around Fort Larned as "old man Dodds." In the summer of 1864 he was chief of scouts at Fort Larned and was sent out, by the commanding officer, on a reconnoitering party, and was the first man on the grounds after the massacre. Col. Dodds says: "The caravan had reached a point on Little Coon Creek and here the train was set upon by a band of Brule Sioux Indians under Chief Little Turtle, and one of the most horrible massacres in the history of Indian warfare followed. Sixty teamsters were killed and their camp looted and only one person remained to tell the story. Our party struck Little Turtle's trail and following it to the scene of the massacre, arriving about two hours after the red skins had completed their horrible work. Here was a scene to daunt the stoutest heart. Dead men were lying about in the short, brown grass, which was stained to a vivid scarlet by their flowing blood. The agonized positions of some of them told too well the torture which came before death. All had been scalped, and most had been mutilated in that nameless manner which seemed most of all to delight the cruel and merciless instincts of the pitiless savage.

Passing from one to another of all that company of men we found but two who were living. We came upon two boys who had been shockingly

wounded and mutilated, but were still alive. As tenderly as possible they were taken back to Fort Larned and placed in the care of Post Surgeon H. H. Clark. One of these boys died a few hours after reaching the hospital but the other lived and regained his strength." This boy was Robert McGhee, who, as late as the fall of 1895 was a resident of Carrollton, Mo. His is one of the most marvelous cases of recovery from injury ever recorded in surgical annals. In addition to being scalped, the boy was knifed, shot and hacked in a manner almost beyond belief.

After this event McGhee rose to the rank of major and became a government scout. For sixteen years he pursued that occupation, and it is but reasonable to presume that in some measure he wiped out the debt he owed the Indians.

He was with Major Reno and Major Burbank in their campaign against the Cheyennes, and his associates often said that to show McGhee an Indian was to arouse a man-eating tiger. But here is the thrilling story as told by young McGhee a few days after he recovered his speech at Fort Larned hospital. Strange as it may seem, the boy did not become totally unconscious during the torture which he endured and his story is as follows:

"I was taken alive by the Indians and first witnessed the torture inflicted upon my wounded and captive companions. I was then taken before Chief Little Turtle who concluded to kill me with his own hands. First he knocked me down with a spear handle, and shot me in the back with a pistol; then proceeded to scalp me by cutting the scalp loose in front and tearing back a piece about eight by ten inches. I was still
alive and piteously pleading with the cruel old chief when he thrust his spear into my body. He struck me twice on the head with his tomahawk. He then plunged the tomahawk into my breast cutting off a rib. He turned me over on my face and two arrows were shot through my body, pinning me to the ground where I laid in that torturous condition until Col. Dodds found me about two hours later, and brought me here to Fort Larned, and here I am alive and able to tell the marvelous story."23.

Isaac Harrison Marre of Mound City, Kansas, is one of the few survivors in Kansas of the old Indian wars in the state. Marre was just a "boy" when he entered the service of the government in the early 60's, and was stationed at Fort Larned. At that time Fort Larned was a formidable army camp.

Mr. Marre not only has the distinction of having served in the Indian campaigns, but he also has the distinction of having been the cause of a near Indian outbreak in the war, and the subject of long and somewhat exciting negotiations between the United States government and the Indian war councils.

He was not more than sixteen years old, and was placed on sentinel duty. In walking his post and carrying out his orders he shot and killed an Indian. The army was on its nerves at the time, because it was in the midst of a host of savages. In a communication written by Capt. A. W. Burton of the 6th Kansas, stationed at Fort Larned at the time, it is stated that from twenty to thirty thousand Indians were

23. The Tiller and Toiler, Larned, Kansas, May 9, 1913.
camped within a few miles of the Fort.

In the night Marrs, the young sentinel, heard a horseman coming toward the Fort. He had been instructed to keep diligent watch against any approach of the enemy. In a loud voice Marrs challenged the horseman, who came galloping on without response. Again Marrs challenged without receiving a response. "Halt!" challenged Marrs the third time, and when the wild rider gave no answer and did not stop, Marrs raised his rifle and shot. The horseman rolled from his mount, shot through the head. Marrs called Lieutenant Pellet, the officer of the day and told him that he had shot someone out there. Investigation proved that it was a Cheyenne Indian.

Col. Henry Leavenworth, in command of the Fort, exonerated Marrs, and called the chiefs and mighty men of all the tribes together and explained the matter to them. But they were not so easily satisfied. The parley was continued for several days, the Indians threatening to take to the war path in revenge. The garrison numbered only a small band of soldiers, compared with the enemy and the Indians felt they had all the advantage. They would accept neither explanation nor apology. Finally they agreed to peace on one condition: Marrs was to be turned over to the Cheyennes for punishment.

In his report of the incident Captain Burton, mentioned above, says: "Since writing the foregoing page I have been out to a council of the delegation of Cheyennes and officers of the garrison. The Cheyennes agree to settle the difficulty if Marrs is given up to them. I do wish we had a few more troops, so that we would not need to listen to the
numasters'. As it is, if I were in command I would let them know that we ask no favors from them. But let it come to what it will, not one hair of Marre's head shall be touched until they have killed every man in the garrison."

Marre was not delivered to the Indians, of course, but it was a period of anxiety for him, knowing that there were about twenty thousand Indians just outside the Fort waiting to welcome him to their arms for the purpose of showing him what they could do to a white man that had killed one of their tribe.

The Indians were deterred from making war and reconciled to denying themselves the pleasure of handling Marre upon the representation that the government was sending a big army to the relief of the Fort.

Mr. Marre enlisted from Bourbon county, but for many years he has lived at Wound City. He is now seventy-eight years old. He entered the army at the age of fifteen. Even at his present age he is very much of a lively citizen, taking an interest in the life of his home town. He is about the last man, indeed, that would be picked out as one who once came very near having caused a war between Uncle Sam and the Indian tribes of the west.24

The last trouble caused by the Indian was in the summer of 1871. A band of them made a surprise attack on Fort Larned and succeeded in driving off eighty-four head of horses and mules. The Indians were always eager for an opportunity to secure horses or mules. The army ani-

24. The Tiller and Tiller, Larned, Kansas, May 29, 1925.
males were driven off and claimed by the Indians as their own. 25.
Section IV
Miscellaneous Activities.

Comrade Smith of Larned, Kansas, can speak with authority on one phase of the soldiers' amusement program. Mr. Smith, being somewhat of a musician, was asked to come to the post and play for the dances. The dances were always free but the soldiers would "pass the hat" and raise funds to pay the musicians. Mr. Smith played the violin; in face he still plays the same one that he played in 1877 and 1878. He was assisted in his musical numbers by two other young men; Louis Reed played the guitar and George Hollenbeck played the double bass-viol.

Mr. Smith says that there were few people in the country in those days but all were invited and many of them came. The only women at the Fort were the wives of the officers.26.

Captain Henry Booth, who for many years owned and managed the sutlers store at the Fort, tells of the full dress dinner parties given at Fort Larned during the gala days when the inspecting officers would visit the post. He tells of one occasion when the officers were taken to Pawnee Rock for a sight seeing trip and were chased by the Indians. They were chased from Pawnee Rock to within sight of Fort Larned and only succeeded in getting away from the Indians by throwing out some articles of clothing. The Indians would always stop long enough to quarrel over who should have the spoils, then take up the trail in an effort to find more plunder.27.

Mr. C. E. Campbell, late of Hutchinson, Kansas, for many years

27. The Larned Campaign, Larned, Kansas, October 6, 1937.
quartermaster at Fort Larned, tells of the Fort life in the following report:

"The daily life at the garrison was drearily, monotonous, no distinction between the days of the week, except that on Sunday there was always a full dress inspection by the commander and a relief from the usual daily policing of grounds and quarters. Early morning reveille, guard mount at 9 A.M., occasional drills, another sunset parade, constituted the daily activities. Hunting buffalo, and in season wild fowls, grow tiresome in a short time, and the billiard and bar-room of the post traders offered the only alternation of interest; except when the mail day arrived. At first the mail came once a fortnight, but subsequent (sic) the trips were increased to twice a week. Long before the ambulance carrying the mail sacks from the nearest railroad point was due to appear on the distant ridge on the line of the horizon, glasses would be brought out to scan the trail over which it was expected. One or two hours would be spent in anxious watching, fearing that some accident had befallen the animals or the carriers. When at last its approach was unmistakably assured, a sigh of contented relief gave place to the previous forbodings and everyone at once proceeded to the traders store where distribution was made. Each to get his share of remembrances and news of the outside world."

Mrs. Ellen Campbell Fairchild of Hutchinson, Kansas, a daughter of Lieut. C. E. Campbell, says she can remember when all the officers and many of the men, owned a game chicken, and cock fights were a common

23 Lieut. C. E. Campbell's report.
thing at the Fort. Sunday was a big day for cock fights but they were a part of the program on other days as well.  

A newspaper was published in Fort Larned in 1865 called "The Plains." Its editors and staff being the officers and soldiers stationed there. In the first issue of the paper, dated Saturday, November 25, 1865, it tells of Kit Carson passing through Fort Larned on his way to New Mexico. Also it tells of the killing of buffalo and wolves by the men at the post.  

In the spring of 1881 the post commander conceived the idea of having a few of the soldiers try their luck at gardening. A plot of land, known as the island, was decided upon and the men went to work. This was perhaps the first agricultural effort west of Junction City. The plan was a failure due to the hot winds and grasshoppers. However, one of the men, Captain Head, succeeded in getting two beets to grow. He worked out a device to protect his "garden" from the wind and hoppers, and was rewarded for his efforts by being the only man to raise anything at all.  

As a result of the agricultural efforts of the men, the post commander made the following report:

"The surrounding country is a rolling prairie, with poor soil and not adapted to agriculture. To raise any kind of crops irrigation would be necessary, but nearly all vegetation is destroyed by the hot%

29. Mrs. Ellen Fairchild, Hutchinson, Kansas.  
30. The Larned Chronoscope, Larned, Kansas, October 6, 1927.  
31. Mrs. Ellen Fairchild, Hutchinson, Kansas.  
32. E. E. Frizzell, Owner of the Fort, Larned, Kansas.
winds in the summer. 33.

A rather unusual incident is told by Lieut. John Proctor Thompson who was stationed at Fort Larned.

Lieut. Thompson was officer of the day and late in the afternoon went to the guard house southeast of the parade ground. A little way beyond the guard house he saw a coyote. He was much surprised, for the coyotes and wolves never came close to the Fort, especially in daytime. He saw that the animal made no effort to run away so he called a few of the men and went to investigate. The investigation disproved the long established idea that coyotes never go mad. This one was mad, and made fight at the men but was so weak it could do very little damage. The account was written up and sent to the government military authorities as proof that coyotes do go mad.

Lieut. John Proctor Thompson is a half-brother of Edna Dean Proctor, the poetess, and was named for his mother’s first husband, John Proctor. 34.

R. H. Wright of Dodge City, Kansas, tells the following incident which shows something of the early life in and about Fort Larned. Mr. Wright’s party was traveling the Santa Fe Trail and had to abandon a big Concord coach on account of the muddy condition of the trail, and went on to the stage station with a light spring wagon. On the way they met a band of friendly Indians, under Little Raven, who were going to Fort Larned for supplies and who said they would haul the coach in.

33. Commander’s Report, Department of the Missouri, From the Library of Congress.

34. Mrs. Ellen Fairchild, Hutchinson, Kansas.
course the Indians didn't follow the trail, but struck across the country to the Pawnee Rock. After a long time had elapsed, Little Raven, chief of the Arapahoes, rode into the Fort and told the owners of the coach that he had left it twenty miles up the creek, and blessed if he could get it any farther, as he had pulled the tails out of nearly every one of his herd of ponies to get it as far as he did. Their method of hauling the coach was by tying it to the tails of their ponies.35.

Picture No. XVI

CHIEF LITTLE RAVEN, ARAPAHO INDIANS

Little Raven, Chief of the Arapahoes, was a friend of the whites. He was a very close friend of Mr. C. E. Campbell late of Hutchinson, Kansas. The above picture was taken from Harper's Weekly, June 8, 1887.

Picture XVII

Satanti, Principal Chief of the Kiowa Indians

Satanti was just the opposite of Little Raven. He was very cold in manner and one of the most cruel Indian chiefs on the plains. Nothing gave him more pleasure than to capture and punish the white man. General Hancock said of him that he was one of the most important characters he had as yet encountered. The above picture was taken by a member of General Hancock's army, while at Fort Larned in 1867. The coat he wears is a Major-General's, presented to him by General Hancock. The sash was given him by General Davidson.
The Larned Town Company was organized in the fall of 1871 with ex-Governor Samuel J. Crawford as its president, and in January of 1872 the directors of this company held their first meeting at the home of Captain Henry Booth at Fort Larned. At this meeting the present townsite of Larned was decided upon and arrangements were made for the movement of a frame building at the Fort to the new townsite. The house was drawn by horses and was floated across the creek.

The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad reached Larned July 20th, 1872. As a salute to the new railroad, troops from Fort Larned fired from the top of a near-by hill. 36.

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36. The Tiller and Toiler, Larned, Kansas, May 22, 1925.
Section V
Abandonment

The following is taken from General Pope's report dated October 3rd, 1879.

"Larned, Hays, and Lyon are no longer needed for military defense of the frontier, although the troops now occupying them are at times entirely necessary for this purpose--------One important and well-located point in Western Kansas only is necessary for the protection of that frontier, which, if well garrisoned by an effective force, would accomplish, and accomplish far better and more economically, the objects for which the four posts of Lyon, Wallace, Hays, and Larned were established."37.

The main body of troops was moved from Fort Larned to Fort Dodge in 1878. However, the post was not completely abandoned for four or five years. The last men there, who were connected with the army, were three in number. Lieut. Payne and two privates were kept at the post until it was disposed of. These men did nothing but live at the post and see that no great amount of damage was done.38.

On March 13, 1884, the section of the reservation on which the buildings are, was sold at auction to the highest bidder for "cash in hand." This section was purchased by the Pawnee Valley Stock Breeders Association with Mr. Sage and Mr. Jackson as the managers. Later

38. Lowry Webb, Larned, Kansas.
it passed into the hands of a Mr. Wilbur, with Mr. Pontius as manager. The remaining fifteen sections of the reservation were thrown open to pre-emption in lots of one hundred sixty acres to each man. 39.

The post cemetery was about a quarter of a mile northwest of the Fort. Of the cemetery Mr. C. E. Campbell says: "So far as I know, and I think I know, there were no Indians buried at the Fort cemetery across the creek northwest of the present group of buildings. The report that a large number of Indians were buried there is fiction. Indians generally took their dead away with them in their engagements. That was a point of honor, they rescued their dead; in the attempt to recover bodies many of them were sacrificed. In 1886 I was in charge of a party that exhumed these bodies and they were shipped to Leavenworth, Kansas, and buried in the national cemetery." 40.

There were sixty-eight of these bodies moved by Mr. Campbell's party. The graves were opened and the bones put in small pine boxes. The boxes were then shipped to Leavenworth and buried there at a cost of $16.25 per body. 41.

39* E. E. Frizell, owner of the Fort, Larned, Kansas.

40* Lieut. C. E. Campbell's article in The Tiller and Toiler, Larned, Kansas, Sept. 27, 1923.

41* Mrs. Ellen Fairchild, Hutchinson, Kansas.
Picture No. XVIII

The marker shown in this picture stands at the northwest corner of the old parade ground. It has the following inscription:

"Fort Larned established by Major Henry W. Wessells in 1859. Is in latitude 30 deg. 10 min. north longitude 22 deg. west and is 1932 feet above sea level."
Picture No. XIX

This is a picture of the marker at the southwest corner of the old parade ground. It is in two parts. The upper part is a Santa Fe Trail marker with the following inscription:

"Santa Fe Trail 1822-1872 marked by the Daughters of the American Revolution and the State of Kansas 1906."

The lower section of the marker is a brief history of the Fort with the following inscription:

June 29, 1902, by E. E. Frizell, and Fort Larned Ranch established."

At the present time the old Fort is a first rate stock ranch and alfalfa farm comprising several thousand acres. It is owned and operated by Senator E. E. Frizell and Sons of Larned. The buildings are in an excellent state of preservation and the old Fort will remain as a landmark for many years to come.

THE END
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Capt. Booth was post trader at Fort Larned for a number of years.

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Campbell, Lieut. C. E. Paper.

Lieut. Campbell was stationed at Fort Larned from 1868 to 1872. This article was written in long hand and is in the possession of Mr. Campbell's daughter, Mrs. Ellen Fairchild, Hutchinson, Kansas.


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Montgomery, Mrs. Frank C. Fort Wallace and its Relation to the Frontier.

(In Kansas State Historical Collections, vol. XVII, pp. 189-203.)

Page 277 contains an account of the abandonment of Fort Larned.

Page 211 gives information on Gen. Hancock's Expedition.

Page 249 tells of the last Indian troubles at Fort Larned.

The Tiller and Toiler, Larned, Kansas, May 9, 1913, and May 29, 1925.

Brief articles about Fort Larned.


No date given. Probably written in the 60's of the last century. Article gives definite facts about Fort Larned.


Page 563 tells of Mr. Weichselbaum as post trader at Fort Larned.

Page 568, Weichselbaum gives an account of Col. Leavenworth being at Fort Larned as Indian Agent.

Wickwire, Mrs., Report. (In Larned Chronoscope, Larned, Kansas, Oct. 6, 1927.)


Page 63 refers to Chief Little Raven.

Personal Interviews.

Fairchild, Mrs. Ellen, Hutchinson, Kansas.

Mrs. Fairchild's father was stationed at Fort Larned for a number of
years. Her brother, Malcolm Campbell, was one of the first white children born in Pawnee County. Mrs. Fairchild is very good authority.

Frizell, Z. Z., Larned, Kansas.

Mr. Frizell is State Senator and an early pioneer to Pawnee County. He is very much interested in the early history of Fort Larned, due to the fact that he is the present owner. (1932.)

Smith, Comrade, Larned, Kansas.

Mr. Smith has lived at Larned for about 55 years. He used to visit the Fort while the troops were there.

Webb, Lowry, Larned, Kansas.

Mr. Webb has lived in Pawnee County longer than any person now living. He was there several years before the troops were moved.