

THE MILITARY HISTORY OF FORT GRIFFIN: 1867-1881

THESIS

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Introduction

Often forgotten by historians of the Indian Wars, the Texas frontier was the scene of some of the most savage and brutal confrontations ever to occur between the Indians, and the white soldiers and settlers. Even with the return of Federal troops to Texas after the Civil War in 1865, it was not until the climatic Red River War in 1874-1875 that the Comanche and Kiowa were effectively neutralized as a threat to white expansion.

Though not as well known as forts located in the central and northern plains, the garrisons of Forts Griffin, Richardson and Concho played crucial roles in the pacification of the Comanche and Kiowa, and contributed significantly to the opening of the frontier for white settlement.

This study will focus on Fort Griffin, and its contributions to the taming of the Texas frontier. Established in the summer of 1867 and located directly below the reservations north of the Red River, the soldiers of Fort Griffin were engaged in an almost continuous series of battles with raiding Comanche and Kiowa warriors. In 1871 and 1872 Fort Griffin served as the rendezvous site for Colonel Ranald Mackenzie's expeditions into the Texas Panhandle. During the Red River War Fort Griffin would play its most pivotal role when it furnished troops and all supplies to the various columns.

Additionally, an examination of the Regular soldiers who manned the fort will also be undertaken. All too often our perception of the frontier soldier has been stereotyped by

to what type of man joined the army after the Civil War? What was his ethnic background and motivation for joining the army? What were his duties, what did he wear and eat? How was he paid and what did he do in his off time?

This study will also examine the relationship between the garrison and the town of Fort Griffin, known as the Flat, and its own important roll in Texas History.

By integrating a history of Fort Griffin with an accurate portrayal of the Regular soldier who manned the post, I hope to bring to light a unique and often neglected aspect of Texas History.

Chapter 1

Chaos on the Texas Frontier 1861-1865

Life on the frontier of Texas had always been a perilous existence for early settlers. Though besieged by droughts, floods, insects and disease, the most dreaded fear of all was an attack by Indians. The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 only added to this sense of dread. Federal outposts along the frontier which had kept the Comanche and Kiowa in check were abandoned, thus effectively ending any large scale organized resistance to Indian depredations. With the added burden of furnishing men and supplies to the Confederate army fighting in the east, state authorities could provide few resources for frontier protection. The resulting manpower shortage created by the war left the primary responsibility of defending the frontier against Indian attacks to small units of the Texas Rangers, thinly scattered Confederate outposts, and local volunteer militias.¹

Beginning in 1861, Comanche and Kiowa raiding parties from north of the Red River began to take advantage of the porous Texas frontier defenses and penetrate into the Clear Fork country (refer to map Figure 1). Initially drawn into the area by the movement of the buffalo, the Indian presence was encouraged by the withdrawal of Federal garrisons at the beginning of the war as well as the dwindling of the frontier population. The resulting vast areas of undisturbed range land for the southern buffalo herd and the added opportunity to steal cattle and horses from the essentially defenseless and wildly scattered ranches, prompted the renewed Indian presence. While initial encounters were

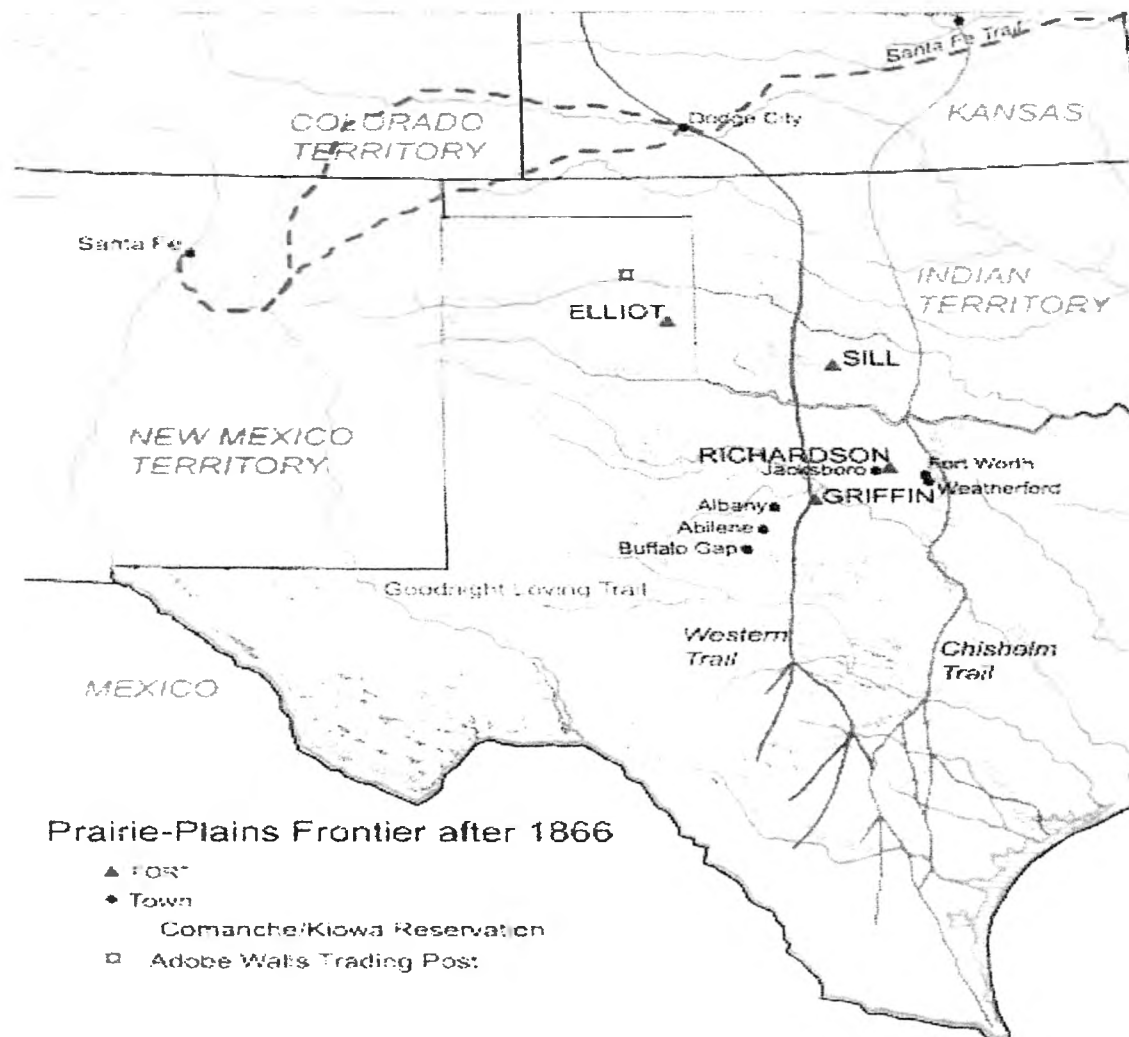


Figure 1

infrequent and casualties few, the nerves of the settlers were constantly set on edge by the mere threat of additional and possibly larger raids.²

As badly as the situation along the Texas frontier had deteriorated, it was to change dramatically for the worse in the fall of 1864. On October 13, Kiowa Chief Little Buffalo led upwards of five hundred Comanches and Kiowa warriors from north of the Red River into the Clear Fork country in a massive killing raid. His ambition was to drive out all white settlers along the frontier, land which the Indians regarded as their traditional hunting range. Alerted by Indian smoke signals, many of the settlers were able to seek shelter in the newly established but undermanned Confederate outpost of Fort Murrah. In the battle which followed, five soldiers were killed, and the remaining soldiers and civilians were driven back into the fort. With Fort Murrah effectively neutralized, the Indians turned their fury on the open settlements along Elm Creek. Many of the men were away from their homes on supply runs or herding cattle, while the local Ranger unit was simultaneously searching for these very Indians.³

Settlers caught in the open or surprised in their homes met gruesome deaths. From the safety of Fort Murrah settler Franz Peveler witnessed the death of his neighbors Isaac and Miles McCoy. At one home, Indians forced a woman to watch as her daughter was scalped and murdered. Another young woman in the same home was raped and scalped, while her baby was bashed against a wall. Many settlers survived only by hiding in caves or in wooded thickets along Elm Creek. Some homes endured attacks which lasted for hours. The ranch house of George Bragg, defended by five men and over twenty women and children, was besieged by dozens of Indians. They owed their survival to the fact that Bragg was well armed, and with the women loading their guns, the men were able to maintain a continuous barrage against the Indians. The siege was lifted only by the timely

arrival of several Rangers and neighboring settlers.⁴

The Indians, by now exhausted by the day long attacks, once again briefly besieged Fort Murrah before night fell. Observing the Indians from the safety of the fort, the settlers spent a very uneasy night anticipating a renewal of the battle the next day. Much to their relief, morning revealed that the Indians had retreated north of the Red River with their loot and captives. Temporarily freed from further attacks the settlers could ascertain the cost of the raid in lives and cattle. It was devastating, with twelve settlers killed and eight carried off as captives. Cattle losses were estimated between five and ten thousand head. Ranchers reported that from Young County to the Red River the area was completely stripped of cattle as well as hundreds of horses and mules. Nevertheless, for all the loss of life and possessions, the Indians failed in their objective of driving the settlers away from the frontier. While occasional raids would continue to plague the settlers for years, never again would murder and pillage of that magnitude take place again.⁵

The Elm Creek raid provoked a radical change in living conditions along the frontier. Demoralized by the prospect of massive numbers of Indians descending upon them at any moment, many settlers moved away from the frontier to older settlements back east. The vast majority were determined to stay and protect their homes and livelihood. In an effort to pool their manpower resources for defense against further Indian attacks, many of the settlers decided to “fort up” for protection. Under this plan, several families would build their homes close together for mutual defense. The result was that various makeshift “forts” sprang up along the Texas frontier. In Young County, along with Fort Murrah, Fort Clark was established along the Clear Fork of the Brazos. Fort Mugginsville was built on Hubbard Creek in Shackelford County while Forts Picketville, Owl Head and

Davis were located in Stephens County.⁶

The “forts” of the settlers came in various shapes and sizes. While Fort Clark consisted of homes lining the banks of the Brazos River for two hundred yards, Fort Picketville resembled a small town with homes built around a school. The largest and best designed was Fort Davis, located on the east bank of the Clear Fork of the Brazos. Named after Confederate President Jefferson Davis, the fort consisted of 125 individuals. Fort Davis resident Sam Newcomb, who kept a diary recording daily life at the fort, described the post as occupying a space of 600 feet by 375 feet, divided into sixteen lots, each 75 feet square. An alley 25 feet wide ran through the center of the fort from east to west. The initial plan called for the fort to be surrounded by a palisade, but it was never completed because the Indian threat lessened. Newcomb described the homes of the fort as “built with pickets, covered with dirt, and while not very ornamental, they are very comfortable.”⁷

Only with the establishment of Fort Griffin in 1867, did families feel secure enough to move away from the forts, and resume their old way of life. Many ranchers returned to the area safe in the knowledge that, while an isolated Indian raid would occur, the presence of the garrison would discourage large scale depredations. Nevertheless, several ranchers did move their families close to the fort for added safety. Still, as Captain Wirt Davis noted, as late as 1869, at least ten families continued to live at Fort Davis and a dozen more at Picketville. These settlements however, were an exception, and as the years passed, more and more ranches radiated outward from Fort Griffin.⁸

While the forts provided protection for the settlers, they could not prevent persistent raids by determined bands of Comanche and Kiowa warriors, and the resulting loss of hundreds of head of cattle and horses. Often the men attend to herding cattle were

attacked and chased back to the very outskirts of a fort. When the settlers rode out in pursuit, the Indians would flee and quickly outdistance their pursuers. As difficult as “forting up” may have been, it did accomplish the settlers’ purpose, for despite Indians harassment, no fort was ever directly attacked.⁹

By 1865, the continuous raids were having a cumulating effect on the Texas frontier. Immense herds of cattle and horses had been driven off, homes burned and settlers killed or been made captive. As settlers moved away from the frontier to the safety of the interior of the state, many of the frontier counties lost as much as one fourth of their population. Counties bordering the Red River, directly below the reservations in the Indian Territory, had been completely depopulated of settlers by Comanche and Kiowa raids. As a result, the frontier had been pushed back fully one hundred miles east of its 1860 boundary.¹⁰

At the end of the Civil War in the spring of 1865, many settlers believed that with the return of men and with the arrival of Federal troops, they could expect support and protection from the unceasing Indian attacks. But they soon came to realize there was to be no relief for the frontier. With the defeat of the South, the Texas Rangers and Confederate troops manning the frontier were disbanded. The Texas government was powerless to provide any kind of organized protection for the frontier. By the summer of 1865 the Texas frontier had deteriorated into total chaos, beyond anything the settlers had witnessed during the war.¹¹

The end of the Civil War revealed another danger not only to the frontier but also to the entire state. Deserters, criminals, fugitives and renegades of every type and race began to take advantage of the social breakdown and preyed on the frontier settlers. These criminals and deserters became such a menace along the frontier that frequently

troops had to be diverted from their main task of patrolling for Indians. Entire settlements as well as isolated ranch homes were often attacked and looted. Many of these renegades were known to cooperate with the Comanche and Kiowa warriors in the theft of cattle and horses. The Indians also enjoyed a profitable trade with white and Mexican *Comancheros* from New Mexico. In exchange for cattle and horses stolen in Texas, the Comanche and Kiowa received guns, ammunition, whiskey, tobacco, coffee and sugar. The trade with the *Comancheros* was so prevalent that it was to continue until the 1870's, ending only with the defeat of the Comanche and Kiowa in the Red River War, and their final incarceration on the reservation.¹²

If the settlers on the frontier expected the returning Federal troops to assume the burden of defending the frontiers, they were quickly disappointed. Texas fell under the aegis of the Fifth Military District commanded by General Philip Sheridan, and his purpose was to oversee the military rule of a hostile population, enforcing federal laws and ensuring the safety of the freed slaves. The Federal troops under his command, who were stationed in the interior of Texas, came as an army of occupation to pacify and police a rebellious population, not to fight Indians. Because of the overwhelming job of administrating his district, Sheridan and other federal authorities paid little heed to the appeals emulating from the settlers on the frontier.¹³

Governor Throckmorton tried every means at his disposal to convince Sheridan of the desperate situation on the Texas frontier. When his requests were continually ignored, the governor attempted to organize a frontier regiment composed of ex-Confederate soldiers. After Sheridan adamantly forbade the raising of state troops, Throckmorton bombarded Federal authorities in Austin with requests for the use of Federal soldiers for frontier defense. He even sent telegraphs to President Andrew Johnson describing the

latest Indian raids in an attempt to gain support. Not until 1867, after a flood of angry letters and petitions to Congress, and on orders to take action by President Johnson, did a reluctant Sheridan agree to establish a line of garrisons along the Texas frontier. He remained convinced that Governor Throckmorton was only using the raids as a pretext to organize a state militia. Sheridan also believed that the extent and ferocity of the Indian raids were highly exaggerated by the frontier settlers¹⁴

Chapter 2

The Establishment of Fort Griffin 1867

Delayed by a yellow fever outbreak along the Texas Gulf coast, it was not until late in 1867 that Sheridan was able to dispatch soldiers to reoccupy the prewar outposts of Forts Stockton, Davis, Chadbourne and Belknap. In addition he authorized the construction of two new posts: Fort Buffalo Spring on the Red River northeast of Fort Belknap and Fort Richardson at Jacksboro.²

On December 29, 1866, the Sixth Cavalry, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Samuel D. Sturgis, marched out of Austin with orders to establish Fort Richardson and reoccupy Fort Belknap. During the march north, the soldiers were to witness first hand the results of the devastating Indian raids. Trooper H. H. McConnell noted the “blackened chimney stacks and ruined ranches.” Arriving at Jacksboro in January 1867, and after scouting many locations, the regiment eventually established Fort Richardson a mile south of the town.³

Marching south to the prewar outpost of Fort Belknap, Colonel Sturgis was appalled at the condition of the buildings. Abandoned at the outbreak of the war, the garrisons structures had been left to the elements and scavenging settlers. Trooper McConnell noted “the quarters and hospital were roofless and most of the wood work had been removed” and that there were “dead buffalo lying on the parade ground.”⁴

But the most serious difficulty facing the post was a shortage of water. The Brazos was so brackish at this location that not even the horses and mules would drink from it

The post well furnished little water and often ran dry during the summer months. The nearest source of water was Elm Creek located six miles from the post which Colonel Sturgis knew would be inadequate to supply enough water for a large garrison. Noting that Fort Belknap was poorly sited for defense and hampered by an inadequate water supply, Colonel Sturgis immediately sent a report to General Charles Griffin, the military commander in Austin, requesting that a new location be selected. General Griffin concurred, and after scouting various sites, Colonel Sturgis accepted the recommendation of Lieutenant H.B. Mellen, who reported on a site easily defended and well watered, located thirty-five miles south of Fort Belknap on the Clear Fork of the Brazos.¹⁸

Arriving on the afternoon of July 31, 1867, companies F, I, K and L of the Sixth Cavalry established a temporary post on the flood plane between a mesa and the river. Acting on the recommendation of the medical officer that the ground was marshy and prone to flooding, Colonel Sturgis relocated the post to the top of the mesa, which quickly became known as Government Hill. Initially named Camp Wilson after Lieutenant Henry H. Wilson, the son of a United States senator from Massachusetts, the post was renamed Fort Griffin in honor of General Griffin who had recently died of yellow fever.¹⁹

Based on the report of Colonel Sturgis and other post commanders in 1867, a board of officers were appointed to review the establishment of frontier garrisons for the entire Texas frontier. As a result of the board's recommendations in February 1868, General Winfield S. Hancock, who assumed command from General Sheridan, ordered that Forts Chadbourne, Belknap and the unfinished Buffalo Spring be abandoned and new posts constructed. Along with Fort Richardson and Fort Griffin on the Clear Fork of the

Brazos, Fort Concho was established on the forks of the Concho River. With the establishment of these new posts and the reoccupation of the prewar forts of McKavett, Terrett, Clark and Duncan the new frontier defense line extended from the Red River to the Rio Grande. Forts McIntosh, Ringgold and Brown protected the frontier from the Rio Grande to the Gulf coast. Lastly Forts Stockton, Davis and Quitman would guard the El Paso Road. These posts would provide the primary defense for the Texas frontier for the next twenty years, and would only be abandoned when the Indian threat had dissipated and the frontier moved further west.²⁰

Once the site for Fort Griffin had been selected, soldiers were soon set to work clearing the site of trees, brush and the prickly pear cactus which grew in abundance. The area was surveyed and sites selected for the various structures. As initially conceived by the Quartermaster Department, Fort Griffin was to be built entirely of stone for durability and comfort. To achieve that end the Department Quartermaster in San Antonio dispatched a number of ox drawn wagons containing a steam sawmill, window sashes, door frames, tools and a number of mechanics, "in short anything necessary to carry on the work."²¹

The first substantial structure on the post was "a log house, consisting of two rooms and a hall between, [which] was hauled in from a deserted ranch where it served as the quarters for the commanding officer," while "a similar building was brought in for the hospital," Through much hard work and the use of local building materials, by the winter of 1867, spartan but comfortable quarters had been constructed for the officers, each consisting of a room and kitchen. Unfortunately for the enlisted men, their quarters were not given a high priority. Forty-two one room huts in four rows were constructed, each measuring fourteen and one half feet long, eight feet wide and five feet ten inches at the

eaves. Each hut was provided with a fire place in one end, a door at the other and one small window for ventilation. While each hut was originally designed to house only four men, six men were crowded into these structures during the first winter, as “a sufficient number of huts could not be put up on account of the scarcity of lumber.” Compared to the crowding and discomfort of the huts, the living conditions of the barracks were even worse. Two company size barracks were constructed of pickets, upright posts of oak or cottonwood chinked with mud or mortar, and roofed with lumber. Some idea of their state can be determined from an 1873 report in which the post surgeon noted that conditions were such that only one was occupied because the men preferred the huts.²²

For the enlisted men conditions were never to improve. The oak, elm and cottonwood lumber used in construction was green and of inferior quality. In the hot and arid climate, the lumber quickly shrank and warped, leaving gaps in the walls which allowed the cold winds and rains of the winter, and the blowing sand and dust of the summer, easy access. As late as 1880, an inspection noted the wood utilized in the construction of the enlisted men’s huts was warped, twisted, suffered from shrinkage, and was in constant need of repair. The result of these substandard quarters was that dysentery, various fevers, and lung ailments constantly plagued the soldiers until the fort was abandoned in 1881. Additionally, flies, mosquitoes and other vermin, which had easy access to the huts, added to the discomfort suffered by the men.²³

As late as 1875, the post surgeon reported on the unhealthy condition of the barracks occupied by Company E of the 10th Cavalry. The canvas which served as the roof of the barracks had become thin and rotten with age, allowing the entry of rain water. The surgeon wrote “The men’s Clothing, Bedding and Accoutrements are drenched with

water every time it rains and they are compelled to sleep at night in the wet bedding. The water collects in small pools in the dirt floor and the building is damp and uncomfortable for some days after the rain has ceased.” His report recommended “that a new roof be put on the barracks or that the men be furnished with tents to protect them from the rain.”²⁴

In the spring, building resumed and by the summer of 1869, more substantial structures for the officers had been constructed. Junior officers were housed in one story quarters consisting of three rooms, a kitchen and fireplace. Two other structures for the more senior officers consisted of four rooms, a kitchen and fireplace, a hallway and an underground cellar. The most opulent quarters was reserved for the commanding officer. He lived in a two story residence, with four rooms on the ground floor separated by a hallway, an underground cellar and a back and front portico. For all the grandiose plans drawn up by the Quartermaster Department, the only structures completed wholly or partially of stone were the commanding officers quarters, the headquarters, hospital, bakery, the commissary and the powder magazine. Certainly the morale of the enlisted men must have suffered when their labor was used to build spacious and comfortable quarters for the officers, without any improvement to their own drafty and crowded barracks.²⁵

The post hospital was originally envisioned by the Quartermaster Department to be an airy and well appointed stone structure. Instead the hospital was plagued by filth and unsanitary conditions as long as the garrison existed. The original post hospital building consisted of a dirt roofed log cabin which had been moved to the post from an abandoned ranch. It was expanded over the years as other “temporary structures” were erected and connected to it. By 1870, the hospital building had deteriorated to such an extent that it

sagged in the center, and canvas had to be attached to the ceiling to prevent dirt and water from falling on the patients and contaminating the medical supplies. The unsanitary conditions of the hospital at Fort Griffin was not unique, as the army's own survey of frontier hospitals in 1870 revealed that the great majority were temporary structures.²⁶

In January 1870, when W. R. Steinmetz arrived at Fort Griffin to assume the duties as post surgeon, he was appalled at the condition of the hospital buildings. He noted that there was no enclosure around the hospital and a complete lack of shade for the patients. Steinmetz wrote that while heat for the hospital ward was provided by two stoves, it was "more than contradicted by the more extensive ventilation from the crevices in the flooring, walls and roofing through which sand and dust is also admitted during the high winds which are frequent during all seasons of the year." He condemned the hospital kitchen as "a frame building erected of green lumber which has warped, leaving large crevices through which the sand and dust is driven by the high winds, making it impossible to keep the room clean." Steinmetz reported that the dispensary was in the same filthy conditions, and that to keep out the dust and still admit light the windows had to be covered with muslin.²⁷

Steinmetz wrote that the hospital store room was "in a filthy condition and in such a disorganized state" that he could not examine the contents until a new store room was built. When Steinmetz was able to enter the room and survey the contents, he reported that "two fire buckets were found containing-in a state of decomposition, one a specimen of the entrails of some beef cattle, the other [a] human being which were thrown out and the buckets thoroughly cleaned and disinfected." Steinmetz went on to state that the unsanitary conditions of the hospital facilities were brought to the attention of the post

quartermaster “but as yet [he] has taken no steps in the matter.”²⁸

While there were minor improvements and repairs to the hospital over the years, its condition continued to be a cause of complaint from the post surgeons. Numerous requests were submitted by a succession of Fort Griffin’s garrison commanders through the chain of command requesting funds be authorized for repairs, but the request were continually denied. Post Surgeon D. C. Caldwell struggled manfully in his attempts to obtain an adequate hospital for the garrison. In the fall of 1874, he submitted a request for a new hospital, but amazingly that request was refused “upon the grounds that the Post would soon be abandoned.” In June 1875, Caldwell requested \$339.50 for hospital repairs, and in June 1877, an additional sum of \$252.35. A letter from Fort Griffin to the Adjutant General of the Army dated August 14, 1878, requesting funds for repairs to the hospital, stated that, “if the Post is to be maintained during the coming winter these repairs and improvements, or the greater part of them, are indispensable to the comfort and proper treatment of the sick of the command.” The letter went on to list many of the deficiencies of the hospital: warped lumber, a leaky roof, falling plaster, a drafty interior, and cracks in the walls, allowing the entry of dirt and rain. They were the very same discrepancies noted by Surgeon Steinmetz in his 1870 medical report. It is ironic to note that while Caldwell was refused funds in 1874, owing to the eminent abandonment of the garrison, as late as September 1880 repairs continued to be authorized and carried out on the hospital. Even so, a mere six months later, in May 1881, the last soldiers were to march out of Fort Griffin.²⁹

Surgeons Steinmetz and Caldwell lobbied long and hard to obtain adequate medical facilities for the garrison. Unfortunately army bureaucracy, budgetary concerns and a low

priority continually hindered their best efforts. Trooper H. H. McConnell may well have spoken for many enlisted men when he stated that most army hospitals were “inhospitable” and provided “less comfort than the barracks.” Considering their importance to the health of the garrison, the neglect of the hospital was a grave oversight and often bordered on the criminal.³⁰

The overall cleanliness of the garrison was another concern for the post surgeons. Soldiers would often discard trash and other useless articles in any convenient location. Instead of walking to a latrine, the men would continually use a mesquite thicket along the northeast edge of the post. The smell eventually became so offensive that the commanding officer ordered the men to clear it away. At one point a load of night soil was dumped upstream instead of down stream, where it would be dispersed by the river, and had to be burned because of the offensive odor.³¹

In his medical report of 1875, Caldwell noted that “the post has been very much neglected, refuse matter of all kinds has been allowed to accumulate in the ravine and side of the hill west of the Cavalry Corral and offal of every kind has been scattered around everywhere.” Frequently, the manure from the stables was dumped on the edge of the hill and burned, creating an offensive smell. Caldwell recommended that “this refuse matter ought to be removed to a greater distance from the garrison, and its further accumulation prevented by larger police parties.” Caldwell also criticized the shortage of boxes in the men’s sinks, as well as the lack of regular cleanings. He noted other sinks were old, broken and extremely filthy, requiring repair or replacing. Caldwell recommended that “the ground inside the stall should be cleaned and disinfected with lime.” He wrote of two dead mules near Collins Creek that are “coming into

decomposition, and unless removed to a greater distance from the post or buried, they will soon become a most disagreeable offense” and “deleterious to the health of the garrison.”³²

In the same report, Caldwell expressed concern that the new town of Fort Griffin, located at the base of Government Hill, was beginning to affect the health of the men. He was troubled over the “number of Lewd Women living in the vicinity of the post” who had already infected a number of the men with venereal disease. In his opinion it would “improve the discipline and health of the post if these disreputable women were removed by the Authorities, either Civil or military.”³³

Another problem that was to bedevil not only Caldwell but also the entire frontier army was the moral character of some of the laundresses who worked at the posts. Army regulations allowed each company four laundresses, who were entitled to receive rations, quarters and transportation whenever the men were moved to a new post. Most were the wives of enlisted men who provided a much needed service to the army, but some of these women were, in fact, prostitutes. The laundry service was simply a convenient cover which allowed these women to practice their trade on a government facility. And while this fact was certainly known by most military authorities, they often ignored the issue. In an effort to legitimize their work a number of these women would “marry” a soldier. Once the soldier was transferred or discharged she would simply marry another. The laundresses’ quarters obtained such a scandalous reputation that the red light districts around some western military towns were known as “Sudsville.” No doubt aware of this fact, Caldwell strongly recommended that “the grounds around the laundresses’ quarters should be better policed, and their quarters be inspected more frequently by their

Company Commanders.”³⁴

In his 1875 report to the War Department, Inspector General Marcy recommended that the number of laundresses be gradually reduced and eventually abolished. He wrote that because of limited funding from Congress it has frequently been impracticable to provide the laundresses and their children with adequate quarters, leading to unnecessary suffering. Additionally, when the troops were serving in the field, the laundress who were married to soldiers, were not entitled to quarters, rations or fuel. Macy’s solution was that no more married men be allowed to enlist in peacetime, and that on the expiration of their enlistment, soldiers who were married to laundresses can only reenlist based on exceptional circumstances. He further recommended that soldiers do their own laundry, or have it done by men detailed from their company or by black or white men enlisted for laundry work and compensated for that purpose. Not until 1878 did Congress mandate that laundresses be permanently removed from army rolls. Perhaps with a touch of nostalgia, one frontier veteran was to write of the laundresses that, “They were good, honest, industrious wives, usually well on in, years, minutely familiar with their rights,...which they dared to maintain with acrimonious volubility,...and they were ever ready for a fight, yet they were kind at heart if rough in manners, always ready to assist in times of distress.”³⁵

Frontier garrisons by their very nature were crude affairs with few amenities or diversions. As their function was to keep the Indians in check, guard mail, and serve as a staging area for offensive and defensive operations against hostile Indians, the placement of a frontier garrison was necessitated by strategy rather than comfort. Located on the very edge of civilization, often deep in Indian lands, the western army post was a

combination of danger, isolation, monotony and boredom. The only requirements that a location had to meet was a plentiful supply of water, good grass for the animals, wood for fuel and building material, and a level area for the garrisons' buildings and parade ground.³⁶

Laws and regulations stipulated that the soldiers were responsible for the building and maintenance of frontier posts out of any local building material. Unfortunately, Fort Griffin suffered from substandard building material and inadequate funds. The inevitable results were deficient structures and miserable living conditions. Additionally, senior military and civil authorities believed the hostile Indians would be quickly defeated and the frontier pushed forward, thus negating the expense of more permanent and costly structures. When the Indians proved more resilient than expected, the posts continued to be used year after year without any material improvement. As early as 1874, at the height of the Red River War, the army was already discussing the closure of Fort Griffin. General William T. Sherman was more than justified when in 1874, he lamented that "some of what are called military posts are mere collections of huts made of logs, adobes or mere holes in the ground, and are about as much forts as prairie dog villages might be called forts." Not until the 1880's, much too late for Fort Griffin, did conditions on frontier garrisons begin to improve.³⁷

Posts located in the southwest faced the additional hazards of scorpions, tarantulas, centipedes and snakes. Mice, flies, lice, and mosquitoes only added to the torment of the soldiers, often leading to outbreaks of malaria, typhus and dysentery. In summer the men had to endure blistering heat and blowing sand, while in the winter, numbing cold and freezing rain. Isolated from normal civilization, and faced with the daily routine of army

life, the men welcomed any sort of diversion. Toward the end of the Indian Wars, some western posts could boast of large and comfortable enlisted quarters, meeting halls, a well stocked commissary, canteens and organized sports teams, which provided comfort and relief from frontier duty. Unfortunately, these amenities never caught up to the soldiers of Fort Griffin. The daily routine was only broken only by the occasional hunting or fishing expeditions, band concerts, and games of checkers or cards.³⁸

Chapter 3

Army Life on the Texas Frontier, 1867-1881

The ordinary soldier who manned the frontier posts of Texas were as varied as their background. Many were veterans of the Civil War, who enlisted in the Regular Army after the volunteer troops were mustered out. Others had recently enlisted. While the vast majority of soldiers were Northerners who hailed from an urban environment, many were recent immigrants from Europe. Most immigrant soldiers hailed from Ireland, Germany, England, Canada, France and Switzerland. Not a few were veterans of European armies. Unlike American born soldiers, European immigrants who enlisted were more likely to make the army a career. Frequently, immigrants who were veterans of a European army and unable to find civilian employment, would enlist in the U. S. Army. Soldiering was a profession in which they were familiar. Other immigrants enlisted because they simply missed army life.³⁹

The experience of Englishman Jacob Howarth was no doubt typical of many immigrants soldiers. In the fall of 1871, Howarth enlisted “for no particular purpose” in New York City. Along with other enlistees he was sent by steamer to New Orleans. From there he boarded another ship for the journey to Indianola, Texas, then a train to Victoria. On Christmas Day, the new recruits began the 115 mile march to San Antonio, arriving there at the end of the month. After a brief rest, Howarth and the other men began their final trek to Fort Griffin. Howarth wrote that he felt that he had “left civilization behind” as he men marched out of Fredericksburg. He recorded his excitement at seeing his first

buffalo and his first Indian, fortunately a friendly Tonkawa. Upon reaching Fort Griffin, Howarth must have been dismayed by the drafty enlisted huts, worn tents and dilapidated structures which made up the post.⁴⁰

During his five year enlistment in the army, when not engaged in seemingly endless drills, Howarth was employed in escorting the mail, providing protection to surveying parties, guarding prisoners and engaged in various scouting expeditions. He never saw combat with hostile Indians, but during the Red River War in 1874-1875, he supported Colonel Ranald Mackenzie's column by "fetching up supplies" during "the great roundup of Indians." At the expiration of his enlistment in 1876, Howarth returned to England, a "seasoned veteran" of the Indian Wars.⁴¹

Along with Union war veterans were a number of ex-Confederate soldiers who enlisted in the Regular Army. Not a few had previously held commissions as officers in the Confederate Army. Southern soldiers often returned home to find their farms destroyed and families missing. Additionally, the social and economic turmoil of the war left many men restless and unemployed. After four years of war, soldiering was all they knew, and in the army they could find a home, food and pay.⁴²

Whether they were white, black or immigrants, men enlisted in the regular army for a myriad of reason. Jacob Howarth had no particular reason, and Trooper H. H. McConnell never commented on his reasons for enlisting. A great many men enlisted in the army to hide from civil authorities, escape from a bad marriage, avoid family problems or were jobless and needed money. Others wanted to go west, a few sought adventure, while some just wanted to be a soldier. For many of the blacks, the army offered the opportunity for advancement, to better themselves, and a way out poverty.⁴³

The majority of blacks who initially enlisted in the 9th and 10th Cavalry, and the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st Infantry were from the deep south. Major Zenas R. Bliss of the Thirty-ninth Infantry, categorized the recruits as “the very ignorant class of negroes...many of them from the cotton plantations in the interior of Mississippi, and Louisiana, and [who] were of the lowest type of the race.” Once the enlistment of these men expired, the army sought to recruit blacks from the border and northern cities, in order to obtain what they believed would be a better educated and motivated soldier. The new recruitment policy proved to be a great success, and by the 1870’s, the quality of black soldiers had greatly improved. At Fort Griffin, among the forty-one men listed in the muster roll of Company C, 10th Cavalry on August 31, 1870, thirty-five listed northern cities as their enlistment sites. Cities included New York City, Brooklyn, West Point, and Troy, as well as, Baltimore, Chicago, Philadelphia, Dubuque, Cincinnati and Jersey City.⁴⁴

Major Bliss was so pleased with the result that he wrote “they now rank among the best soldiers on the Frontier.” He went on to state that their service during the Indian Wars was admirable and they had “many gallant deeds to their credit.” Army statistics support the fact that desertion rates were less, and enlistment rates higher, in black than in white units. As a result, black units had a tendency to be more stable and the soldiers more content.⁴⁵

Another obstacle which faced the frontier soldier, black and white, was the negative opinion held by a great majority of civilians. Many looked down on the regular soldier as rough, shiftless and hard men who were “too lazy to work.” Frontier soldiers were only appreciated by civilians when their livelihood depended on army pay, or when hostile Indians threatened their lives. Soldiers deeply resented this civilian attitude and it

occasionally led to violence, especially on pay days.⁴⁶

There is little doubt that soldiers and civilians were wary of one other when the Sixth Cavalry established Fort Griffin in 1867. While the majority of settlers welcomed the soldiers with great enthusiasm and exuberance, others were more cautious. Settlers resented the fact that Federal troops had been in Texas for two years, policing the interior population, while leaving the frontier ranchers to face the Indians raids alone.

Additionally, some of the older settlers recalled that prior to the Civil War, the army had been largely unsuccessful in pacifying the Indian menace. With the arrival of new Federal troops, many settlers were doubtful that the army would be any more successful in halting further raids. The attitude of the soldiers was very much different. The majority were Civil War Union veterans and not eager to provide protection to ex-Confederates. The soldiers also held the opinion that the settlers were largely responsible for their own dilemma. Texas secession from the Union had prompted the withdrawal of Federal troop from the frontier, leaving it open to Indian depredations. Now with the war over, the settlers, once again, sought protection from Federal troops.⁴⁷

For the soldier who enlisted in the Regular Army the journey to a Southwest garrison could be long and arduous. Some men enlisted directly at a frontier garrison into an active unit, but most joined at a recruiting office, or with a regimental recruiting team. An applicant had be a minimum of twenty-one, but many lied about their age. Some recruiters, recognizing a promising candidate, willingly allowed the under aged to enlist. An additional burden faced by many recruiters were that a large majority of the newly arrived European immigrants had a limited knowledge of, or could not speak, English. For a variety of reasons, it was not unusual for some recruits to enlist under a different

name. Many were hiding from law enforcement authorities or escaping from a tumultuous home life. A few were ex-Confederate soldiers, deserters seeking to reenlist, or cashiered officers hiding their disgrace.⁴⁸

Once an applicant had furnished the recruiter with pertinent information, he then had to disrobe, bathe, and be examined by a medical officer, a test which was often cursory and superficial. A recruit was examined to ensure “that he has free use of all limbs; his chest is ample, that his hearing, vision and speech are perfect...that he has no tumors, or ulcerated or extensively cicatrized leg...that he is not a drunkard, is not subject to convulsions; and has no infectious disorders.” Upon successfully passing the medical exam the recruit was sworn in and along with other recruits, awaited transportation to a recruit depot. From there he was sent to one of several recruit depots, depending on his branch of service. Carlisle Barracks in Pennsylvania was initially used as the recruit depot for cavalymen until the 1870’s, when Jefferson Barracks, Missouri took over that function. Infantry recruits were sent to David’s Island, New York, Columbus Barracks, Ohio, or Newport Barracks, Kentucky.⁴⁹

At a recruit depot, a newcomer would be assigned to a recruit company of instruction under the direction of a veteran corporal or sergeant. Here, the recruit was issued his first uniforms, which seldom fit properly, and his basic equipment. Training was almost nonexistent, for the recruit depots were only looked upon as way stations where the men awaited assignment to their designated regiments. Recruits had time to learn only the basic military courtesies, how to make a bed, and arrange his uniforms and equipment for inspection. They also participated in daily exercises, close order drill and fatigue duty. Lack of money and the demands for manpower in units actively campaigning in the west

prevented the development of any systematic training program. As most men spent only a week or two at the depots, they reported to their units “knowing nothing of the use of arms, or even the position of a soldier.” The army expected the recruit to learn soldering skills from the experienced corporals and sergeants in his own company. Most men had limited firearms training, and a shortage of ammunition prevented the development of any kind of shooting skills. Many of the recruits assigned to the cavalry had never even ridden a horse before. At the cavalry depots, recruits were taught only the fundamentals of mounting and guiding a horse. The men were simply expected to get on and ride. The results, while amusing to the veterans, could be painful to the novice. In recalling the temperament of the mounts he trained on at Carlisle Barracks, Trooper McConnell wrote that the horses were “the most vicious brutes...I have ever encountered.”⁵⁰

When new recruits left the depot they were often transported on railroads, steamboats, wagons or stages. Because most western posts were, by their very nature, located on the edge of civilization, most made the final journey to their assigned garrison by walking. Trooper Howarth made his journey from New York to Texas by steamboat, train and on foot. Many new recruits were from urban areas and had never been out west before. Their first encounter with the vast deserts and prairies of the southwest must have been overwhelming. In the arid southwest, the journey of the men to the fort often had to be timed from one watering hole to the next. Recruits often arrived thirsty, footsore and no doubt pondering what they had gotten themselves into. Some recruits were unfortunate enough to encounter hostile Indians even before they reached their post.

While Troopers McConnell and Howarth had the limited benefits of passing through a

recruit depot, a few of the recruits appear to have enlisted directly at Fort Griffin, with the majority being black recruits. Twenty men were received at the post from April to July 1870, all being assigned to Company E of the 24th Infantry. The group of fourteen men who arrived at the post in May 1870, were no doubt received from a recruit depot. The remainder, one in April, three in June and one in July, appear to have enlisted directly at the post. The post medical report notes that new recruits were examined by the post surgeon, accepted and assigned to Company E. In January 1871, the post medical report lists only one white recruit examined. He was subsequently accepted and assigned to Company B, 6th Cavalry. The same report also noted the enlistment of eleven Tonkawa Indians recruited as scouts. One potential recruit who attempted to enlist at the post in December of 1870, was rejected due to an active case of venereal disease and a left scrotal hernia. Men who enlisted in the army at a western post were only given an abbreviated indoctrination into army life and some rudimentary drill. Because of the constant manpower shortage, the new recruit often found himself on an active campaign against hostile Indians within week of enlisting.⁵¹

Once the new recruit reached his post, he was assigned to a company, which during the Indian Wars was the basic unit. A cavalry regiment was composed of twelve troops and an infantry regiment of ten companies, but seldom were all companies assigned to the same garrison. Fort Griffin often had only one or two companies of the same regiment assigned to the post at any one time. During the Indian Wars, the army had no regular policy which called for the periodic movement of regiments or companies. Units were only rotated to other posts as required by the contingencies of the various campaigns and wars.⁵²

The new recruit soon learned to remain within his company, and seldom did he associate with men from another unit. The soldiers in his company were his friends, mentors and companions. He lived, ate, campaigned and sometimes died with them. A soldier could spend his entire enlistment in the same company and he came to be personally identified with that unit. Many homeless men came to look upon the army as their home and the company as their family. Soldiers often developed close personal friendships with fellow soldiers. On campaigns, they fought together on the skirmish line, shared a blanket for warmth, pooling their rations, and divided the last drink of water from their canteens. This was your best friend, in army language; you're "bunky." A man's "bunky" could be another recruit or an older soldier. He was a kindred spirit, a confidant, someone in which to share personal stories and histories, the one man a soldier could always depend on.⁵³

Soldiers, then as now, took great pride in being assigned to the company of an elite regiment, such as the 4th, 6th, 7th, 9th, or 10th Cavalry. This unit pride was especially prevalent in corporals and sergeants, who were often Civil War veterans and proud of their service record. These old campaigners were the back bone of any company. Many first sergeants actually ran the company. They were responsible for the unit's administrative affairs, training schedule, discipline and assignment of company punishment. An enlisted man was not even allowed to speak to an officer unless he had the permission of his first sergeants. Trooper McConnell wrote, "The First Sergeant is virtually in command of the company and if he but conduct himself as he should, he can command the respect of both officers and men, and lives as comfortably as he wishes to." The grizzled old sergeants had years of experience and were

knowledgeable in the ways of army life, and it was a wise recruit who learned to observe and emulate them. The frontier army came to depend heavily on these men, to such an extent that from 1865 to 1890 the noncommissioned ranks of the frontier army were to be held almost exclusively by Union war veterans.⁵⁴

A soldier assigned to a frontier garrison found himself at an isolated post, living in a poorly built, and often overcrowded barracks, cold in the winter and broiling in the summer. He fought flies, disease, boredom and occasionally Indians. The routine was tedious at best and revolved around the daily bugle calls. The day's activities began at daylight with reveille, followed immediately by stable call, when the cavalymen fed, watered and groomed their mounts. At 6:45 A.M. sick call, breakfast was at 7:00, then drill from 7:30 to 8:30, followed by fatigue duty at 8:30, then came guard mount at 9:30, water call at 11:15, and orderly call at 11:45; recall from fatigue at 12:00 and dinner at 12:15. The afternoon began with a further fatigue detail at 1:00 P.M., followed at 4:00 by recall from fatigue. At 4:30 came stable call, then retreat at sundown, fatigue at 8:15 and taps at 8:45. The routine only varied on Sunday when at 9:00 a.m. there was a general inspection of the men, their equipment, the barracks and stables.⁵⁵

Guard mount was one of the high points of the daily routine, but also an especially exacting time of inexorable detail. Guard mount began at 9:30 a.m., when at the appropriate bugle call, the men detailed for guard duty would assemble in front of their company barracks. The company first sergeant inspected the men for blackened shoes, polished buttons, and immaculate uniforms. At a second bugle call 10 minutes later, the men are marched to the parade ground in front of the guard house. Here the men were inspected by the company sergeant major who assigned the men to the various posts. The

officer of the day then took charge of the guard mount for a further inspection. He drilled the men in the manual of arms, passwords were exchanged, whereupon the men assumed their post. Unless dictated by severe weather, or other unusual conditions, the men were relieved every two hours. During the twenty-four hours of his guard duties, the men were not allowed to remove their clothing, ammunition belts or shoes. Any sleep or rest had to be obtained on a large, raised wooden bed, shared by other guard members.⁵⁶

The most onerous tasks frontier soldiers had to endure were the various fatigue details, which took up a large portion of the day. The very fact that the majority of frontier garrisons were situated in isolated, and widely scattered locations necessitated the fact that soldiers had to supply the labor for the essential maintenance and upkeep of the post. When not engaged in an active campaign, soldiers were used as common labors, which lowered morale and drained their energy. It was also a contributing factor in why some men deserted. Soldiers were often detailed to build telegraph lines, roads, construct bridges, dig ditches, repair wagons, and build the garrisons' buildings. Some men commented that they had more experience with a pick and shovel than with a rifle. After experiencing numerous fatigue duties Trooper McConnell summed up the feeling of many men when he wrote that soldiers were "armed laborers."⁵⁷

General John Pope, who wrote that his posts were "garrisoned by enlisted labors rather than soldiers," along with other senior officers on the frontier, labored to convince the War Department that the answer was to hire civilian labors. Soldier would then be free to participate in much needed training and drill. Unfortunately, the War Department and a cost conscious Congress, was never moved by these arguments. The result was that throughout the period of the Indian Wars, frontier soldiers were to spend the majority of

their time engaged in menial labor.⁵⁸

When not engaged in fatigue, soldiers were detailed to escort new recruits, the paymaster, or to guarding the mail. Trooper Howarth was to spend his entire five year enlistment in such duties as guarding surveying teams, participating in scouting parties, and escorting supply wagons during the Red River War. As at many western garrisons, cooking and drinking water had to be replenished from surrounding springs or rivers. Fortunately Fort Griffin was blessed with two clean sources of drinking water in the immediate vicinity of the post. Collins Creek was located at the foot of Government Hill, and the Clear Fork of the Brazos, a quarter of a mile from the post. Daily water parties were detailed to fill large wooden barrels, then deliver the water to the company mess halls, barrack, officers' quarters and the stables. While many western posts had to provide their own wood and hay, at Fort Griffin, government contracts to supply these vital necessities were given to some of the local ranchers, no doubt much to the relief of the soldiers.⁵⁹

Other fatigue duties included the innumerable police details which were necessary for the maintenance of the garrison. There were buildings which had to be cleaned, trash to collect and the parade ground to weed. For the cavalryman, stable call was perhaps the most detested duty they performed. Each morning and evening they dressed in their white canvas stable clothing, earning the title "government ghost," and marched to the stables to care for their mounts and clean the stables. Other soldiers were detailed to dispose of garbage, which often entailed throwing it down a gulch, a hill or carrying it a short distance from the post in a wagon. By far the most hated fatigue duty was to be assigned to dispose of night soil. Often, this detail was assigned to men as extra duty, as

punishment for a minor offense. The “sinks” used at the hospital and officer quarters consisted of two movable boxes both lined inside and outside with zinc. Each seat in the latrine had a smaller upper box which fit into lower larger box. The upper box was used to contain the offal. Fluid was allowed to pass through small holes into the lower box and then the ground. Each morning soldiers had to empty the contents of the upper box into barrels and carry it away from the post to the leeward. After a week or so, the ground below the boxes became so saturated with urine that it too had to be removed. New soil mixed with lime was used to replace it. For the first two years the latrines for the enlisted men were located directly behind their huts, and consisted of pit toilets dug in the ground and covered with dirt when full. The post surgeon consistently wrote in his medical report that they were extremely unsanitary, offensive and vermin infested.⁶⁰

Another unpopular detail was to be assigned as the company cooks’ assistant, known as a “Cooks Police.” This duty entailed chopping firewood for the cook stove, washing mess gear, retrieving water for the cook, setting and clearing the mess tables three times a day, waiting on the men during the meal, cleaning the mess hall after the meals, and any other duties which the cook might assign. Assignment to the post hospital was another unpleasant duty that most men tried to avoid. One man from each company was detailed to assist the hospital steward as a nurse or cook along with various sundry duties. Even with the incentive of extra pay, few men volunteered to be a hospital cook or “bed pan pusher.” Some company commanders and first sergeants were known to assign this duty to the most slovenly and careless soldier in the unit, as a way to be rid of them, if only for a short time. Whether this tactic was conducted at Fort Griffin is unknown. As indicated by the post medical report of September 1870, however, Surgeon Steinmetz commented

that the four men assigned as attendants, Privates Jacob Byer, 4th Cavalry as cook, J.D. Henderson, 11th Infantry as nurse, John Stuart, 6th Cavalry as nurse and James Lauve, 4th Cavalry as nurse were “good and efficient.” The post medical history notes that only one soldier, Private George H. Hayne of K Company, 22nd Infantry, was relieved for inefficiency while serving as hospital cook in August of 1880.⁶¹

Serving as a teamster was also an unpleasant detail avoided whenever possible by soldiers. Because frontier garrisons were widely dispersed, and usually located far from water or rail facilities, supplies for the garrison had to be transported on army wagons from a remote depot. All supplies for Fort Griffin had to be transported from the railroad terminal of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad at Denison, a distance of 215 miles. As army appropriations did not authorize the employment of civilians, soldiers had to be pressed into the duties of a teamster. In his 1875 report to the War Department, Inspector General R.B. Marcy wrote that soldiers are often detailed to teamster duty against their wishes and frequently lack experience in driving a wagon. As a consequence, the soldiers often abuse, overwork and do not take proper care of the horses. As a result, after a short time, the horses are rendered unfit for service, and have to be disposed of. In his report, General Marcy notes that the German Army had a highly efficient transportation service, consisting of organized companies and battalions, with officers and enlisted men for this specific duty. General Marcy appealed to the government to authorize the enlistment of competent and qualified men to act as teamsters, hostler and herders where they could be controlled by army regulations and disciplined. Marcy wrote that a transportation service based on the German system would not only increase the efficiency of the army, but would have economical benefits for the government.⁶²

There was one extra duty which some soldiers eagerly sought, and that was to be employed as a servant by an officer. Prior to 1870, Army Regulations allowed an officer to employ a soldier, called a “dog robber,” as his servant if they were serving in the same company. If the soldier agreed, his pay and allowance were charged to the officer, and the soldier was reported and mustered as serving in that capacity. While the soldier was still required to maintain his uniform and equipment, participate in drills, inspections and reviews, he was excused from guard and other military duties, which many men preferred.⁶³

After July 15, 1870, a law took effect which made it “unlawful for any officer to use any enlisted man as a servant in any case whatever.” Officers were forced to turn to the civilian sector to seek personal servants. Officers who had engaged a servant in the East, and were transferred to a frontier garrison had to pay the travel expense of the servant. In the male dominated west, female servants were quickly lost to marriage. Frequently, the servant would leave for a more lucrative position. Many servants refused to accompany an officer west due to fear of hostile Indians, primitive living conditions, social isolations, and the loss of material benefit of civilized society. Some officers were reduced to feeding and caring for their own horse, cooking their own food, cleaning their quarters, and polishing their own boots along, with various tasks normally done by a servant.⁶⁴

In 1875, Inspector General Marcy strongly lobbied Congress to modify the 1870 law and allow soldier servants for officers serving in remote locations along the frontier. His argument was that officers were devoting too much time in performing servants’ work, while neglecting their military duties. Unlawful or not, the practice often continued on the frontier, for officers were willing to pay a good soldier-servant as much as \$5 to \$10 a

month, more if he was a good cook.⁶⁵

An opportunity open for some soldiers who possessed an education was the position as post schoolmaster. These men were entitled to extra duty pay of thirty-five cents a day to teach the basics of reading, writing and mathematics. Fort Griffin was scarcely a year old before the first school was established. Students included not only army children but children from the neighboring ranches. Additionally, post schools were open to the enlisted men who were interested in furthering their education, or simply wanted to learn how to read and write. Teaching could also be a difficult assignment, as the soldier was still required to stand guard and attend to his other military duties. Some schools were open only a few months of the year and teaching the children could often be a difficult task. Many of the children had never attended school before, and the older children believed it a waste of time. Because Fort Griffin lacked a suitable candidate, the post commander of Fort Richardson, Major Samuel Star, temporarily transferred Private Benjamin F. Stockhouse to serve as schoolmaster. Private Stockhouse proved to be so popular that he soon had a bustling school of approximately twenty students. The commanding officer of Fort Griffin was so delighted he asked that Stockhouse be permanently assigned to the post. Private Stockhouse was apparently not so pleased with the assignment. He deserted after two terms, taking along with him an undisclosed sum of army money, and the school was temporarily closed. Stockhouse stopped briefly at the home of one of his students in Picketville, where he later sent the following message, "A swift team, a good buggy with wheels well greased: catch men if you can." Unable to obtain another schoolmaster, in desperation Colonel G. P. Buell placed an advertisement in the *San Antonio Express* to fill the teaching position. The advertisement stipulated the

candidate must be willing to teach both white and “perhaps colored”, and “possibly some Indian children as well.”⁶⁶

Difficulties with education were not the only literary area in which Fort Griffin suffered. In 1869, post surgeon Carlos Carvallo established a small library of fifty-six volumes for the more literate soldiers. Unfortunately, these books covered the subjects of science, medicine, physics chemistry and pharmacology. While the soldiers at Forts Concho and Richardson had access to popular books, and newspapers of the day such as *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*, the men at Fort Griffin had to be content with such stimulating readings as *Treatise on Diseases of the Ear*, *Treatise on Human Physiology* and *Clinical Diagnostics*. The history of Fort Griffin's library can best be summed up by the medical report which noted, “the post library consist of 106 volumes most of which are in a dilapidated condition.”⁶⁷

Entertainment for the enlisted men was severely limited. In the spring and summer there were the occasional hunting and fishing expeditions, and in winter checkers or card games. The lack of recreational activity forced many men to seek diversion in the saloons, bordellos and gambling halls of the Flats. The officers had a greater opportunity to relieve the tedium of garrison duty. Officers could bring their families to the new post. Servants, either detailed enlisted men or girls brought from back East, eased the burden of frontier living. Occasional furloughs allowed officers to break the monotony of garrison duty. At Fort Griffin, social isolation quickly overcame sectional differences with the local population, and the officers, and their wives established close bonds with some of the local ranch families. Colonel Adna R. Chaffee, garrison commander, invited the locals to post soirees and military dances, which the locals reciprocated by ranch

dinners, horseback rides, picnics and hunting parties.⁶⁸

Another burden in which the frontier soldier had to bear, was the maintenance of his uniforms. Soldiers were issued the basic Union uniform of dark blue blouse, and light blue trousers trimmed in the colors of the wearer's service, yellow for cavalry, light blue for infantry and red for artillery, along with a campaign or forage cap. Unfortunately, war time profiteers often used cheap material resulting in a uniform of inferior quality. There were also defects in the cutting and sizing of the uniforms. Congress believed that surplus Civil War clothing would be sufficient to supply the Regular Army for the next decade and was unwilling to appropriate new funds to replace the substandard uniforms. The soldiers were forced to spend their own money to tailor the uniforms for a proper fit. Additionally, the shoddy material tended to wear out quickly, especially on campaigns, forcing the soldiers to overdraw their uniform allowance, leading to further complaints. Only in the late 1870's, when the army carried out a series of reforms, did soldiers receive an extra five dollars to cover the cost of tailoring.⁶⁹

Another drawback was the army's failure to supply a summer and winter uniform. The standard blouse and trousers was made of heavy weight wool, which caused undue suffering for soldiers in the summer. In the Southwest, a blue or grey flannel shirt was often worn in place of the blouse. Recognizing that campaigning in a wool uniform in the Texas summer could be uncomfortable, as well as dangerous, in 1871, Secretary of War William W. Belknap, authorized the soldiers in the Department of Texas to wear white trousers and straw hats. In an effort to find adequate, but lightweight head protection from the scorching Southwestern summers, in 1875, Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs obtained white cork helmets used by British troops in India from the British

Minister in Washington. The helmets were tested by soldiers serving in the Southwest for five years and were apparently well received. After various modifications the helmets were approved for use by the War Department in 1880.⁷⁰

As the stockpile of Civil War uniforms began to draw down in the 1870's, the army began to experiment with various styles and modifications in the shirts, blouses and trousers. It was not unusual that in a company of soldier no two were dressed alike. On a campaign the variety of uniforms was even more striking. Troopers often wore checker or buckskin shirts along with the more common grey or blue shirts. Trousers could be faded blue, corduroy or even white. Veteran cavalymen would often line the seat of their regulation trousers with canvas, while other soldiers wore the canvas trousers used in stable duty. A bewildering variety and color of hats was also worn on a campaign. Black, brown, white and straw hats were worn, all creased, shaped and dented, depending on the style of the wearer.⁷¹

But the uniform items that drew the most scathing comments from soldiers were the shoes and cavalry boots, which were manufactured at the military prison in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The shoes were made of course leather, and so poorly made that it was often impossible to tell left from right. To prevent blisters from newly issued shoes and boots, some soldiers rubbed their feet and socks with soap. Others would soak the shoes in water and wear them until they dried, in order to form them to their feet. The most serious drawback of the regulation footwear was that the upper and lower portion of the shoe was held together with brass screws, rather than the traditional heavy duty thread. According to Quartermaster General Meigs, this would make the shoe more durable and longer lasting. Unfortunately, the screws protruded through the leather

and into the foot, causing the wearer excruciating pain. Additionally, the brass screws conducted heat and cold to the wearer, causing more discomfort. One commanding officer complained that some of his men were crippled as a result of wearing substandard government issue shoes. In his 1875 report to the War Department, Inspector General Marcy noted the numerous complaints from post in Texas and Kansas over the brass screws penetrating the inner sole, and inflicting pain on the wearer. Marcy reported that 27 pairs of boots and 120 pairs of shoes were found to be defective from imperfect threads on the screws, and subsequently replaced by the contractor. Many soldiers took advantage of an 1879 General Order which allowed the men to wear civilian shoes and boots. Many cavalymen in the Southwest elected to wear cooler, and more comfortable Indian moccasins and leggings instead of cavalry boots. Only with the retirement of General Meigs in 1884, did the army replace the brass screw shoes and boots. While the medical reports from Fort Griffin list many soldiers discharged for various ailment or disabilities, there is no record of any soldier being discharged for foot abnormalities, but this may be that most soldiers had by this time purchased their own footwear.⁷²

For the frontier soldier the most contentious issue was pay. In an effort to demonstrate concern for the citizen soldiers, during the Civil War Congress enacted a special pay provision which increased the pay of enlisted soldiers by \$2 a month in 1861, with a further raise of \$3 in 1864. This brought the pay of a private from a pre-war \$11 to \$16 a month. After the war, once the volunteer army had been mustered out and as a cost cutting incentive, in 1871, Congress reduced the pay of the army to the 1861 level with disastrous results. Soldiers responded to this reduction in pay with massive desertions. In 1871 alone the desertion rate rose from 9.2 percent to 32.6 percent. Fort Griffin, like most

frontier garrison, suffered crippling desertion rates. In a ten month period in 1871, Fort Griffin recorded a total of eight-eight desertions. There were two desertions in January, eight in February, nine in March, eight in April, four in June, a staggering twenty-nine in July, eighteen in August, thirteen in September, and two in October. An average of eight and four-fifths desertions per month. While the reduction in pay may not have been the primary cause of all eight-eight desertions, it was certainly the major factor.⁷³

In an effort to correct the problem of enlisted pay, on May, 15 1872, Congress established a series of longevity increments amounting to one dollar per month for the third year of service, two dollars in the fourth year, and three dollars in the fifth year of the soldiers' first enlistment. Under this system a private would earn \$16 a month in the last year of his first enlistment. However, in order to deter desertions Congress mandated that all longevity pay would be held by the government, at four percent interest, until the soldier was honorably discharged. The belief being that the soldiers would not want to forfeit their money by deserting. Soldiers who reenlisted would only have one dollar in longevity pay retained until discharge, but they would continue to receive their highest salary. Along with the longevity pay the new law encouraged soldiers to save money voluntarily. In the 1860's, the army had attempted unsuccessfully to reduce desertions by forcibly deducting one dollar a month from each private's pay, which was receivable on his honorable discharge. Under the new system, a soldier could deposit \$5 or more with the paymaster and after six months earn a four percent interest on savings of \$50 or more. A few men did take advantage of this savings plan and manage to accumulate a sizable sum upon discharge. But for most soldiers the temptation to spend money was too great and few were willing to set aside a portion of their pay.

Additionally, even if a soldier wanted to save some of his pay, there was no safe depository on post. Most men distrusted their fellow soldiers, and even the commanding officer of Fort Griffin admitted that sending money through the mail or carrying it on them invited theft.⁷⁴

As a result of the 1872 legislation, for most of the Indian Wars soldiers in the cavalry, infantry and artillery branches received the same basic salary. Privates received \$13 a month, corporals \$15 a month, sergeants \$17 a month, and first sergeants \$22 a month. Soldiers in the engineer and ordnance branch received higher pay, with privates making \$13 a month, a private first class \$17 a month, corporals \$20 a month and sergeants \$34 a month. A Signal Corps sergeant first class and a hospital steward received a princely \$45 a month. Out of this salary soldiers had their longevity pay deducted, and an additional twelve and one half cents taken out to support the Soldiers' Home in Washington, D. C.⁷⁵

Another source of friction was the various forms of army salary in the guise of extra duty. The army had a pre-war custom of paying more if soldiers were engaged in extra duty assignments for more than ten days. A laborer could earn an extra 20 cents a day, while a mechanic, blacksmith, school teacher and an artisan received an extra 35 cents a day. Before Private Benjamin Stackhouse deserted, his extra duty pay of 35 cents a day as the Fort Griffin teacher would have earned him an extra \$10.50 a month, almost doubling his pay. Under this system a private receiving his base and extra duty pay could often make more than his first sergeant. Soldiers frequently turned down promotions because they could make more money by remaining a private, and working in an extra duty assignment. Not surprisingly, this pay differential caused much strife and dissension in the non-commissioned ranks. Not until 1898, when the army carried out major

reforms, were many of the inequities in the army pay system corrected.⁷⁶

Payday was perhaps the most important event on the post. Ordinarily a traveling paymaster would visit each post every two months. Trooper McConnell recalled that weeks or months before the arrival of the paymaster there was not a cent to be found circulating among the enlisted men. Once the pay master arrived on post and set up his office, the companies were mustered, and usually paid by the seniority of their commanding officers. The enlisted men were formed up outside the paymaster's office, each man dressed in his undress blues, but wearing his dress white gloves. When a soldier's name was called, he removed the glove from his right hand and signed the payroll sheet. The paymaster would then count out the pay and place it in the soldier's right hand, while at the same time he saluted with his left.⁷⁷

Even with two months pay in this pocket the men discovered that it did not go far in frontier establishments. Because of the government's monetary policy, frontier soldiers were paid in paper money, "greenbacks," which was discounted by civilian merchants, anywhere from fifteen to fifty percent, in relation to gold and silver. This hardship was only reversed when the government resumed specie payment in 1879. For most soldiers, the first order of business was to pay off old debts. Many soldiers had little or no money left after paying off their old debts to the post sutler, civilian establishments, and moneylenders, who frequently charged exorbitant interest rates. Then there were the financial obligations to the company laundress, company barber, company cobbler and company tailor.⁷⁸

Many soldiers would spend a large portion of their pay on food purchased from the post trader. W.B. Hicks opened the first trading post on Government Hill in 1868, but

was not able to keep an adequate inventory of goods. The post surgeon wrote that the inventory was very limited and but the quality of items was only fair. Additionally, freight cost kept prices high and on payday the limited stock was quickly exhausted. Not until 1870, when Frank E. Conrad assumed the duties of post trader was the inventory to improve. Conrad had served two years as the post trader at Fort McKavett, and he brought his considerable experience and managerial skills to his new position. His trading post was so successful that he was able to open a store in the town of Fort Griffin. Entering into a partnership with merchant Charley Rath, the firm of Conrad & Rath were to reaped great profits in the 1870's, from the market in buffalo hides, and herds of cattle passing through Fort Griffin on their way to markets in Kansas.⁷⁹

Just a few of the items a soldier could purchase from Conrad's store included chocolate at 75 cents a pound, pineapple at 45 cents a can, a Best beer at 65 cents a bottle, cheese at 30 cents a pound, a two pound can of lobster for 80 cents and a can of condensed milk for 40 cents. Unfortunately, the high cost of goods along with the discount imposed on his paper money, could quickly exhaust a soldiers pay with one visit to Conrad's establishment.⁸⁰

While some men quickly gambled their pay away, the vast majority of soldiers lost their money in drunken revelry at the local "hog ranches" which invariably sprang up around military post. For many soldiers, drinking was an escape from the monotony, boredom and aimless existence of army life. Small towns, such as Saint Angela at Fort Concho, Scabtown at Fort McKavett and the Flat at Fort Griffin, catered to the needs of the restless soldiers with cheap, vile liquor and prostitutes. For the frontier saloons, gambling houses and sporting women army payday was an important economic windfall,

and each was hopeful of separating the soldier from his money.⁸¹

Frequently, the flow of liquor among the men resulted in fist fights and drunken brawls. While visiting friends in another company, a drunken Private Michael Finnell challenged anyone to a fight. When a sergeant ordered his arrest, Finnell became belligerent and had to be confined in the guardhouse. In another incident a drunken brawl ensued when an Irish sergeant used “grossly abusive language” towards a black soldier. Surgeon Carlos Carvallo reported over 150 cases of contusions treated in one year, most the result of alcohol fueled fights. The morning after payday typically found a soldier with empty pockets, a pounding head and often a stay in the guardhouse. Some soldiers were so incapacitated by drunkenness after a night of revelry that they were unable to carry out their military duties, which led to further disciplinary problems.⁸²

Some soldiers short of money would resort to selling government property, or their extra military clothing, to civilians for money to buy alcohol. Uniforms, guns, ammunition and horses found a ready market among the civilian population. The blue wool trousers, flannel shirts and underclothing were items in great demand by cowboys, miners, ranches and settlers, who could purchase them cheap from the soldiers. One soldier was even court martialed after being discovered stealing nuts and bolts from the post blacksmith’s shop. But the most prized item was the heavy army overcoat. The exchange rate for an overcoat was a bottle of whiskey and there was a brisk market. Henry Comstock, who was driving a herd of cattle through Fort Griffin to Kansas, recalled that soon every trail hand in his outfit “had a cavalryman’s overcoat with a cape over the shoulders.”⁸³

In his medical report, post Surgeon Steinmetz was constantly writing about the

problems of drunkenness. In 1869, Steinmetz reported only one case of drunkenness and as late as August 1871, wrote there was “very little except during the end of the month when the men are payed off.” But after 1871, as the Flat grew into a major supply point for cattle drives and buffalo hunters, the number of saloons and bootleggers increased, with the result that drunkenness became a serious problem among the soldiers. By 1871, Steinmetz wrote that “drunkenness prevails to quite an extend” and Colonel W. H. Wood, Fort Griffin garrison commander, complained that the men wasted their pay on gambling, whiskey and women.⁸⁴

Unfortunately, drunkenness was to remain a constant problem for the frontier army, not only in the enlisted ranks, but among some of the officers as well. Officers and enlisted men who were unable to control their consumption of alcohol became major moral and disciplinary problem, and most were eventually discharged from the army. While paydays often turned into a drunken spree, the post surgeon noted that few of the men became hopeless alcoholics. Considering the disgustingly vile rotgut whiskey which the men consumed in the saloons of the Flat, it is amazing that only four cases of alcohol poisoning were recorded from 1873 to 1877, and only one case of delirium tremens. No doubt the strict military routine and the infrequent paydays prevented an even bigger drinking problem among the men.⁸⁵

Only in the 1880's, long after the closure of Fort Griffin, did conditions begin to improve in the permanent garrisons. The establishments of post canteens and the rising popularity of beer, helped reduce drunkenness among the men, curb disciplinary problems and improve morale.⁸⁶

With the exception of pay, no other issue drew so many bitter complaints from

frontier soldiers than the subject of army rations. Not only did the daily ration lack quality but quantity as well. During the Civil War, the daily ration for soldiers was 20 ounces of beef, 12 of bacon, 18 of soft bread, 2.4 of beans, 2.4 of sugar, .6 of salt and 1.28 of roasted coffee. For the duration of the war Congress supplemented this fare with an increased ration of bread and potatoes. After the war, an economically minded Congress reduced army rations to the point that army surgeon Glover Perin wrote the “ration is not only deficient in quantity but that it does not contain the elements necessary to preserve the health of the soldier.”⁸⁷

The primary rations of the frontier soldier consisted of beef, pork, beans, rice, cornbread, hominy, tea, bread or hardtack and coffee. The only condiments available were salt, pepper brown sugar, vinegar and molasses. Owing to spoilage and transportation difficulties along the frontier, army rations did not provide for butter, milk, eggs or fresh vegetables. These items could only be obtained from the post trader, company or posts gardens or from the local civilian population. In an effort to add vegetables to the diet, the army experimented with a variety of dried vegetables which were compact, lightweight and easily transportable, but they proved so unpalatable that they were quickly dispensed with. In the 1860's, a form of 'desiccated potato' was added to army rations with mixed results. Boiling water was added to the potatoes to make a paste which was then formed into cakes and fried. Because all supplies for Fort Griffin had to be transported over 215 miles from the railroad terminal at Denison, Texas, most vegetables supplied to the men were canned. The only fresh vegetables which the post received were the occasional wagon load of onions and sweet potatoes, which were expensive to purchase and often of inferior quality. In his January 1875 medical report,

Post Surgeon Caldwell stated that the variety of fresh vegetables was poor, and that the men received only enough to prevent an outbreak of scurvy.⁸⁸

For the soldiers of Fort Griffin, there was little variation in the menus between breakfast and dinner, which consisted of a monotonous diet of beef, bread and coffee. The beef was supplied to the post by contract with local ranchers at \$2.75 per hundred pounds. While the beef was judged of good quality and was plentiful, even it became tiresome when served every day. Breakfast would consist of beef or hash, also known as slumgullion stew, bread, coffee or tea. Dinner would vary only by the occasional addition of plum pudding, baked beans or soup. Supper consisted almost uniformly of bread and coffee, sometimes with the addition of apples, peaches or syrup. While fresh wild meat and fish may have occasionally graced the menu of a particular company mess, the medical report stated that “no supplies of any consequence are obtained from hunting and fishing near the post.” Only on Thanksgiving and Christmas could the soldiers look forward to a more varied diet, along with the addition of sweets. On Christmas Day in 1874, Company G of the 11th Infantry, along with the usual fare of roast beef, bread and coffee, enjoyed a dinner and supper of ham, tomatoes, potatoes, pudding, cake and pies, while the men of Company G, 10th Cavalry feasted on turkey, pies and cakes.⁸⁹

The army stipulated that each company was responsible for its own mess. The company mess sergeant would draw the staples of flour, cornmeal, beans, beef, salt pork, hardtack and coffee from the commissary department. According to army regulations, food preparation was to be conducted by several privates detailed by the company commander for a ten day tour as cooks and bakers, with no extra compensation. Under this system the army believed that if soldiers learned how to cook on posts, they could

properly and safely prepare their rations in the field. Sixth Cavalry Trooper Harry McConnell, by now a first sergeant, ignored regulations and was able to retain in the company mess a soldier who had been a cook in the Dutch Navy. In order to compensate the soldier for his efforts, McConnell charged each man in the company a few cents each month to give to the cook. It must have been a contented company for McConnell was to write that "Wonderful were his resources in producing new and unexpected results in our bill of fare....puddings and mysterious sauces that...seemed worthy of Delmonico..."⁹⁰

Fort Griffin also successfully circumvented this regulation, for as Post Surgeon D. G. Caldwell wrote "The company cook was retained in his position as long as he elects to remain or until he fails to perform his duties properly. The character of the cooking depends, to some extent at least on the skill factor and tact of the company cook." The system of retaining one cook appears to have worked, for Caldwell noted that there were no complaints from the men, and "as a rule however, the men are supplied with good wholesome food, well cooked." Company kitchens were inspected daily at 11:30 A.M. by the Officer of the Day and by company officers. Regular inspections were conducted by the commanding officer and the medical officer. Caldwell wrote that during his term of duty "no diseases have occurred which could be attributed to the quality of the food, or to the manner in which it was prepared."⁹¹

The dilapidated, and poorly built kitchens and mess halls did not promote sanitary conditions. Company kitchens were furnished with one large cook stove, and rough cupboards for the storage of nonperishable foods and cooking utensils. The attached mess hall was furnished with rough pine tables and benches. The floor of both consisted of rough stone blocks. Cracks in the walls and roof allowed the free entry of dust, rain, flies

and other vermin which often contaminated the food, and contributed to the periodic outbreaks of diarrhea and dysentery among the men. Caldwell described them as “extremely uncomfortable in bad weather.”⁹²

While some foods were fried or roasted, the most common method of cooking was boiling. Beef, salt pork, bacon, soup, beans and stews were boiled then simmered. Hash or stew was usually baked all night and served at breakfast. Unfortunately, few soldiers possessed any culinary talent, resulting in food that was poorly prepared and frequently unpalatable. A large amount of food was also lost through spoilage due to improper handling, and the lack of adequate storage facilities. An exasperated Major Thomas M. Anderson of the 10th Infantry expressed the sentiments of many when he wrote that “...nearly as much food is wasted as is used in the Army from the ignorance and inexperience of company cooks.”⁹³

It was while in the field, on a campaign or escort duty, that many soldiers fell ill as a result of improperly cooked food. Caldwell wrote that the men are issued flour to be baked into bread in Dutch ovens. Unfortunately, the men used too much baking soda, resulting in bread that is unwholesome and unhealthy. Caldwell reported that many of the men developed diarrhea, dysentery and other digestive disorders from the poor quality of the bread. He recommended the use of hard bread, or hardtack, instead of the issue of flour, but the officers and men were adamantly opposed to its use.⁹⁴

The bakery at Fort Griffin was continually plagued by sanitary problems. The flour and corn meal was often infested with weevils or damaged by weather. The post medical report of September 1869 noted that the “Bread, during the first and middle part of the month, was of very inferior quality being doughy and tough, owing to the wants of hops,

and the inferior quality of the flour.” Only when a supply of hops was received did the quality of the bread improve. The same report noted that the flour and corn meal issued was of “inferior quality, containing weevils and small worms in large quantity” and was “musty and caked from damage by the weather.” The post surgeon suspected that a post wide epidemic of dysentery and diarrhea was a direct result of the moldy bread and wrote that “as soon as the bread began to improve, [the] endemic was at once modified.” The quality of the flour was to be a continual problem, for as late as 1879, it was judged as only fair by the medical officer.⁹⁵

In May 1870, operations at the bakery were discontinued “since the 7th in consequence of the desertion of the post-baker and there being no one in the garrison confident to fill his place.” Not until July 6 was a suitable replacement found and the bakery placed back in operation. The post surgeon also reported that the oven was too small, the building poorly ventilated, and major improvements were required.⁹⁶

Since 1876, many officers, included the commissary general, adjacent general and the inspector general, had been recommending that the army enlist permanent cooks. This would provide the men with someone with culinary skills and curb the amount of wasted food. In 1891, the army belatedly provided compensation to men with cooking skills, but not until 1898 did Congress authorize the army to provide permanent cooks.⁹⁷

The officers mess offered a more varied and healthful menu. A few of the items the army commissary department provided the officers mess was bacon, ham, sardines, mushrooms, clams, lobster, pickles, tomatoes and peaches, along with a wide variety of spices. Surgeon Caldwell wrote that “All of the articles on the list compare very favorably with articles of the same kind found in family grocery stores” and that “the

only exception being that, recently, an excessive amount of some perishable articles are received and have deteriorated before they can be used.” The Fort Griffin officers’ mess purchased two cows from a local rancher which provided a fresh supply of milk. Officers with families frequently kept chickens purchased from local ranchers for a steady supply of fresh eggs. Additionally, an officers pay would enable him to purchase the more expensive items from the post trader, such as Eclipse or Extra Dry Champaign at \$37.00 for a dozen pints, sherry at \$1.25 per pint, a J.B. Behloradsky beers at 70 cents a bottle, potted tongue at 80 cents a can, or satisfy his sweet tooth with gum drops or caramels at 50 cents a pound.⁹⁸

Perhaps no man had a more daunting task in the frontier army than the post surgeon. He was responsible for the health and well being of the garrison. On the frontier he was frequently the only doctor for hundreds of miles. He treated not only the soldiers, but their families, local civilians and friendly Indians. The surgeons at Fort Griffin struggled constantly against the filthy, and unsanitary condition of the men and the garrison. They treated accidental gunshot wounds, rattlesnake bites, fractured bones, boils, contusions, scurvy, constipation, diarrhea, dysentery, intestinal disorders and the flu. The post surgeons continually submitted reports to the commanding officers of Fort Griffin complaining of uncollected rubbish, foul sinks, venereal disease among the men, and overcrowding in the guardhouse. Army medical records indicate that each year, of every 1,000 men, post surgeons treated approximately 1,800 cases. Of these, almost 1,550 were for disease and 250 for wounds, accidents and injuries. For each 1,000 cases 13 died, 8 from disease and 5 from wounds, accidents and injuries. Not surprisingly, venereal disease was the most prevalent disease, followed by malaria, respiratory

disorders and digestive ailments.⁹⁹

From 1876 to 1871, the post surgeon reported a total of forty cases of venereal disease. He concluded that thirty-nine of these cases were contracted by men who had passed through San Antonio on their way to Fort Griffin. After 1871, as buffalo hunters and trail herds began to utilize the Flat as a supply source of supplies, the number of saloons and bordellos began to increase. Consequently, incidents of venereal disease and syphilis among the soldiers began to multiply. In May 1871, Sergeant John McDonald of the 6th Cavalry, and Privates Thomas Norton and Thomas O'Shea both of the 11th Infantry were all given certificates of discharge for what the post surgeon termed "constitutional syphilis." In 1875, Surgeon Caldwell reported several of the soldiers had already contracted venereal disease from the "lewd women living in the vicinity of the post." In February 1876, Private Jeremiah Redder was discharged due to syphilis contracted "by his previous intemperance." Approximately ten soldiers were discharged from Fort Griffin for syphilis during its history. When combined with other frontier post, the number of men discharged for syphilis must have been staggering, creating a further manpower problem for the army. Sexually transmitted diseases would continue to plague the frontier army, for wherever a military post was established a "hog ranch" was soon to appear.¹⁰⁰

Fort Griffin was perpetually plagued by various diseases, especially malaria. The proximity of the Clear Fork of the Brazos and Collins Creek were ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The cracks in the walls and roofs of the poorly built barracks allowed the insects' easy access to the men. Although occasional outbreaks of malaria were a constant menace, the most serious occurred in September 1869, when the surgeon

reported nineteen cases. A second outbreak occurred in September 1878, when the surgeon recorded a large number of malarial fever cases at the post, and “moderately disseminated in the surrounding locality.” Fortunately, there were no recorded fatalities in either outbreak. The only recorded death from malaria occurred in August 1874, when Sherred Helm, a recently discharged soldier from the 10th Cavalry, died of what the surgeon termed “typho-malarial fever.”¹⁰¹

Diarrhea and dysentery were other common ailments which periodically swept through the garrison. A lack of personal hygiene among the men was certainly one contributing factor. The simple procedure of washing hands would have prevented many outbreaks. A major source of dysentery was food contaminated by moisture, dirt and vermin. The improper preparation and storage of food led to many cases of diarrhea, stomach and bowel disorders. In 1872, one soldier died due to inflammation of the stomach and bowels. Several cases of diarrheas and dysentery were so severe that men were given certificates of disability by the post surgeon, and discharged from the army. Tragically, the first recorded death at Fort Griffin occurred on September 12, 1869, when the wife of Lieutenant N. M. Kendall died of acute dysentery. Lieutenant Kendall was on patrol at the time and did not learn of his wife’s death until his return. Mrs. Kendall was “interned in the soldiers cemetery, her body being followed to the grave by the officers of the garrison and their wives, together with her other friends at the post. The burial services of the Roman Catholic Church were read over her remains, as she had requested.” Lieutenant Kendall later had the body disinterred and moved to her family’s home in LaPorte, Indiana. Just one week later on September 19, Private Henry Blair of Company E, 24th Infantry, also succumbed to acute dysentery, and was “interned with the usual

military honors, in the soldier's cemetery at this post."¹⁰²

Respiratory ailments were another common complaint among the men. The poorly constructed barracks were badly ventilated and drafty. In winter the cold wind and rain freely entered through cracks in the walls and contributed to a large assortment of ailments. The post surgeons reported a large number of men receiving discharges from the army due to chronic rheumatism, pulmonary pleurisy, bronchitis, respiratory lung infection, and consumption or tuberculosis. Soldiers were not the only ones who suffered from these respiratory ailments. Sam Houston, a Tonkawa army scout, died at the post hospital on June 24, 1874, of consumption.¹⁰³

Soldiers died of a wide variety of diseases including typhoid fever, which took the life of Lieutenant Austin Pierce in November 1870. In March 1871, Sergeant Charles Coffey died of Bright's Disease. One soldier died of acute cerebral meningitis and in 1874, Private Nathan Williams died of a ruptured urethra. In 1874, a private in a detachment of men returning to Fort Griffin from Denison, Texas, suddenly sickened and died. The post surgeon later determined the soldier died of heart disease. There were at least two recorded fatalities in which the post surgeon could not determine the cause of death. In February 1881, in the only recorded outbreak, the post surgeon wrote that "measles has prevailed during the month at the town of Fort Griffin and vicinity. No cases have occurred among the troops and but one family at the post (that of the Commissary Sergeant) has been affected with the diseases." The death of two Tonkawa Indians, who were serving as army scouts, was also recorded by the post surgeon. In April 1870, Mauck (Yack-eus) died of hemophilia, and in October 1871, Chief Loc Burlington died in the hospital after being poisoned in the Tonkawa village , by person or persons

unknown.¹⁰⁴

Soldiers received a certificated of disability and a discharge from the army from diseases such as epilepsy, inflammation of the heart, enlargement of the spleen, paralysis, hypertrophy, conjunctivitis and chronic ophthalmic. One interesting case is that of Private Joseph Keller of Company G, 11th Infantry, who in December 1875, was given a certificate of disability, and a discharge for chronic rheumatism, and sciatica of the right leg. Sciatica is a pain, tingling or numbness, produced by the irritation of the nerve roots that lead to the sciatic nerve in the lower back, and which extends down the back of the legs, ankles and feet. It is often caused by a bulging or ruptured disc. The surgeon reported that the “inability to use the limb caused a wasting of the muscles” leading to “a considerable loss of motor power in the limb.”¹⁰⁵

There are even two documented cases of mental disabilities. In May 1874, Private Alfred Leo of the 10th Cavalry was discharged “by reason of imbecility of mind and consequent inability to learn or perform the duties of a soldier.” And in August 1874, Private Samuel Anderson of the 10th Cavalry was discharged for “imbecility of mind.”¹⁰⁶

Another source of fifth and contamination was the lack of bathing facilities for the men. While army regulations required that men bath a least once a week, there was little effort to enforce the regulations or to provide adequate bathing facilities. Many post in the arid Southwest had only enough water for drinking and cooking, and certainly none to spare for bathing. As one officer wrote, “The regulations say the men must be made to bathe frequently; the doctors say it should be done; the men want to do it; the company officers wish them to do so; the Quartermasters’ Department says it is important. Yet we have no bathrooms.” One officer recalled that he had never seen a bathhouse during his

30 years in the army. How the men endured was summed up by a soldier who stated that, "It wasn't so bad after a while since everybody smelled, they all got used to one another."¹⁰⁷

In the poorly ventilated and crowded barracks at Fort Griffin the odor must have been overpowering. One officer reported that even after the men had vacated one barracks, and the windows and doors had been open for half an hour, the stench was overpowering. While the post surgeon struggled to enforce the regulations, bathing was only possibly during the spring and summer months. During the winter months and without proper indoor facilities, the men simply did not bath. The post medical report for May 1870, states that, "since the appearance of warm weather the men often bathe in the creeks around the post. There are regulations in regard to this matter." Hospital patients "are required to bath not less than once a week as well as on admission when their strength will permit when otherwise their bodies are sponged by the attendants; these requirements have been fully complied with." Collins Creek, located at the foot of Government Hill, was the most convenient facility for the men, the other being the Clear Fork of the Brazos, a quarter mile from the post.¹⁰⁸

The greatest source of disease and unspeakably foul conditions was the post guardhouse. The Fort Griffin guardhouse was described as an old frame building 14 x 32 feet, divided into two rooms, one for the guards and the other, 14 x 20 feet, for the prisoners. Only in the summer of 1875, was an additional prison room of 14 x 20 built to relieve the chronic overcrowding. Post surgeons continually complained that it was overcrowded and infested with lice, fleas, flies and rats. The prison room was unventilated and never allowed to air out. The straw in the bedding was never changed

and was swarming with bedbugs. The floor of the guardhouse was cover in tobacco juice, food scraps and other debris. The trash and filth which had collected underneath the floor, along with the unwashed bodies of the men, created an odor that was sickening. Men were confined for offenses ranging from theft, desertion, fighting, and drunkenness to manslaughter. Other men were confined for minor offenses such as having a button unfastened on their blouse, unpolished boots or failing to salute an officer. Surgeon Carlos Carvallo objected to these two classes of prisoners being confined in the same room. He wrote that “The better class of soldiers and the imprisoned recruit confined for slight offenses, are here brought under the harmful influence of the chronic deserter, and other vicious characters usually found in the post guardhouse.” Prisoners were given thirty minutes to eat and only allowed out of the guardhouse at reveille, when they were detailed to police the garrison grounds. Their duties included cleaning latrine sinks, collecting trash, cleaning the stables and other menial tasks. The remainder to their time was spent incarcerated in the guardhouse.¹⁰⁹

The overcrowding of the guardhouse reached epidemic proportions in 1871. In January there were 33 prisoners, 29 in February, 30 in March, 26 in June, 20 in October, and an incredible 56 in November. The average number of prisoners confined in the guardhouse for the entire year of 1871, was 28 1/2 men. It was the 56 men imprisoned on November 26 which provoked a confrontation between Surgeon Carvallo and Colonel W.H. Wood, the garrison commander. On January 1872, Carvallo submitted a report to the assistant adjutant general of the Department of Texas, “requesting that a special inspector be sent to inspect and report upon the condition of the guardhouse – owing to the danger of some dangerous epidemic such as typhus breaking out,” because of

overcrowded, inadequate ventilation and bad policing. Carvallo also recommended that the floor of the prison room be removed, the trash and rubbish beneath carried away, and the ground be covered in lime. He also called for the prison room to be scrubbed under the supervision of the post surgeon, the airing of the prisoners bedding, daily inspection of the prison room, and a whitewashing of the guardhouse.¹¹⁰

To substantiate his claims of conditions in the guardhouse, Carvallo wrote that “more than one fourth of the cases of sickness among the enlisted men of the command occurred among the inmates of this Dungeon. On March 27 there were as many sick prisoners as sick men in the whole of the rest of the command.” To substantiate his argument, Carvallo used the case of Privates Martin McDonough and James Murphy as examples. In August 12, 1871, Private McDonough was confined to the guardhouse after being charged as a habitual drunkard. Carvallo wrote that “half of the time of his confinement he was in good health and capable, when sober, of performing his duty.” On December 13, 1872, after five months of confinement, McDonough was admitted to the post hospital for a “severe attack of scurvy and Chronic Rheumatism.” McDonough’s health continued to deteriorate, and in February he was given a certificate of disability and discharged from the army. Private Murphy was incarcerated in the guardhouse in December 1871. Surgeon Carvallo reported that during his confinement “scurvy manifest itself” and that his rheumatism became chronic. On May 23, 1872, Private Murphy was given a certificate of disability and discharged from the army.¹¹¹

Colonel Wood was enraged by the report and accused Carvallo of insubordination. Wood objected to statements in the report which he said “were untruthful and lead to convey false ideas and impressions.” The Colonel ordered Carvallo to remove all

statements from the report which he considered offensive. Threatened with a possible court martial Carvalho amended his report by removing “all the objectionable paragraphs which reflected upon the Commanding officers actions.”¹¹²

The greatest hazard to soldiers on frontier duty was not from hostile Indians but from accidents. Soldiers suffered injuries and death from accidental shootings, suicide, drowning, a drug overdose, and insect bits. Drowning claimed the lives of three Fort Griffin soldiers. In May 1870, Ferrier Felix Kenny of the 4th Cavalry was thrown from his horse and drowned in Collins Creek. He was buried in the post cemetery with full military honors. In June 1871, Private Pete Dunn was drowned when the wagon he was driving was turned over by a strong current while crossing a creek between Fort Griffin, and the sub post of Fort Phantom Hill. His “remains were brought to the post and interned with military honors.” The final victim of drowning was Private Moses Price of the 10th Cavalry, who was brought dead to the post hospital on October 17, 1873. Private Price drown while crossing the Clear Fork of the Brazos about 25 miles from the post near Carters Range. The surgeon reported that the “body was considerable decomposed” and that no post mortem examination was conducted. One of the most bizarre deaths occurred on Christmas Day 1870, when Private Agustis Bend of the 10th Cavalry was found frozen to death near the post.

In what is almost certainly the bite of a black widow spider, in August 1876, the post surgeon reported that two men of the 11th Infantry “have suffered severely from the effects of the bite of a poisonous spider, which was concealed in the wall under the seat of the sink.” The surgeon recommended that the sink be so arranged that the seats can be removed and set aside when not in use. He also recommended that the walls beneath be

plastered to prevent the spiders from entering. Although rattlesnakes were a daily hazard only one case was treated by the post surgeon, a civilian from the town of Fort Griffin.¹¹³

A carriage accident on March 11, 1871 almost took the life of post Surgeon W.R. Steinmetz. Returning from attending to a civilian patient, Steinmetz was somehow violently thrown out of his carriage. Assistant Surgeon Edward Alexander discovered Steinmetz fifteen minutes after the accident in “a condition very much resembling concussion of the brain.” At his own request Steinmetz was returned to duty on the March 27, but continued to suffer from ‘harmful cramps, stiffness of limbs, confusion of thought and slight impairment of sight and hearing.’ Steinmetz was so incapacitated by the accident that Assistant Surgeon Alexander had to assume the duties of post surgeon until Steinmetz fully recovered.¹¹⁴

Another hazard for both soldiers and civilians was the ever present danger of bone fractures. In June 1879, civilian R.G. Hastings was admitted to the post hospital for treatment of fractures in both bones of the lower legs above the ankles. As the surgeon tersely noted, “discharged cured July 31, 1879.”¹¹⁵

Shootings, accidental and intentional, were the primary cause of injury and death to soldier and civilians alike. The first recorded gunshot wound to a soldier at Fort Griffin occurred on December, 24, 1869, when Corporal Henry E. Taylor of Company E, 24th Infantry was shot in the lower right leg. Corporal Taylor survived his wound and after a stay in the hospital returned to duty in February 1870. In a bizarre shooting ruled as an accident, on January 23, 1870, Private Jackson Tolliver of Company E, 24th Infantry was shot not once, but twice by a fellow soldier. One bullet entered the chest and the other his right leg. Surgeon Steinmetz removed both bullets and noted that Private Tolliver had

recovered from shock, and seem to be doing well, but suddenly died at 11:30 P.M. from internal hemorrhage. Corporal James Bonham of Company H, 4th Cavalry was shot in the right fore arm by a drunken soldier. Assistant Surgeon Orsamus Smith removed bone fragments and applied splints. Corporal Bonham was transferred to the post hospital at Fort Richardson for further treatment, recovered and was later returned to his company at Fort Griffin.¹¹⁶

There were only two cases of murder and attempted murder in the history of the post. The first occurred in December 1870, when Sergeant Gottfried Schuler of Company G, 11th Infantry was shot and killed instantly by a soldier from his own company. His killer may well have been a soldier seen by state militiaman A.J. Sowell marching around a pole to which he had been chained. Although Sowell reported that the man had shot and killed an officer who had slapped him across the face with a saber, there is no record of an officer murdered at Fort Griffin. Most likely this was the soldier that had shot Sergeant Schuler. Sowell reported that the soldier marched around the pole in the freezing rain and cold until he died. The second incident occurred when a Lieutenant Taylor issued an order to a private, who apparently found the order objectionable, and assaulted the lieutenant, violently throwing him to the ground. The private then removed his pistol and claimed that he was going to blow the lieutenants head off. Fortunately the officer was able to deflect the pistol just as it fired. The bullet missed his head but his ear was mangled by the shot.¹¹⁷

Another accidental shooting occurred in March 1872, when Private Thomas Lyon of Company H, 4th Cavalry, was “shot in the head, by the discharge of a revolver in the hands of a neighboring comrade.” Private Lyon died eight hours later “from hemorrhage

and pressure on the brain from the ball.” In September 1872, the first shooting of a soldier in the Flat was recorded. Private Michael Cameau of Company E, 11th Infantry was involved in an altercation with a civilian in the Flat and was shot. He died from his wounds a week later. In an incident which “occurred between soldiers and citizens of the town of Fort Griffin near the post on October 26, 1875,” Private Daniel Bingham of Company F, 11th Infantry was shot. The bullet went through his hand, entered the left thigh just above the knee, hit the femur, and then traveled upward to lodge in the gluteal muscle. Post Surgeon D. C. Caldwell removed the bullet, applied cold applications, and reported that Bingham appeared to be doing well. Unfortunately Bingham began to develop a massive infection in his thigh, complicated by a high fever. Despite all effort by the surgeon, Bingham died in December. In the final shooting incident involving a soldier, Private Edward Copley of Company G, 11th Infantry, was shot in “the middle of the belly of the biceps muscle” during a drunken brawl at the Flat on October 1876. Despite massive swelling of the belly and a lengthy hospital stay Copley recovered and “was returned to duty on April 8, 1876. Cured.”¹¹⁸

In his monthly report for July 1875, Surgeon Caldwell wrote that some of the soldiers were in the habit of carrying concealed razors and small pistols, with the result that within the past month several of the men had been severely wounded by these weapons. He recommended that it be made illegal for the men to carry any weapon, except as prescribed by regulations and orders. Caldwell believed that this would lead to “quite a falling off in the number of accidents and injuries during their payday.”¹¹⁹

There were two suicide attempts recorded in the post medical history. The first was a suicide attempt using Laudanum. On July 20, 1878, Private John Pierce of Company E,

10th Infantry was discovered lying in his bunk “in a comatose condition; respiration slow, pupils contracted and pale skin.” Private Pierce had been seen in his quarter for about two hours and observed drinking earlier in the day. But upon observing that “there was a bottle containing a little bit of tincture of opium on the table near him it was suspected that he had taken an overdose of that medicine.” Surgeon A. A. Yeoman was able to determine that Private Pierce had purchased the bottle of Laudanum two or three day before, and had not taken any of it until the day of the suicide attempt. Yeoman sent out an assistant to the druggist, who stated that the bottle was full of Laudanum when sold to Private Pierce, and that the patient had been advised not to take more than the dose which was plainly marked on the bottle, ‘Dose for an adult – 30 drops.’ Initially Yeoman was unsure if Private Pierce had actually contemplated suicide or if under the influence of liquor he had taken opium by mistake. “But as the man’s character had not been good at the post, it seems probable that he took the Laudanum with the view of securing a painless death.” With the aid of a stomach pump and a combination of sulfur atropine, mustard, alum and Castro Oil, Yeoman was able save Private Pierce, and he was returned to duty in August.¹²⁰

The second suicide occurred on August 8, 1878, when Private John Sutton of Company E, 10th Infantry shot himself with his regulation .45 cal. rifle in the left cheek, with the bullet subsequently lodging in the brain. The surgeon noted that “the muzzle of the gun must have been very close to, or in contact with, the cheek, as the flesh was blackened and bruised.” Private Sutton had communicated to other soldiers in his company “that he was suffering greatly from homesickness (nostalgia) of the most severe character.” Private Sutton had just arrived at the post on July 11th with a detachment of

other recruits, and not being accumulated to the climate of the Southwest, was suffering miserably from the heat. The surgeon noted that Sutton had been hospitalized for an attack of malarial fever in late July which had been preceded by a further attack before his suicide.¹²¹

Soldiers were not the only patients treaded by the post surgeon for gunshot wounds. Most were liquored up resident of the Flat, wounded in disputes over a perceived wrong, cards or women. In December 1879, post Surgeon J.T. Powell treated civilian Davis Miller for a gunshot wound to the right ankle. A more serious case occurred in March 1881, when Surgeon Powell treated John M. Fleming of a gunshot wound to the left leg resulting in a compound fracture of the tibia, the large bone in the lower leg. After a lengthy examination Powell determined the leg could not be saved. Two hours after admission Fleming, “was etherized and the leg amputated, at the knee joint.”¹²²

The most notorious civilian shooting victim the post hospital treated was a man named J. B. Cockrell. Cockrell was involved in a running feud with a man named Kit Peppard, alas Joe Bowers, who ran a saloon in the Flat. Bowers claimed to be from Prescott, Arizona and was described by Surgeon Carvallo as, “a deseparate or noted desperado who had already murdered two men in cold blood within sight of the waving Stars and Stripes, without any effort being taken by the military authorities to bring him to justice.” The feud began in Bowers’ saloon, where Cockrell accused a gambler, who worked in the saloon, of cheating him at cards. The feud continued to simmer with occasional insults exchanged, until one day Bowers went gunning for Cockrell, but only managed to kill the horse he was riding. On February 18, 1872, Bowers and Cockrell met again. After a

fusillade of shots, Bowers succeeded in shooting Cockrell through the right lung. Surgeon Carvallo was able to save Cockrell's life, all for naught as things turned out, and on March 2 he was discharged. Still recovering from his wound, Cockrell began to spend time in a saloon next to Bowers establishment, telling any and all who would listen that he was going to finish Bowers one day. Finally on May 3, that fateful day came. Now completely healed, Cockrell armed himself with a Winchester rifle and began to walk toward Bowers saloon. Having been informed by friends that Cockrell was coming, Bowers armed himself and waited. As soon as Cockrell entered his saloon, a blast from Bowers double barreled shotgun effectively ended the feud. Much to the disgust of Carvallo, Bowers, who had also killed John Carter, a black wood contractor for the post, "was allowed to go at large and even to come to the post a few times after the murder."¹²³

But the most prevalent problem which faced the army was desertion. During the Indian War period the army numbered only around 25,000 men, but from 1867 to 1891 the Secretary of the War reported that approximately 88,475 had deserted from the army. The peak period was from 1871 to 1872, when one third of the soldiers who enlisted in the army deserted in each of those years. The army suffered staggering desertion rates for so many years that many officers considered the problem incurable. An indication of the problem besetting the army can be obtained by statistics of deserters from Fort Griffin. From 1867 to 1875, the average garrison strength of Fort Griffin was approximately 320 men, but during that same period there were 292 recorded desertions. Adding the deserters from the other frontier garrisons and the magnitude of problem is stunning. When asked for possible solutions to the problem in 1878, Judge Advocate General W. M. Dunn could only recommend more harsh regulations against gambling and more

rigorous discipline for drunken soldiers. Not until the 1880's and 1890's did the army take more positive steps, and begin to investigate the root causes of desertion, and develop recommendation to deal with it.¹²⁴

But many frontier officers were already familiar with the causes of desertion. They were aware that soldiers were exploited as common laborers, lived in inadequate quarters, ate substandard and poorly prepared food, suffered from boardroom, low pay, lengthy intervals between paydays, harsh discipline, tyrannical officers, brutal noncommissioned officers and the indifference or outright hostility of the civilians. Many soldiers who enlisted in the army were unaware of what the army was about, while others could not adjust to military discipline and routine.¹²⁵

A majority of the desertions which took place between 1871 and 1872 can be traced to a budget conscious Congress, which reduced the pay of a private from sixteen to thirteen dollars a month. Owing to the reduction in pay the frontier army experienced a flood of desertions as exemplified by the 88 men who deserted from Fort Griffin in 1871. Many soldiers deserted the army because of the economic incentives civilian jobs offered. The west suffered a perennial shortage of labor, and many jobs paid as much as a dollar a day, greater than what a laborer could make in the east. This was especially prevalent in areas where better paying jobs were plentiful. Men could earn good wages in a railroad construction gang, mining, logging, as a teamster or as a cow hand. Soldiers, like their civilian counterparts, were also caught up in the get rich quick fever on the discovery of a new gold or silver field, and quickly deserted to join the stampede to the new diggings.¹²⁶

Other soldiers deserted because they could no longer tolerate the loneliness of a frontier post and the continued isolation from civilization. Some posts in the Southwest

were located in deserts, miles from any town which could have provided relief and diversion from the daily routine of army life. The largest town to offer recreation to the soldiers at Fort Griffin was San Antonio and it was several days ride away. Not infrequently, men suffered from homesickness, but found that furloughs home were difficult to obtain from an unsympathetic first sergeant and company commander. In the event a soldier was granted a furlough, he often lacked the money or the time for a trip east to visit kin. Unable to endure continued separation from family and weary of army life, the soldier simply deserted at the first opportunity. Other deserters were soldiers who did not fit in socially or conform to conventional standards. In the close confines of the barracks new recruits had to quickly adapt to the patters of his assigned company. Men who did not adapt and caused continual conflicts within the company were actually encouraged to desert.¹²⁷

Enlisted men facing a court martial, possible prison or harsh punishment for a minor breech of discipline, chose desertion rather than face the consequences. A soldier could be punished with confinement in the guardhouse, assigned extra duty, restricted to quarters, fines and loss of pay for minor infractions. A dirty rifle, late or missed roll call, talking out of turn, laughing in ranks or incurring the displeasure of an officer or noncommissioned officer would often land the miscreant in the guardhouse for days. Other punishments could be inhumanly cruel, such as walking up and down in front of the guardhouse with a heavy log over their shoulders, confinement in a sweatbox, suspending a soldier by their arms, wrists or thumbs, marching with a knapsack full of rocks, dunking in a stream or staking a man to the ground. Rather than face his court martial and punishment, a Private Hallock of Company D, 4th Cavalry deserted from

the Fort Griffin guardhouse in April 1867, and was never apprehended.¹²⁸

It is hardly surprising that soldiers deserted in droves considering the low pay, bad food, inadequate quarters, brutal discipline, and isolation. Two third of all soldiers who deserted did so in their first eighteen months of service. Some of the new recruits discovered they did not like army life and, as they would with a civilian job, they simply quit. Other deserters used the army as a means of free transportation to the West. Most desertions took place in the spring and summer months when travel was faster and easier.¹²⁹

For the soldier who deserted, the chances of being caught were marginal. Only one out of every five deserters was ever caught. Most civilians, rather than report a deserter, tended to protect them. This prompted General Reynolds J. Burk to write, “the general opinion was that ranchers were disposed to cover up such men,” and rarely admitted information or knowledge of them to pursuing detachments. Indeed, “The average citizen regards desertion as but little worse than enlistment.” Only the rewarded of thirty dollars for the capture of a deserter motivated some civilians to turn them in to law enforcement or army authorities. Most deserters often had a head start of several hours, and were easily lost in the vast, unsettled county. In May 1870, five men deserted from Fort Griffin and while details were out sent in pursuit, they returned unsuccessful.¹³⁰

Indian army scouts were the most successful in tracking and apprehending deserters. In July 1870, a detail from Fort Griffin was more successful when it caught four deserters from Company F, 6th Cavalry after a two day pursuit. In July 1880, Private James Baughman, a deserter from Company A, 24 Infantry, was arrested by the sheriff in Weatherford, Texas and returned to the post under escort. After the end of the Civil War,

desertion was not viewed as a particularly serious and dishonorable crime until World War I. Even if a deserter was caught the punishment was usually only two to five years at hard labor, a dishonorable discharge, and forfeiture of all pay and allowances. Soldiers who remained loyal often sympathized with men who deserted, and took little pleasure in seeing a man returned in chains. Frequently deserters awaiting court martial were shackled with a ring around one ankle and a 25 pound ball attached to a five or six foot length of chain which caused excruciating pain.¹³¹

In an effort to deter desertions, the army experimented with various measures, such as conduct unscheduled roll calls at odd hours of the day and night. Frequently, during the night the captain or lieutenant would go from bunk to bunk waking up each man and requiring them to give their name. These unannounced checks were intended to quickly discovered deserters who had counted on several hours head start, and to deter would be deserts. The most obvious reasons for the army to apprehend or prevent desertions was the loss of government property that deserters took with them. Soldiers often deserted in the field taking their horses, saddles, carbines, pistols, ammunition, and field equipment. While deserters kept the horse and saddle for travel, the extra equipment could often be converted to cash by selling it to civilians, who were only too eager to obtain government equipment. Additionally, a deserter had to be replaced, increasing the cost to the government in recruiting, training and equipping a new soldier. Only in the 1890, with new laws and reforms, did the army succeed in greatly lowering the desertion rates.¹³²

Chapter 4

Clash of Warriors 1867-1875

But regardless of bad food, drafty barracks, isolation and boredom, the officers and men of Fort Griffin were there for one purpose, to pacify the Comanche and Kiowa Indians, and open the frontier for settlement. In their fight against the Comanche, the army often sought civilian volunteers who were familiar with the area. Many of the local ranchers, who suffered the continual loss of livestock, frequently rode with soldiers on patrol and after 1871, federal authorities allowed the Texas legislature to organize a state militia. To act as trackers and scouts the army enlisted the services of the Tonkawa and the tiny band of Lipan Apache Indians. They had established a small river bottom village at the edge of the fort for protection against their traditional enemies, the Comanche. Originally the inhabitants of much of the Hill Country, the nomadic Tonkawa soon found themselves caught between the Comanche and the rapidly expanding Anglo settlers. When forced to choose sides, the Tonkawas decided their future lay with the settlers of Texas. They rendered valuable service to the Texans and later to the United States military during wars with other Indian tribes.¹³³

By 1854 there were approximately six hundred Tonkawas living on the Lower Brazos Reservation located at Fort Belknap. As part of the Indian removal policy in 1859, the Tonkawas were relocated to a new reservation in the Indian Territory. With the coming of the Civil War in 1861, the Tonkawas were once more caught between the two warring factions of North and South. Compelled to make another agonizing decision, the

Tonkawas cast their lot with the Confederacy, while other Indians on the reservation remained loyal to the Union. By 1862 tensions between the Tonkawas and the prouion Indian tribes had reached a boiling point. Seizing an opportunity to exact revenge for erceived wrongs, on October 24, 1862, the Delaware, Shawnee, Wichita, and Caddo along with other tribes attacked the Tonkawas. Of the 300 members of the tribe over half ere killed in the massacre. As a result of the attack, the Tonkawas harbored a seething hatred against all plains Indians and especially the Comanche, who had driven them from their ancestral homeland. The survivors immediately fled the reservation and returned to Texas, where they camped around the towns, begging for food and whiskey. After the war Governor J. W. Throckmorton petitioned the federal government and military authorities to donate land and supplies. The army agreed to provide protection to the Tonkawas in exchanged for their service as army scouts. In 1867, the Tonkawas were initially settled at Fort Richardson where garrison commander Major Samuel Star described them as a “lazy, vagabond race.” Finally on August 4, 1868, the remaining 143 impoverished survivors were settled at Fort Griffin.¹³⁴

The Tonkawas lived a primitive existence in their small village at the foot of Government Hill. Insensitive treatment at the hands of the whites, and the assault on their traditional way of life and culture sapped their spirit. Additionally, many Tonkawas adopted the worst aspect of Anglo culture. Many whites loathed them for their fondness of alcohol, their smelly attire and filthy personal habits. Surgeon Carvallo noted that the bars and liquor stores in the Flat sold whiskey to the Tonkawas in violation of government law, and that it was normal to see “both men and women in a beastly state of intoxication.” Carvallo was also appalled by the “frightful hygienic condition,” of the

Tonkawa village, “and nothing is done for its proper policing.” For the Tonkawas the solution was simple, whenever a village became too filthy to live in, they simply moved to another location nearby.¹³⁵

Colonel W. H. Wood, the garrison commander at Fort Griffin, was less than happy with his new Indian charges. In an effort to eliminate the problem, Colonel Wood tried to have the Tonkawas reassigned to Fort Concho. Unsuccessful in this endeavor, he offered their services to anyone who would take them away from Fort Griffin. When that invitation was refused, he consoled himself that they would eventually “become extinct and no longer be a burden to the government.” Not without a tone of irony General Edward Ord complained that while the government fed and clothed the hostile Comanche and Kiowas, the friendly Tonkawas were allowed to starve except for the scouts. Army service gave the Tonkawas a renewed sense of purpose, status in the tribe and an opportunity to become warriors once more. In spite of the contempt Colonel Wood held for the Tonkawas, they were to render valuable service to the U. S. Army in its campaigns against the Comanche, including the pivotal Red River War of 1874-1875.¹³⁶

The army’s plan for defending the Clear Fork settlers was relatively simple. Cavalry units were to be employed for patrolling and in the pursuit of hostile Indians. Infantry and small mounted detachments were to man two sub posts for strategic support. A company of infantry, a small detachment of cavalymen, and two Tonkawa scouts reoccupied the old post of Phantom Hill. Located thirty-three miles southwest of Fort Griffin, Fort Phantom Hill was abandoned and burned in 1854, forcing the soldiers stationed there to live in tents. A small guard detachment also occupied Mountain Pass, forty miles southwest

of Phantom Hill. These sub post garrisons were to supply escort for the stage line to El Paso, government supply wagons, immigrants and surveying parties. Unfortunately, the Fort Griffin garrison suffered from a number of handicaps. Because a majority of the soldiers were from the urban North and many were foreign, most soldiers were unskilled in 'Indian fightin.' An additional disadvantage was that despite the new line of post, the cavalry could not be everywhere at once. Comanche and Kiowa raiding parties were aware of this and easily penetrated into the interior to inflict havoc on the settlers. The Comanche, often called the best light cavalry in the world, knew the area well from previous raids, were extremely mobile and adept at lighting raids. While they did not pass up the opportunity to kill an isolated settler, they avoided pitched battles whenever possible, intent only on obtaining plunder and captives.¹³⁷

The soldiers were also hindered by the governments own vacillating policies and aims. The army was characterized by a lack of coordination between military divisions, personality conflicts and infighting between federal departments. There were disagreements over strategy between President Ulysses S. Grant, and Generals William Sherman, Philip Sheridan and John Pope. Congress was unwilling to finance protracted and costly military campaigns, much of the public wanted a more conciliatory approach to the Indians, and reformers, such as the Quakers, lobbied against any type of military solution. But the most insurmountable obstacle to overcome was the conflicting aims of the Department of the Interior, which had administrative control of the reservations, and the War Department, who was task with placing the Indians on them. Not until the military debacle along the grassy slopes of the Little Big Horn River in the summer of 1876, was Congress, the public and the War Department galvanized into a concerted

action to seek a military solution to the Indian problem.¹³⁸

Handicapped or not Lieutenant Colonel Samuel D. Sturgis had a mission to accomplish, and he began by sending out patrols immediately upon his arrival at the Clear Fork. Not until the fall of 1867 was the first encounter recorded between soldiers from Fort Griffin and hostile Indians. On October 17, while leading a patrol through Shackelford, Stephens, and Palo Pintos counties, forty-five enlisted men of Companies F, I, K, and L of the 6th Cavalry and twenty-two Tonkawa scout, under the command of Sergeant W. A. T. Ahrberg, encountered a party of Comanche Indians at Deep Creek. In the engagement which followed Sergeant Ahrberg reported, "Indians killed, 3; prisoners taken, 1 woman; property captured, 19 horses; 1 mule, and 2 revolvers" along the scalps of five white men.¹³⁹

In early 1868 Fort Griffin soldiers were to achieve their most complete victory to date over an Indian raiding party. On March 1, a band of Comanche swept deep into Stephens County where they came upon a group of herders engaged in a roundup of cattle. One of the herders spotted the war party and quickly gathered the other herdsman together. As the herders scouted the area for more Indians both parties inadvertently collided on a small rise, and a lively skirmish ensued. But the Comanche quickly realized they were outgunned by the well armed ranchers and withdrew. Upon searching the area the herders discovered the body of George Hazelwood, who had become separated from the main body of herders and was killed.¹⁴⁰

The Comanche raiders then moved westward into Shackelford County, where they killed Phil Reynolds, an employee of Judge W. H. Ledbetter salt works, who was out gathering wood. By the morning of March 2, the raiders had surrounded the salt works

itself. As employee Nep Thornton was walking toward the salt works that morning, he observed the Comanche as they crouched behind the banks of a nearby creek. Realizing they had been spotted, the raiders immediately opened fire. Thornton in turn drew his revolver and returned fire. Trapped in the open as he was, Thornton knew that if he ran he would be instantly killed. Keeping his wits about him, he crouched in the grass and carefully fired whenever a target presented itself. Alerted by the shooting, Judge Ledbetter quickly became aware of Thornton's situation. With his wife reloaded the guns, the judge was able to maintain a continuous fire and prevent the Comanche from surrounding Thornton. Under the covering fire of the judge, Thornton slowly and skillfully withdrew to the safety of the house. Unable to secure the quick victory they had expected, the Comanche broke off the fight. For the second time in two days the Comanche war party had been driven off with nothing to show for their efforts.¹⁴¹

Once the Comanche had retreated from the salt works, Thornton and another employee, Sam Lindsey, walked the twenty-five mile to Fort Griffin in order to notify the command of the attack. Colonel Sturgis immediately dispatched Captain Adna R. Chaffee with Companies F, I and K of the 6th Cavalry, totaling five officers, sixty-two enlisted men and seven Tonkawa scouts, to the salt works. From the salt works the Tonkawa scouts easily discovered the trail of the Comanche, who were slowed by three wounded men being dragged on litters behind their horses. Now joined by Ledbetter, Chaffee set a furious pace as the soldiers trailed the Comanche raiders in a westerly direction as they crossed the Clear Fork below Phantom Hill, through Jones and into Haskell counties. Early on the morning of March 6, 1868, the Tonkawa scouts discovered the raiders camped in the forks of Paint Creek, seeking shelter from the freezing cold.¹⁴²

Chaffee quickly positioned his soldiers and scouts around the raiders' camp to prevent any avenue of escape and waited for the dawn. At first light Chaffee's cavalymen and scouts launched their attack. Caught completely by surprise, the Comanche were thrown into utter chaos. The Tonkawas were whipped into a savage frenzy against their hated foe. Believing that mutilating the body of their enemies would scar them in the next life, the Tonkawas butchered every Comanche warrior they could lay their hands upon. Fighting for their very lives, some of the Comanche finally succeeded in breaking through the ring of soldiers and escaped. It was a signal victory for the soldiers and a complete rout of the Comanche, who lost seven warriors in the battle. Chaffee's casualties were two men slightly wounded. Among the Comanche dead was a black man wearing a chief's headdress named Cato who lived at Fort Concho. It was known that he was married to an Indian woman named Kate Gambel, a prostitute, who later plied her trade in the Flat at Fort Griffin. Because Cato would frequently disappear for long periods of time it was surmised that he was raiding with the Comanche.¹⁴³

The March 1868 raid was a major blow to the Comanche and the frontier was relatively quiet until the spring of 1869. Once again the soldiers of Fort Griffin achieved a significant victory over the Comanche when on May 7, units of the 35th Infantry and Tonkawa scouts, under the command of Captain G. W. Smith, cornered and killed fourteen Comanche and Kiowa warriors. In the spring of 1870, Captain Wirt Davis defeated two separate raids in a three month period. On April 3, 1870, Captain Davis with Company F, 4th Cavalry, turned back a raiding party at North Hubbard Creek, killing two Indians and wounding four others. In July 1870, Captain Davis with thirty-seven men of Company D and F, 4th Cavalry and ten Tonkawa scouts departed Fort Griffin to pursue a

band of Indian warriors who had stolen a herd of cattle. Captain Davis overtook the Indians west of Phantom Hill and engaged them in a running battle, in which one warrior was killed and the herd recovered. The Indians broke off the fight and fled. Captain Davis continued the pursuit, but unfortunately the trail was lost when a herd of buffalo stampeded between the soldiers and the warriors. The officers and men of Fort Griffin were beginning to learn the art of fighting the plains Indians and had much to be proud of.¹⁴⁴

In the spring 1871, the Comanche and Kiowa raids were to increase in number and ferocity. Warriors from north of the Red River would sweep south to launched devastating raids on the Texas frontier, then quickly return to the safe haven of the reservation, knowing that soldiers were forbidden to enter. Young County, directly south of the Indians Territory, was particularly hard hit, as were the settlers between Forts Griffin and Richardson. On January 24, four black teamsters led by a man named Brit Johnson, were hauling supplies on the Butterfield Trail from Weatherford to Fort Griffin when a war party of Kiowas led by Manan-ti attacked from ambush. Caught in the open, the Johnson order the men to kill their horse to form a barricade, but there were too many warriors and all four men died within minutes. The men were then scalped and horribly mutilated. Johnson was disemboweled and his pet dog stuffed into his abdomen. Seeking other victims the Kiowas captured another man and scalped him alive. Kiowa war parties even attacked settlers within view of Fort Richardson. By May of 1871, fourteen settlers had been killed and the Texas frontier was in an uproar. Texas Governor Edmond J. Davis complained that “the atrocities recently committed by the Indians’ were beyond “all previous experience of their murderous doings.” He lobbied federal authorities to

increase military strength along the frontier and redouble their efforts to keep the Indians on the reservations in the Indian Territory.¹⁴⁵

Complaints from Governor Davis, resolutions from settlers, newspaper accounts and dispatches from the military department in Texas prompted General Sherman to make an inspection of the Texas frontier. He wanted to see for himself if the appeals for increased protection were justified. In April 1871, Sherman landed in Galveston, accompanied by Inspector General of the Army Randolph B. Marcy. From there Sherman proceeded to San Antonio where he arrived on April 28. On May 2, Sherman, Marcy, two staff officers and a selected detachment of seventeen troopers of the 10th Cavalry departed San Antonio, and set out for the frontier. Sherman was so convinced that reports of Indian depredations had been overly exaggerated that he chose to make the trip in a bulky army ambulance. The caravan passed through Forts McKavett, Concho, and the sub posts of Chadbourne, Mountain Pass and Phantom Hill, finally arriving at Fort Griffin on May 14. During the passage not one Indian had been sighted, which all but convinced Sherman that the reports of murderous Indian raids were the result of overwrought and hysterical settlers.¹⁴⁶

The next day Sherman and his party resumed the seventy mile journey toward Fort Richardson. As the caravan traveled further north, abandoned fields, burned homes and torn fences were a testament to the destruction wrought by the Comanche and Kiowa raids. Marcy was moved to comment that "the remains of several ranches...the occupants of which have been either killed or driven off to the more dense settlements by the Indians. Indeed, this rich and beautiful section does not contain today so many white people as it did when I visited it eighteen years ago, and if the Indian marauders are not punished, the

whole country seems to be in a fair way of becoming totally depopulated.” Safely crossing the Salt Creek Prairie below Fort Belknap, Sherman’s party reached Fort Richardson by sunset, where he was received by Colonel Ranald MacKenzie, garrison commander, his officers and distinguished citizens of the town. Only later was Sherman to discover how narrowly he had avoided death at the hands of a Kiowa war party.¹⁴⁷

As Sherman crossed Salt Creek Prairie over one hundred Kiowa warriors lay hidden on a rise overlooking the meadow. Sherman owed his life to Owl Prophet, the medicine man, who allowed the party to continue. His magic prophesized that they would have more success with the second party to cross the prairie. Two hours behind Sherman’s group were twelve wagons owned by Henry Warren taking a load of corn to Fort Griffin. When the wagons reached the center of the meadow the Kiowa’s attacked to the blast from a bugle. The men desperately tried to circle the wagons but the Indians were in their midst almost immediately. Five of the teamsters managed to make it to the safety of some trees and escaped, the other seven men were horribly killed. Around midnight the first of the survivors, Thomas Brazeal, stumbled, bleeding and dazed, into Fort Richardson where he related his story to Sherman and Colonel MacKenzie. Only when the other teamsters arrived to confirm Brazeal’s story was Sherman to realize how close he had come to meeting the same fate.¹⁴⁸

Sherman ordered Colonel MacKenzie to assemble a troop of cavalry, survey the massacre site and pursue the Kiowa. When Mackenzie’s column reached Salt Creek Prairie, the sight that met them was appalling. All of the teamsters had been scalped and mutilated. Some had so many arrows in them one soldier said that they resembled porcupines. A few were beheaded and their brains removed, while fingers, toes and

genitals had been cut off and stuffed in their mouths. One teamster had live coals placed inside his exposed abdomen while alive. The worst fate befell to a man who had been chained between two wagon wheels and burned alive. The dispatch received from MacKenzie convinced Sherman unequivocally that the reports coming out of Texas these many years, of Indians atrocities, were not the result of exaggerated hysteria. With MacKenzie on the move, Sherman sent a dispatch to Colonel H. W. Wood at Fort Griffin on May 19 with an account of the incident and his marching orders. Wood and 150 cavalrymen were to search the head waters of the Little Wichita and its tributaries, and attack any Indians encountered. Colonel Wood later joined with Mackenzie's column where they trailed the Kiowa raiders to the reservation north of the Red River. Here Mackenzie learned that the leaders of the raid had been arrested and were to be sent back to Jacksboro, Texas under his escort for trial.¹⁴⁹

Sherman continued his trip north and arrived at Fort Sill on May 23 to consult with General Benjamin H. Grierson and Indian Agent Lawrie Tatum, head of the reservation to which the Comanche and Kiowa were nominally assigned. Although Agent Tatum was a Quaker and an initial supporter of President Grant's Indian Peace Policy, even he was shocked by the rising death toll in Texas from the continuous raids. Tatum now favored sterner measures against Indians who participated in these raids and their trials in civil courts. Tatum admitted to Sherman that he knew many of the Indians from the reservation were away on raids, and confessed "they come and go as they please."¹⁵⁰

On May 27, Kiowa chief Satanta (White Bear) arrived at the reservation and brazenly confessed to Tatum that he, along with Satank (Sitting Bear) and Big Tree (Edo-Eetti) had led the raid on the Warren wagon train, had killed the seven teamsters and stolen

forty-two mules. Satanta then lectured Tatum on the indignities the Kiowa's had suffered, then demanded his rations, along with guns and ammunition. Tatum notified General Grierson of Satanta's confession and asked that he be arrested. A meeting was arranged at Grierson's quarters between Satanta and General Sherman. As Satanta arrived, he was unaware that a dozen buffalo soldiers, from Company D, 10th Cavalry were hidden in and around the house. Under questioning from Sherman, Satanta again confessed to his participation in the raid, at which point Sherman informed him he was under arrest and would be sent back to Texas for trial. As an angry Satanta jumped to his feet and reached for his pistol. Sherman gave the signal and the buffalo soldiers quickly covered Satanta with cocked rifles. Other units of the 10th quickly arrested Satank and Big Tree.¹⁵¹

On the morning of June 8, 1871, Satanta and Big Tree were loaded into the first army wagon for the trip to Fort Richardson. Satank loudly proclaimed that he would not go back to Texas and that he intended to kill someone. When he refused to get into the second wagon some soldiers threw him in. He then hid his head under his red blanket, which was a sign of his belonging to the Koitsenko Kiowa. It was believed that he was hiding his face in shame, but he was actually gnawing his wrists so he could get out of his handcuffs. Once he got his hands free he began to sing his death song, whereupon he stabbed a corporal who was sitting next to him with a knife he had hidden in his clothes. As the corporal fell out of the wagon, Satank seized his rifle. Before he could fire, Satank was brought down by a volley of rifle fire from the other guards. The soldiers threw his body to the ground and left. His family was so fearful of army reprisals that they did not claim the body, even after assurances from Colonel Mackenzie that they would not be harmed. As the old chief lay on the ground, he was scalped by the Tonkawa scouts.

Rather than leave Satank in the road, Mackenzie had some soldiers bury him on Chief's knoll in the Fort Sill cemetery. Mackenzie then safely delivered Satanta and Big Tree to Fort Richardson for trial. Both men were found guilty and sentenced to hang. But pressure from the Quaker community and Agent Tatum convinced Governor Davis to commute the sentences to life in prison. Under heavy guard both Indians were transferred to Huntsville penitentiary to begin their sentence. The settlers along the frontier were outraged by Davis's action. Sherman was furious, declaring that if the chiefs were ever set free, "no life from Kansas to the Rio Grande will be safe and no soldier will ever again take a live prisoner." One result of the trial was that the Comanche and Kiowa's suspended their raids in Texas, if only for a short time.¹⁵²

With raids from the reservation Comanche and Kiowa temporarily halted, owing to the incarceration of their chiefs, attention turned to another band of Comanche who refused to accept reservation control. The most truculent of these bands were the Quahada Comanche led by Quanah Parker. Other bands were the Yamparika and Kotsoteka Comanche led by the sub chiefs Mow-way (Handshaker) and Paro-a-coon (He Bear). The Quahada chiefs had refused government handouts, boasting that they acquired all the white man's good they required from raids on the settlers, and by trading stolen livestock and captives to the *Comancheros* from New Mexico for guns, ammunition and whiskey. Quanah Parker and the other chiefs had flatly declared they would only accept reservation life and "walk on the white man's road" when the "blue coats invaded their country and whipped them." In the fall of 1871, Colonel Mackenzie accepted that challenge. Colonel Mackenzie's command, along with troops from Fort Griffin under Colonel Wood, had orders to launch a massive campaign against the Quahada Comanche

of the Staked Plains, and their strong hold in Palo Duro Canyon. Sherman reasoned that if the home of the Comanche were attacked, it would, in turn, lessen their attacks on the frontier settlements. To carry out this expedition, eight companies of the 4th Cavalry, four from Fort Richardson and two from Fort Griffin, along with two companies of the 11th Infantry from Fort Concho, and twenty Tonkawa scouts converged at a site north of Fort Griffin. On October 3, Mackenzie's command of over six hundred men began the march north to the Texas Panhandle. Major E. M. Lawton's supply column of nearly one hundred pack mules brought up the rear of the column.¹⁵³

The first night in camp northeast of Double Mountain almost met with disaster when an immense herd of buffalo stamped directly for the sleeping soldiers. Captain R. G. Carter, in command of the night guard, had his men run toward the buffalo waving blankets, which had the desired effect. The buffalo herd changed direction and went thundering off into the night. After an uneasy night, the march resumed the next morning following the course of the Salt Fork of the Brazos in a northwesterly direction. The second night's camp was along Duck Creek in Kent County, where Major Lawton established his first supply base. The third days march soon found the soldiers in the eroded hills, arroyos and breaks of the Palo Duro county, where they came upon several abandon hideouts of the *Comancheros* which had been built into the banks of the bluffs.¹⁵⁴

That night, the Tonkawa scouts reported they had located the Quahada village. Leaving two companies of the 11th Infantry to guard the pack train, Mackenzie marched out of camp at midnight, determined to strike the hostile Comanche. Unfortunately, operating in unfamiliar Country, Mackenzie soon found himself lost in a labyrinth of

ravines, canyons and towering cliffs. After spending an uncomfortable night in a box canyon, Mackenzie was able to maneuver the column out of the canyon and reached the Freshwater Fork of the Brazos, exhausted and hungry. When his scouts reported the presence of a second village, Mackenzie immediately set out again but when he arrived at the site, the Indians had already departed. After a day of fruitless searching, Mackenzie's worn out troopers camped at Blanco Canyon on the Freshwater Fork of the Brazos. But the column was to suffer one more ignominy. Before morning, a band of Quahadas raced through Mackenzie's camp dragging buffalo hides and ringing cowbells which resulted in the loss of more than sixty army horses.¹⁵⁵

Still determined to locate the main Comanche village, Mackenzie sent out scouting columns in various directions. Soon Captain Carter, who had saved the camp from the buffalo stampede, made contact with a large band of hostiles. Greatly outnumbered, Captain Carter was forced to retreat. By the time Mackenzie and the main column arrived, the hostiles had broken contact and fled, along with the entire village of women and children. Mackenzie quickly set out in pursuit but was halted by the brutal winter weather. Bitter cold, howling winds, and blinding snow and rain forced the column to give up the pursuit. Moving back into the canyon for shelter, the troopers came upon two Comanche scouts. In the skirmish which followed the Comanche scouts were killed but Mackenzie took an arrow in the leg, which was successfully treated by the column's surgeon. The bitter weather, the loss of horses and the exhaustion of the men eventually forced Mackenzie to turn back. In early November 1871, he arrived at his base camp near Fort Griffin and from here each unit returned to its respective garrison. While the campaign may have failed to accomplish its objective of striking a crippling blow against

the Quahada Comanche, Mackenzie learned from his mistakes and gained valuable information, not only on the Indians but on the nature of the terrain. Mackenzie also exposed the extent and magnitude of the *Comanchors* trade with the Comanche and Kiowa.¹⁵⁶

The very next year Mackenzie's determined persistence to strike a telling blow against the Comanche of the Staked Plains was amply rewarded. His Tonkawa scouts located a hostile village on the North Fork of the Red River near McClellan Creek. On September 29, 1872, Companies A, D, F, I, and L of the 4th Cavalry from Forts Griffin and Richardson, made a surprise attack on -way's Kotsoteka Comanche village of 262 lodges. The Comanche were totally routed and lost between 30 to 60 killed. The soldiers burned the village and captured over 130 Indians, mostly women and children, along with nearly 3,000 horses. Mackenzie casualties amounted to one dead and three wounded. Unfortunately, the victory was mired when the Comanche once again sweep through the camp and stampeded the horses. The warriors not only recovered their own horses but made off with numerous cavalry mounts. It marked a major defeat for the Kotsoteka Comanche and when Mackenzie's troopers returned to Fort Griffin, they were greeted as heroes by the citizens of the Flat. With their winter supplies destroyed and many of their families held under heavy guard in a stockade at Fort Concho, the first bands of Kotsoteka surrendered to authorities in the Indian Territory in late 1872. Not until June 1873, were the Comanche women and children captives sent to Fort Sill by army wagons to join the warriors.¹⁵⁷

While most Kiowa raids lessened because of the arrest of Satanta and Big Tree, the Comanche were under no such constraint, and continued their devastating attacks on the

Texas frontier. Between 1872 and 1873, the settlers of Stephens, Shackelford and Throckmorton counties were to suffer an almost continuous series of raids. A worker at the Ledbetter salt works was killed by warriors when he wandered too far from camp. A teacher was shot dead on the outskirts of the small settlement of Picketville. Near his home in Stephens County, Ben Peobles was found scalped and pinned to the ground by arrows. In July 1873, an attack on a settler's home near Camp Colorado left a woman named Williams dead and her seven year old daughter taken captive. A patrol of soldiers from Fort Griffin led by Captain G. W. Angle later discovered the gruesome sight of the young girl hanging from a chinaberry tree on the Salt Fork of the Brazos. Nearby was an Indian shield with the girl's scalp attached to it.¹⁵⁸

Other Kiowa who were impatient would frequently join Comanche raiding parties. One Kiowa who was not content to walk the white man's road was Wild Horse. Learning that his brother had joined a Comanche raiding party and had been killed, Wild Horse determined to carry out a revenge raid. In June 1872, joined by five other warriors, he moved south into Texas, where his vengeance would be exacted on the unsuspecting Able Lee family.¹⁵⁹

The Lee home was only sixteen miles south of Fort Griffin on the Clear Fork of the Brazos. On the Sunday afternoon of June 9, 1872, as Lee was sitting on the front porch of his home reading, he was unaware that Wild Horse and his warriors were working their way along the banks of the river toward his house. Suddenly, from some nearby brush a volley of gunfire ripped into Able, killing him instantly. As the raiders charged the house, Mrs. Lee tried to flee but was felled by an arrow in the back. She was then scalped, one of her arms severed and her body further mutilated. The Lee children attempted to escape

through a corn field, but fourteen year old Frances was killed and scalped. Sixteen years old Susanna, nine year old Millie and six year old John were taken captive. After plundering the house, the Kiowa warriors quickly loaded their terror stricken captives on horses and fled north. Even before news of the attack reached Fort Griffin and other nearby settlers, the raiders had crossed the Red River and were safe in their village. Returning with plunder, horses and captives, Wild Horse and his warriors were received as heroes. The day after the raid Lieutenant E. C. Gilbreath, leading ten troopers and two Tonkawa scouts, was dispatched to investigate the attack. Unfortunately, heavy rains during the night made it impossible for the scouts to track the raiders.¹⁶⁰

When Agent Tatum discovered the Lee children were in White Horse's village, he demanded their immediate release. White Horse agreed only on condition that Tatum ransom the girls. Refusing to deal with White Horse, Tatum told the Kiowa that "paying for them was an encouragement to steal more, and "they should not have a dollar and ...they would have no more rations until the [Lee] boy was [also] brought in." When White Horse hesitated to turn over the captives, Tatum threatened to call in the military, at which point the children were released. Tatum's new hard line policy with refractory Indians was proving successful. Within a year Tatum had forced the Comanche and Kiowa to return 18 white captives, and 164 horses and mules, all without paying a ransom.¹⁶¹

The suspension of most Kiowa raids and the release of the Comanche captives encouraged the Kiowa leaders to call for the release of Satanta and Big Tree. Satanta requested that the Quaker peace policy representatives lobby for his release. He assured Edward P. Smith, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and the peace advocates, that if

released he would convince the Kiowa to end their raiding in Texas. Sherman knew that with Satanta and Big Tree in prison the government possessed an advantage to curb the warlike ambitions of the Kiowa. Agent Tatum knew Satanta only too well when he wrote, "My candid opinion of him is that he could not keep the other Indians from raiding if he wished to; and that he would not do it if he could." The citizens of Texas were so alarmed over the proposed release of the two chiefs that they took their concern to the state legislature. The House of Representatives voted 62 to 0 requesting Governor Davis not to free the two Kiowa.¹⁶²

In October 1872, Commissioner Smith promised a group of Indian chiefs visiting Washington that if the Kiowa ceased raiding in Texas, and if Governor Davis agreed, that Satanta and Big Tree would be released within six months. The Interior Department, Quaker peace advocates and humanitarian groups pressured Davis to honor the agreement. Later that month Commissioner Smith persuaded a witless Governor Davis into bringing the two Kiowa prisoners to Fort Sill to discuss final legalities. Finally, in October 1873, both chiefs were set free. The only stipulation was that if the Kiowa should renew their attacks on Texas and oppose the governments' reservation policy, both Satanta and Big Tree would be rearrested and returned to the penitentiary in Huntsville and serve out the remainder of their life sentence.¹⁶³

The Kiowa were jubilant and gave assurances of peace and support for the reservation policy. Agent Tatum became so disillusioned with the government's policy that he resigned in March 1873, in favor of Quaker James Haworth. The citizens of Texas were shocked and angered. Sherman was furious and sent Davis a scathing letter in which he stated, "I believe in making a tour of your frontier with a small escort. I ran the risk of my

if and I said to the Military Command what I now say to you, that I will not again voluntarily assume that risk in the interest of your frontier, that I believe Satanta and Big Tree will have their revenge if they have not already had it, and that if they are to have scalps, that yours is the first that should be taken.”¹⁶⁴

Sherman's misgivings were soon proven correct. The winter of 1873-74 saw Comanche and Kiowa war parties devastate not only the Texas frontier, but western Kansas, and eastern New Mexico and Colorado. On February 5, 1874, Lieutenant Colonel George Buell, the new garrison commander at Fort Griffin, leading Companies D and G of the 10th Cavalry and Companies A and F of the 11th Infantry along with eighteen Tonkawa scouts, intercepted one such war party along the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos River. In the engagement which followed, the Indians were soundly defeated. Eleven warriors were killed and sixty-five head of stolen livestock recovered. But most raiding parties continued to slipped through the porous frontier and wreak havoc on the frontier. In 1873, sixteen Texas settlers were listed as killed, five wounded and one captured. This number jumped to sixty-five killed, five wounded and one captured in 1874. Following a successful raid the warriors returned to the safety of the reservation knowing that the soldiers were not allowed to follow.¹⁶⁵

Shocked by the rising death toll, Commissioner Smith was forced to admit that it had been a mistake to release Satanta and Big Tree. Smith also pronounced the Quaker Peace Policy as an abysmal failure. General Christopher C. Augur, commanding the Department of Texas, stated that, “All these outrages were committed by the Indians belonging to the Fort Sill reservation, where they are fed by the government and officially regarded as friendly, and their pursuit and punishment within the limits of their

reservation prohibited.” Officers at Fort Sill reported that by 1874, there was a rising hostility among the young Comanche and Kiowa warriors with signs pointing to a major uprising. Although Kicking Bear and some of the other old Kiowa chiefs advocated peace, the young chiefs and warriors would accept nothing less than all out war on the white settlers.¹⁶⁶

Chapter 5

The Red River War, 1874-1875

The influences which propelled the Comanche and Kiowa into what would become the Red River War were numerous and complex. Many Indians could no longer endure the constraints of reservation life, and the loss of traditional living and hunting patterns. Rations were often inadequate, of poor quality and repugnant to their taste. Frequently, to secure the release of white captives and stolen livestock, rations were withheld altogether. The Plains Indians had watched with growing panic the wanton slaughter of the buffalo by white hunters who took only the hide, and left the carcass to rot. Another influence was the cultural value which glorified war and the successful warrior. War was a rite of passage to manhood, a means to gain status and prestige in the tribe. Still another factor was the increased desire to take revenge on the settlers for kinsmen killed in previous raids. Wild Horse's attack on the Lee family was motivated by the desire to avenge his brother killed in a previous raid.¹⁶⁷

Outside pressures also increased the militancy of the Comanche and Kiowa. Whiskey sold on the reservation in violation of federal law was having a devastating and demoralizing effect on the Indians. White horse thieves, principally from Kansas, preyed on the vast herds of Indian ponies. Unscrupulous merchants frequently sold the Indians worn out and defective guns. The Cheyenne, under the same influences, were increasingly participating in the raids with the Comanche and Kiowa warriors. In tribal councils, the Cheyenne were adding their voice to those who were calling for total war.

Most Comanche, Kiowa and Cheyenne warriors had come to believe there was no alternative. They must fight to save their way of life or submit to reservation life and 'walk the white's road.'¹⁶⁸

In the summer of 1874, leading chiefs and warriors of the Comanche, Kiowa, Cheyenne, Arapahoe and Mescalero Apache tribes met near the confluence of Elk Creek and the North Fork of Red River. At a sacred site called Tso'kakan, the tribes participated in an immense Sun Dance ritual. At the ceremony was a Quahada Comanche medicine man named Isatai (Coyote Dung) who vehemently urged war on the whites. He convinced the gathered tribes that he could speak directly to the Great Spirit, who had granted him miraculous powers. Among Isatai's claimed powers was the ability to levitate, raise the dead, produce unlimited quantities of cartridges from his stomach, and so influence the white man that they could not harm the Indians. Isatai first called for a revenge raid against the Tonkawas at Fort Griffin for their assistance to the army. This plan was thwarted when Indian Agent James Haworth was informed of the attack and alerted Colonel Buell. Buell immediately moved the Tonkawa village to the safety of Government Hill and the protection of the fort. Isatai then called on the warriors to attack the hated buffalo hunters' camp at Adobe Walls, located on the North Canadian River.¹⁶⁹

In the early morning of June 27, 1874, in what is acknowledged as the first battle of the Red River War, several hundred warriors led by Isatai and Quanah Parker attacked the twenty-eight hunters in their sodhouse compound. It soon became apparent that Isatai's miraculous powers were no match against the hunters' high powered rifles and superb marksmanship. In a three hour battle, the hunters repeatedly repulsed wave after wave of attacking warriors. Angry at the bad medicine of Isatai and humiliated by their

defeat, the raiders withdrew after losing between twenty-five and thirty warriors. The Comanche and Kiowa then vented their frustration and thirst for revenge in launching punishing raids all along the Texas frontier. One successful raid occurred on the afternoon of July 12, in what came to be known as the Lost Valley Fight. Out to avenge the death of his son and nephew at the hands of the 4th Cavalry, Lone Wolf and fifty warriors ambushed a party of Texas Rangers of the Frontier Battalion, commanded by Major John B. Jones, north of Fort Richardson. One ranger managed to make it to the safety of the post and notify military authorities. Captain Theodore Baldwin with I Company, 10th Cavalry reached the scene to discover two rangers dead, two wounded and a dozen horses killed. From Fort Griffin, Colonel Buell dispatched Companies D, F and G, 9th Cavalry under the command of Captain P. L. Lee to search for the war party, but after five fruitless days the trail was lost.¹⁷⁰

The scope and destruction of the raids had reached such a level of intensity that the War Department was forced to act. General Sherman requested that Secretary of War William Belknap permit troops to pursue hostile Indians into the reservation. He advised Belknap that, "Defensively it will require ten thousand Cavalry to give [frontier settlers] a partial protection but offensively a thousand Cavalry can follow them and punish them as they surely merit." Disturbed by the magnitude of the raids, Secretary of the Interior Columbus Delano and Commissioner of Indian Affairs Smith agreed to Sherman's request. Even President Grant was reluctantly forced to abandon his Peace Policy in support of the War Department's new plan. On July 20, 1874, Secretary Belknap granted Sherman the authority to pursue hostile Indians into the reservation. General Sheridan, the new commander of the Trans-Mississippi West, was delighted with the news. He had

written Sherman that “It is my opinion these raids can only be stopped by a complete control of the reservation. With this control I will agree within eighteen months to close up all Indian troubles forever.”¹⁷¹

Before the campaign to punish the hostiles could begin, the army had one major problem to overcome, and that was to segregate the friendly from the hostile Indians. In the summer of 1874, the agents at the Comanche-Kiowa and Cheyenne-Arapaho reservations ordered their charges to declare their intentions. If for peace, they must enroll at the agencies and be accounted for. If for war, they must leave the reservation and stay away. After August 3, all Indians not on their respective reservations would be declared hostile and subject to immediate attack by military forces. While most Arapahoes submitted to enrollment, the majority of Comanche, Kiowa and Cheyenne left the reservation. In the end only 83 Comanche, 173 Kiowa and 108 Kiowa- Apache elected to stay. Several Comanche chiefs, including Big Red Foot, Tabernanca (Sound of the Sun), Assanonica, Little Crow and Black Duck offered to return to the reservation, but only Assanonica was allowed to do so. The other chiefs were refused, as they had participated in the Battle of Adobe Walls. By August it was estimated that the hostile camp consisted of 1,800 Cheyenne, 2,000 Comanche and 1,000 Kiowa, with approximately 1,200 warriors. The hostiles swiftly moved their camps to the headwaters of the Washita and the various forks of the Red River in the Texas Panhandle. Here, they believed themselves secure from attack among the broken hills, buttes and ravines of the rugged Palo Duro country.¹⁷²

Generals Sheridan, Christopher Augur, commanding the Department of Texas, and John Pope, commanding the Department of the Missouri, had drawn up the campaign in

July. It was to consist of five powerful columns converging on the hostiles from the north, south, east and west, in one continuous operation. The hostiles were to be given no respite, no chance to escape, but harried until they were utterly crushed. One column under Colonel Nelson A. Miles would move south from Fort Dodge, and make for the headwaters of the Red River. It would consist of eight troops of the 6th Cavalry, four companies of the 5th Infantry, a detachment of artillery, twenty-five Delaware scouts and twenty-five civilian scouts, altogether 750 men. Another column under the command Major William R. Price would march east from Fort Bascom, New Mexico with four troops of the 8th Cavalry, comprising about 225 officers and men. The third column, under Mackenzie, would move northwest from Fort Concho, and consisted of eight troops of the 4th Cavalry, four companies of the 10th Infantry, one company of the 11th Infantry, and thirty Tonkawa scouts. Altogether his force consisted of 21 officers and 450 men. The fourth column was commanded by Colonel George Buell from Fort Griffin. His command was composed of six companies of the 9th and 10th Cavalry and two companies of the 11th Infantry. Buell was to march west with his column, and while nominally under the command of Mackenzie, he would follow an independent course. His orders were to search for hostile Indians between the Clear Fork and the Red Rivers. The final column was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John W. Davidson and consisted of six troops of the 10th Cavalry, three companies of infantry and forty-four Indian scouts. Although over three thousand cavalry and infantry were now closing in on the hostiles.¹⁷³

The first major engagement of the campaign occurred on August 30 at the Prairie Dog Town Fork of Red River. Over 200 Cheyenne warriors charged the advanced units of Miles column. In a five hour battle, the soldiers pursued the warriors over twelve miles of

rugged canyons, hills and breaks. The Cheyenne, aided by Comanche and Kiowas, were able to delay the soldiers until their families were able to escape from Tule Canyon and disperse across the Staked Plains. Although Miles had to turn back to replenish his supplies, he destroyed a large village and tons of camp equipment and other provisions.¹⁷⁴

Colonel Buell's troops departed Fort Griffin on September 1 and arrived at Fort Sill on the eighth, where he reorganized his command and made final preparations for the campaign. On September 24 he left Fort Sill with his column and thirty wagons loaded with supplies. Five days later he established a supply camp on the North Fork of the Red River. Colonel Buell divided his command into two battalions. The first battalion was commanded by Major Albert Morrow and consisted of Companies A, E, F and K of the 9th Cavalry. Captain Nicholas Nolan commanded the second battalion with Companies A and E of the 10th Cavalry. Each battalion had a unit of Tonkawa scouts. Buell reasoned that each battalion would be able to scour more terrain and continue to remain within supporting distance of each other. On the morning of October 3, the columns got under way. The men were already beginning to feeling the effects of the cold and wintry weather which had descended over the entire Panhandle.¹⁷⁵

Buell's first contact with the hostiles occurred on October 9, at the Salt Fork of the Red River. Following a fresh trail, Company E of the 9th Cavalry made contact with a small band of warriors. In the pursuit which followed, one warrior was killed and the remainder escaped in the breaks of the Red River. Upon further searching, a camp of fifteen lodges was discovered and burned. On October 10, Buell's supply train arrived to reprovision the column, giving men and horses a much needed rest. When his scouts

reported signs of a large body of hostiles within striking distance, Buell made the decision to cut loose from his supply train in order to march the column more swiftly. Early on the morning of October 11, Buell began his search along the ravines and breaks of the Salt Fork. His soldiers discovered a deserted camp of 75 lodges which was burned, along with all provisions and equipment. The next day his scouts located another abandoned camp of 475 lodges. It too was destroyed, along with tons of food and supplies. Following the trail as it turned toward McClelland Creek and the Canadian River, Buell's columns began to come upon discarded equipment and worn out ponies. Clearly, his pursuit was having a devastating effect on the fleeing Indians. With winter quickly approaching, the hostiles had suffered the catastrophic losses of shelter and provisions. Soon they would be faced with the choice of starvation or surrender.¹⁷⁶

At the Canadian River, the Indians had scattered in numerous directions toward the vastness of the western Staked Plains, and even the best efforts of the Tonkawa scouts were unable to locate the main trail. Suffering from want of supplies, exhausted men and horses, and suffering from the effect of freezing cold and rain, Buell was forced to turn back. In desperate need of supplies, Buell dispatched scouts in an effort to locate Miles' column, which was accomplished on October 24. Rested and resupplied, Buell quickly set out south toward the Sweetwater, where on November 4 he met his supply wagons. While Buell reorganized his command, the men and horses enjoyed a much needed rest. On November 16, the worn out mounts and sick men were sent to Fort Sill while Buell and eighty picked buffalo soldiers continued the pursuit. The weather was becoming increasingly more severe as freezing rain and cold made life miserable for the men. At one point, Buell's column had to take shelter from the weather along the banks of the Salt

Fork. Only when the storm subsided on November 22 was Buell able to continue. The next day a deserted village of twenty-two lodges was discovered and destroyed, along with a vast quantity of horse meat. The discovery that the hostiles were now reduced to eating their horse in an effort to ward off starvation was an indication of their perilous state.¹⁷⁷

Buell continued his pursuit, but was soon faced with a howling snowstorm which turned into icy rain and sleet. It quickly became apparent to Buell that the men had reached the limit of their endurance and could not go on. The soldiers were not adequately clothed for this type of weather and many were suffering the effects of frostbite. The horses were completely used up, and in desperate need of rest and grain. On December 3, Buell made contact with his supply train at which point he broke up his expedition and returned to Fort Griffin. Buell's command had dealt the Indians a crushing defeat. His men killed only two hostiles but his men had destroyed over six hundred lodges, tons of provisions and camp equipment. The discarded equipment, broken down ponies and abandon lodges was grim evidence that his unrelenting pursuit had broken the will to resist in hundreds of Comanche, Kiowa and Cheyenne warriors. In his official report, Buell also gave high praise to the buffalo soldiers of the 9th and 10th Cavalry under his command when he wrote "I cannot give them too much credit for the manly endurance without complaint."¹⁷⁸

While all five columns contributed to the defeat of the hostiles the most crucial battle occurred on September 28, when Mackenzie's scouts located the main Indian village in the upper reaches of Palo Duro Canyon. Several hundred lodges of the Comanche, Kiowa and Cheyenne stretch over three miles along the canyon floor. Tonkawa scouts

had located a narrow, zig-zag path leading into the canyon. At daybreak, troopers of the 4th Cavalry, leading their mounts in single file, began their decent down the path. Just as the first soldiers reached the bottom, the Indians awoke and chaos ensued. As each troop of soldiers reached the canyon floor, they quickly reformed and pursued the hostiles. M surrounding plains. The remainder of the battle was reduced to long range sniping. While fewer than a dozen Indians were killed, the battle was a major defeat for the hostiles. Hundreds of lodges, tons of food and an immense amount of camp equipment was burned. Perhaps the most serious damage the Indians suffered was the loss of their entire pony herd of 1,424 animals. Mackenzie did not intend to give the Indians the opportunity to recover their horses as had occurred following the Battle at McClelland Creek in 1872. The next day Mackenzie had his men drive the herd to the head of Tule Canyon. After allowing his scouts and men to select the finest ponies, the remaining animals, more than 1,000, were shot.¹⁷⁹

By December the soldiers and Indians were suffering from the rain, sleet, and snow and freezing cold. The prairie was frequently covered by a combination of ice, snow and mud. Scores of horses died of exhaustion and exposure. Men suffered from frostbite and respiratory ailments. The harsh winter and logistical difficulties eventually force the other columns to return to their respective garrisons. Colonel Davidson returned to Fort Sill in November, while Major Price and Colonel Mackenzie ended their expeditions in December. Colonel Miles did not return to Fort Dodge until February 3.¹⁸⁰

As early as October, the first bands of hostiles began to return to the agencies to surrender. Harsh weather, military defeats, hungers and constant fear of attack caused many defections. In late February 1875, over 500 Kiowa, led by Lone Wolf, turned

themselves in to the reservation. On March 6, over 820 Cheyenne surrendered along with chiefs Grey Beard, Stone Calf, Bull Bear, Minimic and Medicine Water. Rather than surrender some Cheyenne, led by Medicine Arrows and White Antelope, fled north and joined the Northern Cheyenne. On April 18, almost 200 Kotsotekas and Kwahadis, led by Mow-way and White Horse, surrendered to Colonel Mackenzie at Fort Sill. The last Comanche band, 407 Quahadas led by Quanah Parker, came to Fort Sill on June 2, 1875. For Parker the 'blue coats had invaded his country and whipped him' and now he too must 'walk the white mans road.' The Red River War was over and for the Comanche and Kiowa so was a way of life.¹⁸¹

The question now remained as to what to do with the ringleaders. On March 13, 1875, President Grant decreed that the instigators of the war and "such as have been guilty of crime" would be sent east for imprisonment without their families. After a questionable selection of the ringleaders on April 28, 1875, seventy-four Indians including chiefs, Grey Beard, Minimic, Medicine Water, Lone Wolf, Woman's Heart and White Horse were chained to army wagons and transported to the railroad terminal in Denison, Texas. From here, the Indians would be shipped to their final destination of Fort Marion at St. Augustine, Florida. During the journey Grey Beard was shot and killed while trying to escape in Georgia. In 1878, all the surviving chiefs and warriors were released, and allowed to return to the reservation. While Little Tree was pardoned, there was little disagreement about Satanta's fate. Although he was present at the Battle of Adobe Walls, the Kiowa were emphatic that Satanta took no part in the fight. They stated that he had surrendered his war lance and other symbols of leadership to the younger chiefs and

warriors. But he had violated the conditions of his parole by his very presence at the battle, and he was quickly transported back to the Huntsville penitentiary to serve out his life sentence. Guards soon reported that Satanta become remorse and would often stare for hours out of the window of his prison cell. Unwilling to spend the remainder of his life in confinement, on October 11, 1878, he leaped head first out the second floor window of the prison hospital, the last casualty of the Red River War. In 1963 his body was removed from the prison cemetery and buried on Chiefs Knoll at Fort Sill, near the grave of Satank.¹⁸²

The Red River campaign was one of the most successful campaigns ever conducted by the U.S. Army during the Indians wars. It involved two departments and five separate columns, and despite logistical difficulties and a cumbersome command arrangement it was resounding triumph. As many as 20 military engagements took place between the army and the Southern Plains Indians, with the army never losing a battle. The success of the campaign hinged primarily on the fact that Sheridan was fortunate in having aggressive and persistent field commanders like Mackenzie, Miles, Buell and Davidson. They persevered in the face of supply shortages and brutal weather. Sheridan's "saturation strategy" proved successful in forcing the hostiles to live in continuous fear of attack. The Indians were forced to stay constantly on the move, all the while suffering from cold and hunger. While the number of Indians killed was small, it was the loss of lodges, food and camp equipment which forced their eventual surrender. But the most successful aspect of the Red River War was that the victory was permanent. Never again would the southern Plains tribes of the Comanche, Kiowa, Cheyenne, Arapaho and Kiowa-Apache, make war upon the government. As the Red River War signaled the end

of the Southern Plains Indians it also marked the end of Fort Griffin as a significant military post.¹⁸³

Chapter 6

The Most Important Town on the Frontier 1874-1881

While the military importance of Fort Griffin began its decline, the town of Fort Griffin, the Flat, was beginning it rise to prominence in the settlement of the Clear Fork country. The relationship between the army and the town had always been tumultuous. Lieutenant Colonel S. B. Hayman, garrison commander at Fort Griffin, express his dismay with the new settlement of squatters at the foot of Government Hill in an 1868 letter to the adjutant general. "I found some twenty settlers near the Post who are nearly all engaged to some extent in the traffic of liquor." The Flat like numerous other frontiers "hog ranches" had but one purpose and that was to provide an outlet for restive soldiers. The town consisted of only one street and before 1872, never had more than three saloons. But on army paydays or when survey crews or teamsters came to town, it could become as loud and boisterous as any large frontier town. It offered soldiers a diversion from frontier duty with cheap whiskey, gambling, and willing, often diseased women.¹⁸⁴

By 1872, officers at the fort were increasingly concerned that the town was having a detrimental effect on good order and discipline among the men. Additionally, the post surgeon was distressed by the rising incidence of social diseases among the men, contracted from the growing number of prostitutes. In an effort to rid the army of the problem, Colonel Hayman even tried to establish a fourteen square mile military reservation around the post, but much to the army's discomfort, it was discovered the

post and town had been built on private land. From 1868 to 1872, the army tried to coexist with the town. But in 1872 the death of two soldiers forced the army to act. While on a visit to the town, George Henrie, a civilian clerk at the post, killed two soldiers. One was an escort for a Texas and Pacific Railroad survey crew and the other was escorting Colonel Mackenzie. The commanding officer of Fort Griffin, Major W. H. Wood, was not only embarrassed by the killing of two soldiers unattached to his garrison but was enraged when Henrie fled while out on bail. Confident that an agreement could be made with the owner of the land, Wood declared the Flat as part of a government reservation and sent troops to clear all civilians from the area. Some fled to the opposite side of the Clear Fork while others left the area. The town of Fort Griffin virtually disappeared for two years. The post surgeon was pleased to report that “the whiskey dens closed, the gamblers disappeared and murders ceased” at least for awhile.¹⁸⁵

In 1874, D. M. Dowell of Louisville, Kentucky, the rightful owner of the land became aware that the army had built Fort Griffin on land he had purchased in 1858. Through legal negotiations, the army was able to reach a satisfactory leasing agreement with Mr. Dowell, but was dismayed to learn that he was also going to sell lots on the old site and resurrect the town. The reprieve for the town could not have come at a more opportune time. The end of the Red River War in 1875 opened the vast plains to the buffalo hunters and provided a safe passage for trails herds heading to markets in Kansas. Located near the southern buffalo herd and astride the Great Western Cattle Trail, Fort Griffin was the most convenient supply point for both the hunters and the cowboys. By 1875, even the army realized the futility of attempting to keep socially deprived and women starved soldiers away from that “nuisance under the bluff.” Inspector General N. H. Davis

regretfully concluded that “this kind of evil...will follow the troops to any locality they may go.” With the town’s economy stimulated by the combination of military, hide and trail herd money, by 1875, Fort Griffin became the unrivaled center of trade, commerce and entertainment on the Texas frontier.¹⁸⁶

Until 1870, the hunting of buffalo had been primarily for meat. A small market also existed for robes, rugs and other accouterments made from horns and hooves. Buffalo hides were thick and porous, and considered unsuitable for tanning. Then in 1870, hunter J. Wright Mooar was requested to send 500 hides to England for an experiment to tan the hides for leather. A further shipment of hides was sent to his brother, John W. Mooar, in Philadelphia for a similar process. Both experiments were successful and the demand for hides ignited a slaughter of the buffalo on an unimaginable scale. Hundred of hunters flooded the plains to reap the rewards of this new market. By the end of 1873, the northern herd had been hunted almost to extinction. The hunters and skinners were now eager to locate the southern herd. Colonel Richard Dodge was shocked to note that in 1872, the number of buffalo in Kansas appeared limitless, but by the autumn of 1873 he was to write “where there were myriads of buffalo the year before, there were now myriads of carcasses.” He described the surrounding country as a “dead, solitary, putrid desert.”¹⁸⁷

Searching the Texas Panhandle, J. Wright Mooar discovered the southern herd in July of 1873. By the end of the year veteran hunting outfits from the Central Plains were already hard at work in the grasslands south of the Red River. It was quickly discovered that Fort Griffin offered the most convenient access to the hunting grounds to the west and to markets in the east. For the merchants, saloons keepers, gamblers and sporting

women of Fort Griffin, it was to become an unprecedented boom.¹⁸⁸

On Christmas Day 1874, Joe McCombs led the first hide hunting expedition out of Fort Griffin. Setting up camp in Haskell County, within two months McCombs managed to kill 700 buffalo. Moving west of Fort Phantom Hill, McCombs discovered a large herd and amassed another 1,300 hides. Returning to Fort Griffin in May 1875, he sold the 2,000 hides to merchants Frank Conrad and Charley Rath. Each robe brought \$2 each and the remaining hides \$1.50 apiece, and it was just the beginning. By the time of the 1875 fall hunting season, Fort Griffin was filled with dozens of hunting parties, freight companies, merchants, entrepreneurs, labors, gamblers and prostitutes, all eager to claim a share in the economic rush. When the Texas and Pacific Railroad reached Fort Worth in July 1876, the shipment of hides to eastern markets and supplies to Fort Griffin was greatly simplified.¹⁸⁹

By the fall of 1876, over 1,500 hunters were on the plains west of Fort Griffin. McCombs reported that during the fall of 1876 he could hear the ceaseless gun fire of other buffalo hunters. By the spring of 1877, hides were stacked on four acres of land around the town, each stack the height of a man. It was not uncommon for as many as one hundred wagons a day to leave Fort Griffin loaded with hides. Altogether a half millions pound of hides were shipped out of Fort Griffin to the Texas and Pacific railheads in Dallas, Denison or Fort Worth. The peak year of hunting was 1877. McCombs take for the season was 9,700 hides, while the J. Wright Mooar outfit amassed 8,200. McComb's old partners John Jacob and Joe Poe harvested another 6,300 hides. By the fall of 1878, the once great southern herd of buffalo had all but vanished. Even veteran hunters were shocked by the scale of the slaughter. The J. Wright

Mooar outfit, the largest on the prairie that year, amassed only 1,400 bison and was reduced to taking the hide and fur from deer, antelopes, wolves and other animals to make the season profitable. McCombs only took 800 hides for the year. Many hunters found only rotting carcasses.¹⁹⁰

As the slaughter continued, many people became concerned over the possible extinction of the buffalo. In 1875, a conservation bill was introduced before the Texas Legislature to protect the buffalo. General Sheridan was aghast that such a bill would be passed and rushed to Austin to speak in opposition. In his speech to the legislature Sheridan said, "These men have done in the last two years, and will do in the next year, more to settle the vexed Indian question than the entire regular Army has done in the last thirty years. They are destroying the Indians' commissary; and it is a well known fact that an army losing its base of supplies is placed at a great disadvantage. Send them powder and lead, if you will; but for the sake of lasting peace, let them kill, skin and sell until the buffaloes are exterminated. Then your prairies can be covered with speckled cattle and the festive cowboy, who follows the hunter as a second forerunner of an advanced civilization." Sheridan's impassioned speech was effective and the bill was soundly defeated. The town of Fort Griffin had taken no small part in the decimation of the southern buffalo herd and helped to fulfill Sheridan's request. By 1879, the once massive herds of buffalo were gone, the Indians were safely confined to the reservation and the prairie was covered in speckled cattle.¹⁹¹

Within five years the buffalo were gone and so were the hunters, merchants and teamsters which had fueled the regional economy. The loss of the hide industry was a devastating blow to Fort Griffin for the effects were short lived and few became wealthy.

Most squandered their money in saloons, brothels or lost it to crooked gamblers. One buffalo hunter sold his seasons hides in Fort Griffin for \$1,500. The next morning he was penniless and had to borrow money for breakfast.¹⁹²

Now the citizens of Fort Griffin were faced with the possibility of losing another economic mainstay, the U. S. Army. In 1876 the *Fort Worth Democrat* wrote that “no depredations by Indians are known to have been committed on our northwestern border with the past twelve months.” The frontier had moved well passed the post of Fort Griffin and the Clear Fork country had grown tranquil. So tranquil in fact that in 1876, the army transferred several companies of soldiers from Forts Griffin and Richardson to the Dakota Territory to deal with the truculent Sioux and Northern Cheyenne. In 1878, the army finally abandoned Fort Richardson and by 1879 the garrison strength of Fort Griffin was often composed of only one company of infantry or cavalry. Many townsmen realized that it was only a matter of time before the garrison of Fort Griffin would suffer the same fate. The economic success and future growth of the town was now dependent on an influx of settlers, drovers and the railroad.¹⁹³

The Great Western Cattle Trail, also known as the Dodge City Trail, Old Texas Trail and the Fort Griffin Trail, ran west and roughly parallel to the Chisholm Trail. The Great Western Trail began at Bandera, where it proceeded north, crossing the Clear Fork of the Brazos at Fort Griffin. The trail crossed into the Indian Territory at Doan’s Crossing on the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River, then northward to the Santa Fe railhead in Dodge City, Kansas. Along the way, many feeder routes such as the Matamoros Trail from Brownsville and the Old Trail from Castroville converged on the Great Western. At Albany the Great Western joined the Potter and Bacon Trail, which diverged toward the

Llano Estacado and eastern Colorado. Some of the cattle were driven further north to the Union Pacific terminal at Ogallala, Nebraska for shipment to northern ranges. Other herds were destined for Indian reservations on the northern plains.¹⁹⁴

A number of factors forced herds further west and away from the Chisholm Trail. Much of central Texas was now utilized for farming, and with the introduction of barbed wire in 1875, large sections of the state was now fenced off, forcing herds to make long and time consuming detours. Additionally, years of constant grazing by passing trail herds had reduced the forage in many areas. But the principle cause was Texas Tick Fever. For years Texas cattle had been suspected of carrying some type of disease. Whenever Texas longhorns traveled through areas where there were shorthorn cattle, the latter invariably sickened and died. What no one suspected at the time was that the fever was carried by a specific type of tick. Over time the tough, rangy longhorns had become immune to the fever. Beginning in 1858, the Kansas Legislature began to quarantine large section of the state. By 1876, Texas cattle were banned from the entire state of Kansas east of Ford County. Since Dodge City was located in Ford County, it became the only railhead open to the Texas herds.¹⁹⁵

When the first herd of cattle passed through Fort Griffin in 1875, the town merchants were quick to recognize a revitalization of the economy. The hide trade was showing signs of slowing and the town was anxious to discover a new source of industry. Fort Griffin was located due south of Dodge City and, by 1877, had become the intermediate supply point for north bound herds. The large merchants such as Conrad & Rath and T. E. Jackson quickly developed a lively trade with the drovers. Stores were stocked with items such as saddles, blankets, guns, boots, hats and clothing, in short “everything a cow

man could possibly want.” Cooks could restock chuck wagons, and the men replace or repair worn out or broken gear. But most of the money spent by the trail hands was in the saloons and brothels to relive the stress and boredom of the drive. The drovers usually stayed one or two days, which allowed them time to stock up on enough provisions to see them through to the next depot at Doan’s Store on the Red River. The surrounding prairie furnished ample grazing for the cattle, and the Clear Fork at Fort Griffin furnished sufficient water, and was easily fordable.¹⁹⁶

In 1876, local merchants began to send agents south to intercept herds and persuade them of the benefit of moving their cattle through Fort Griffin. The effort paid off handsomely, and by April herds were arriving rapidly. In one four week period 50,000 head of cattle passed through the town. By the end of the season over 125,000 head of cattle had made their way north by way of Fort Griffin. Even greater results were achieved during the 1877, season when 150,000 head of cattle passed through the Flat. In 1879, the last drive on the Chisholm Trail occurred at which point the Great Western dominated the trailing industry. In that year over 192, 922 cattle passed through the Flat on their way north. But 1881, was to be the peak year for Fort Griffin, with approximately 200,000 cattle passing through. With much of the area around the Flat now being use for sheep, shorthorn cattle and farming, the herds now began to trail through the new county seat of Albany. The residents and merchants of Fort Griffin were to discover that the cattle drives, like the buffalo hunters, were transitory and with the loss of the fort there was no viable economy to sustain the town. From that time forward the town began its steady decline.¹⁹⁷

Beginning in 1879, a series of events occurred which were to devastated the town and

its economy. The first occurred on June 20, 1879, when torrential rains caused the Clear Fork and Collins creek to overflow their banks. A three foot wall of water swept through the Flat destroying everything in its path, killing two people and causing damages estimated at four thousand dollars. While some residents rebuilt others chose to relocate to Albany.¹⁹⁸

An even greater setback occurred in 1881, when the Texas Legislature declared that Shackelford County was no longer part of the frontier. The frontier had advanced fifty miles or more and the army concluded that the garrison of Fort Griffin was no longer required. Early in 1881 the army began the process of closing down the post. Large quantities of government equipment was sold, given away or simply abandon. Some of the buildings were sold to local ranchers, the rest were allowed to stand. Finally, "At sundown, May 31, 1881 the flag at the United States military post known as Fort Griffin, was taken down, never again to be unfurled over military forces at that place." The next morning, Captain J. B. Irvin marched Company A of the 22nd Infantry out of the fort toward Fort Concho, and from there to Fork Clark in South Texas. While the relationship between the garrison and the town was often acrimonious, both had eventually established a mutual dependency. Many townspeople were genuinely sad to see the soldiers leave. Sallie Mathews wrote that the area seemed "rather deserted; we missed the life and stir of a military post..."¹⁹⁹

With the closing of the fort, the problem arose as to what to do with the Tonkawas, who still lived at the foot of Government Hill. They had given valuable service to the army as scouts and despite their rowdiness, fondness for drink and peculiarities, many townspeople looked upon them as part of the community. A petition was drawn up to

recognize the Tonkawas for their service to the army and the people of Texas. The petition requested the state legislature to set aside funds to purchase “not less than 3000 acres of land for them to put them on it under an agent to be appointed by the governor, from among the citizens of this county, and the further sum of not less than \$10,000 to fence in their land (by wire); to build comfortable quarters; for buying farming implements; and to furnish them food and raiment for the next two years, after which it is thought they will be self-sustaining. This is a step that should have been taken long ago. There is no tribe of Indians that have as just claims upon the people as the Tonks, and they have received less than all others. It is hoped that the legislature will take hold of this matter promptly and relieve these unfortunate creatures.” Unfortunately, the Texas Legislature was not swayed by the elegance of the petition and even less so by the financial burden. In October 1884, troops from Fort Clark herded the remaining seventy-eight members of the Tonkawa tribe and their nineteen Lipan dependents onto a train in Albany for relocation to a reservation in the Indian Territory. The army had decided that, like the garrison of Fort Griffin, the Tonkawas were no longer useful.²⁰⁰

With the loss of the buffalo hunters, the military and the trail herds, the last great hope for the Flat was the railroad. The Texas and Pacific was building west from Fort Worth, and the townsmen of Fort Griffin had hopes that it would pass through their town. Instead, the Texas and Pacific management elected to go south, along the Weatherford, Ranger, Eastland, Cisco and Baird route to Abilene, located thirty-six miles southwest of Albany. Fort Griffin next sought the Texas Central Railroad, a subsidiary of the Houston and Texas Central. But civic leaders in Albany were ahead of those in Fort Griffin. In April 1881, Albany held a community fund raiser and collected \$50,000 as a bonus for

the railroad. The citizens pledged a right of way through Albany and agreed to donate land for a depot, sidings and turnouts. They also convinced the Houston and Texas Central executives that Albany would be an ideal shipping point for cattle. Additionally, that the clean water, fertile land, coal deposits and limestone for building material would draw countless numbers of new settlers. The executives were convinced and on December 20, 1881, the first railroad arrived in Albany. Without the railroad the Flat could not survive and after 1881 most business relocated to Albany. By 1900 the town consisted of a combination general store and post office. Within a few years they too were closed and memory of the garrison and town of Fort Griffin rapidly faded into history.²⁰¹

Conclusions

The End of An Era

Largely forgotten today, the garrison of Fort Griffin played a major role in the pacification of the Comanche and Kiowa of the Southern Plains, and the settlement of the Texas frontier. Located directly south of the reservations in the Indian Territory, Fort Griffin was the first line of defense for the settlers located along the Clear Fork. With the establishment of the post in 1868, the Comanche and Kiowa warriors would not longer be unopposed in their raids. By the 1870's, the soldiers were successful in defeating many of the Comanche and Kiowa raiding parties.

The soldiers of Fort Griffin participated in every decisive campaign against the Comanche and Kiowa Indians. The fort served as the rendezvous site for Colonel Mackenzie's 1871 and 1872 expedition against the Comanche and Kiowa of the Staked Plains. But Fort Griffin was to assume its most important role during the Red River War. The 9th and 10th Cavalry under Colonel Buell contributed to the overall success of the campaign by destroying hundreds of lodges, camp equipment and provisions desperately needed by the Indians. Additionally, the fort served as the key supply source for all supplies and men destined for Mackenzie's and Buell's columns. But by 1881 the fort, with the pacification of the southern Comanche and Kiowa, the fort had reached the end of its usefulness. Additionally, the soldiers were now desperately required in the campaigns against the Cheyenne and Sioux of the Northern Plains, and the Apache of the New Mexico and Arizona desert.

Even the town of Fort Griffin contributed to the pacification and settlement of the Texas frontier. Its very location near the southern buffalo herd and astride the Great Western Trail made it a major supply point for the buffalo hunters and the trails herd. Consequently, by 1873, Fort Griffin was the most important town on the frontier. The destruction of the buffalo herd opened up vast areas of the plains for farming and ranching. The cattle drives contributed to the growing demand for beef in northern cities, bringing much needed revenue to Texas. But the economy of Fort Griffin was based on changing and transitory markets, and by 1881, the boom was over. The garrison of Fort Griffin had been abandon and the southern buffalos herd was gone. As railroads began to penetrate into the interior of the state more and more cattle were being shipped directly to northern markets, resulting in the slowing of cattle drive. Once the railroad bypassed Fort Griffin for Albany most residents knew the town could not survive.

Unlike other military towns, such as San Angelo and Jacksboro, Fort Griffin never became a permanent town, and not until many years later would the pivotal role the fort and the town played in the opening of the Texas frontier be recognized.

Appendix A

Commanding Officers of Fort Griffin 1867-1881

Colonel Samuel D. Sturgis, 6th Cavalry, July 1867-March 1868

Captain Adna R. Chaffee, 6th Cavalry, April 1868

Captain Malcolm McArthur, 17th Infantry, May 1868

Colonel S. B. Hayman, 17th Infantry, June 1868-April 1869

Captain John Lee, 4th Cavalry, May-July and September 1869 and December 1869-March 1870

Captain J. W. Clous, 38th Infantry, August and October-November 1869 and April-May 1870

Major Theo Schwann, 11th Infantry, June 1870 and January 1874, August-November 1874, and March-July 1876

Lieutenant Colonel Charles A Whiting, 6th Cavalry, August-December 1870

Captain James Biddle, 11th Infantry, January 1870

Colonel W. H. Wood, 11th Infantry, February 1871-November 1872

Lieutenant Colonel George P. Buell, 11th Infantry, December 1872-July 1873, September 1873, November-December 1873, February-May, July and December 1874, January-February 1875, and October 1875-February 1876

Captain George L. Choisy, 11th Infantry, August 1873 and June 1874

Major D. B. McKibbins, 10th Cavalry, October 1873 and August-September 1875

Captain J. B. Van de Weile, 10th Cavalry, March and May 1875

Lieutenant Colonel J. W. Davidson, 10th Cavalry, April and June-July 1875

Captain Philip L. Lee, 10th Cavalry, August 1876-March 1877 and May-June, August, and November-December 1877

Lieutenant S. R. Colladay, 10th Cavalry, April, July and September 1877

Lieutenant J. F. Stretch, 10th Infantry, January-April 1878

Appendix B

Regimental Units Stationed at Fort Griffin 1867-1881

4th Cavalry, Company D, May 1869-May 1872, January 1875

4th Cavalry, Company F, May 1869-March 1871, September 1872-May 1873

4th Cavalry, Company H, September 1870-May 1873

6th Cavalry, Company B, July 1870-May 1871

6th Cavalry, Company F, July 1867-March 1868, July 1870-May 1871

6th Cavalry, Company I, July 1867-September 1868, November 1868-March 1869, May-September 1870

6th Cavalry, Company K, July 1866-March 1869

6th Cavalry, Company L, July 1867-March 1869

9th Cavalry, Company A, August-September 1874

9th Cavalry, Company B, August 1871-February 1872

9th Cavalry, Company E, August-September 1874

9th Cavalry, Company F, August-September 1874

9th Cavalry, Company G, August 1871-February 1872

10th Cavalry, Company A, August 1874

10th Cavalry, Company B, March 1875-September 1876

10th Cavalry, Company C, May-December 1873

10th Cavalry, Company D, May 1873-September 1874, October 1874, March 1875

10th Cavalry, Company E, March 1875-September 1876

10th Cavalry, Company F, March-September 1874, March 1875

10th Cavalry, Company G, December 1873-January 1875, August 1876-January 1878

10th Infantry, Company E, January 1878-April 1879

11th Infantry, Company A, October 1870-March 1877

11th Infantry, Company F, October 1870-March 1877

11th Infantry, Company G, June 1870-March 1877

17th Infantry, Company C, May 1868-March 1869

17th Infantry, Company F, June 1868-March 1869

17th Infantry, Company S, June 1868-March 1869

22nd Infantry, Company A, April 1879-July 1881

24th Infantry, Company E, July 1869-July 1870

35th Infantry, Company E, March 1869-June 1869

35th Infantry, Company F, May 1869-June 1869

38th Infantry, Company B, July-November 1869

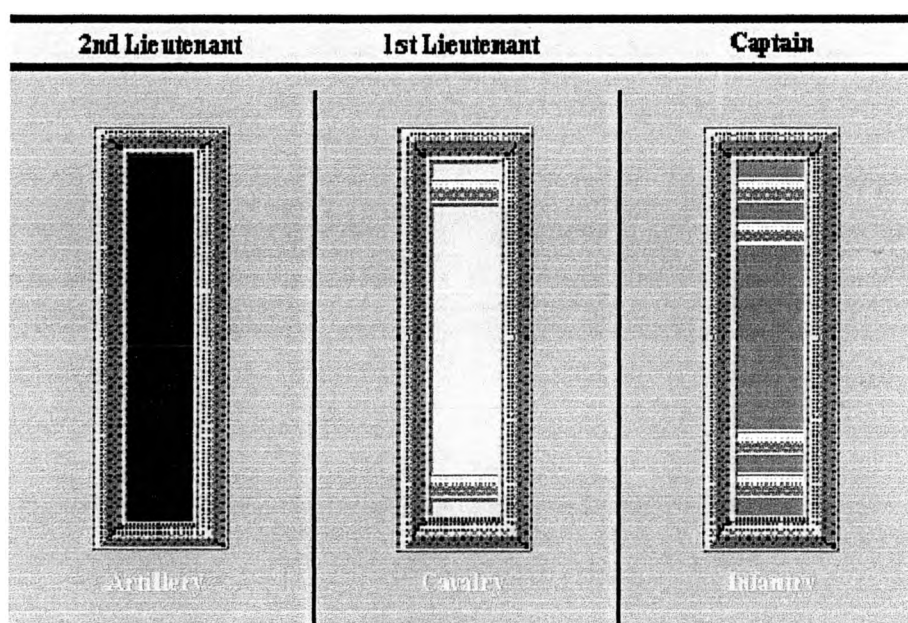
38th Infantry, Company E, July-November 1869

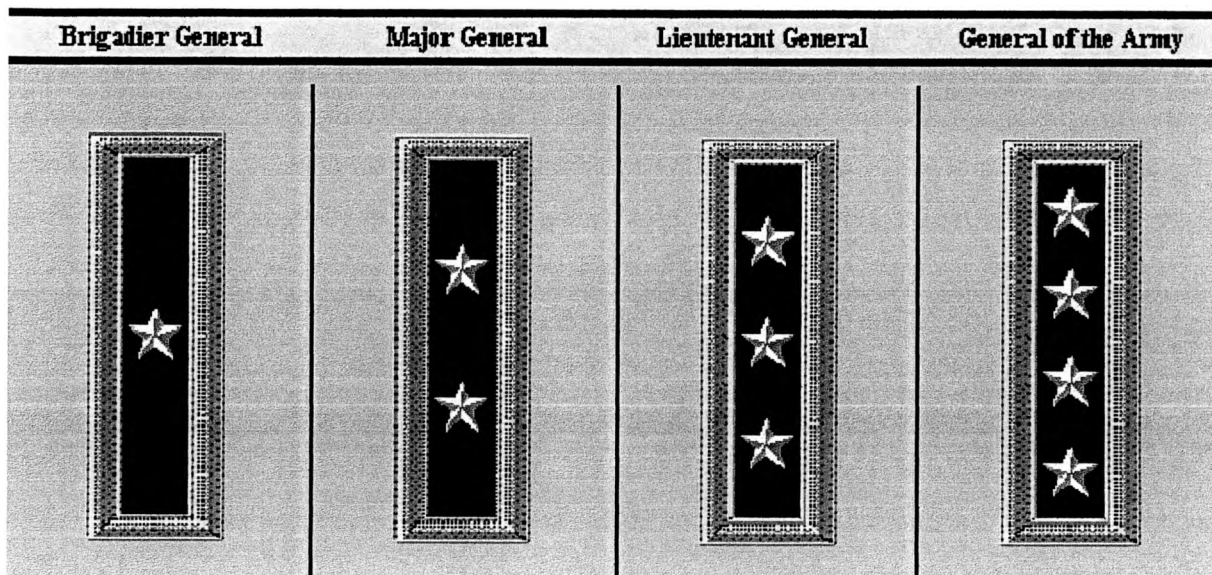
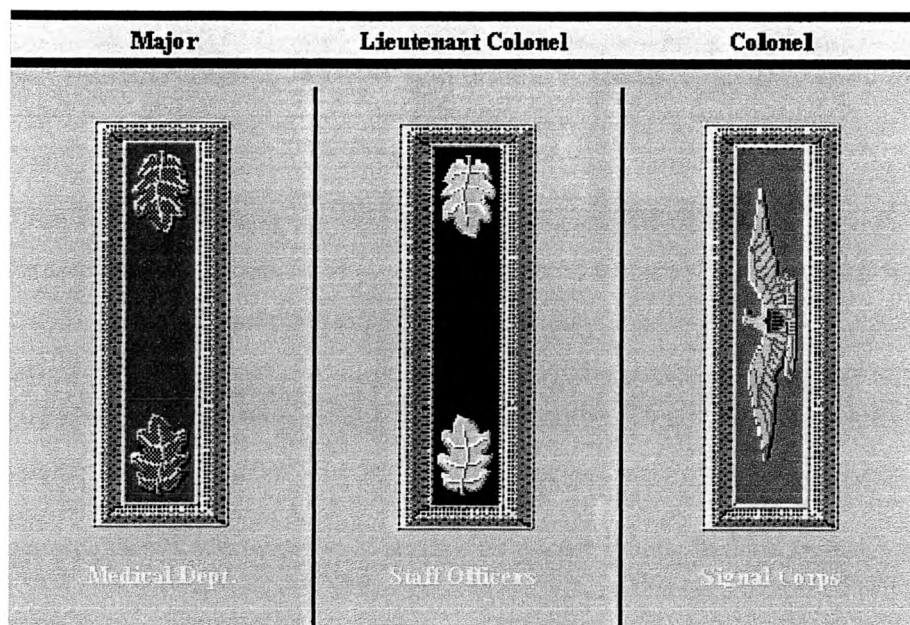
Appendix C

Officer and Enlisted Rank in the US Army Indian War Era

US Army Indian Wars Era (1876)



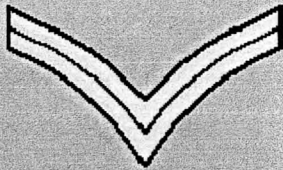
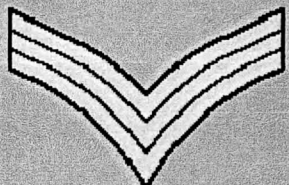



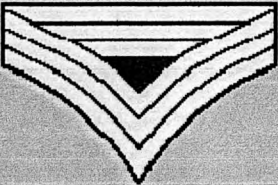
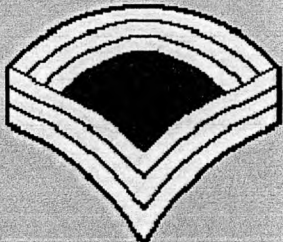

Officer Insignia of Rank



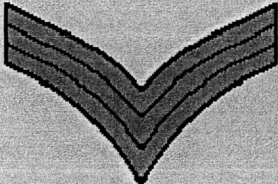

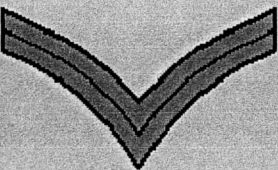

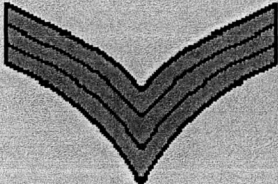
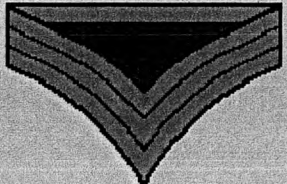

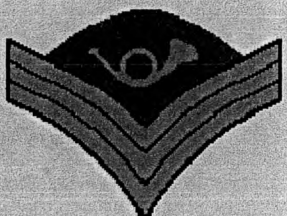
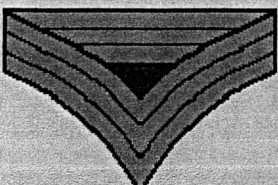
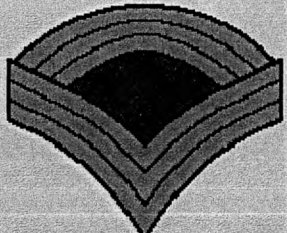


US Army Indian Wars Era (1876)

Enlisted Insignia of Rank

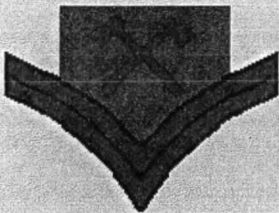



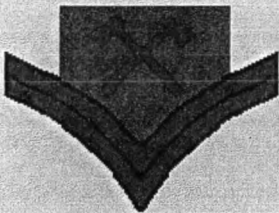
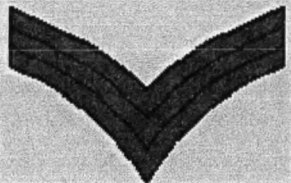
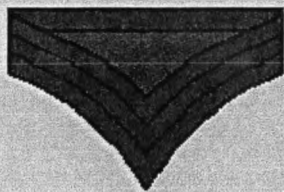


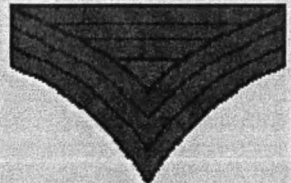
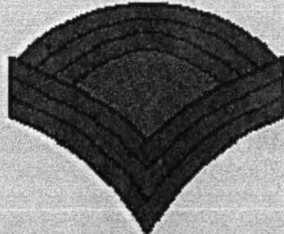
CAVALRY			
Private			
Pioneer Corporal			
First Sergeant			
			

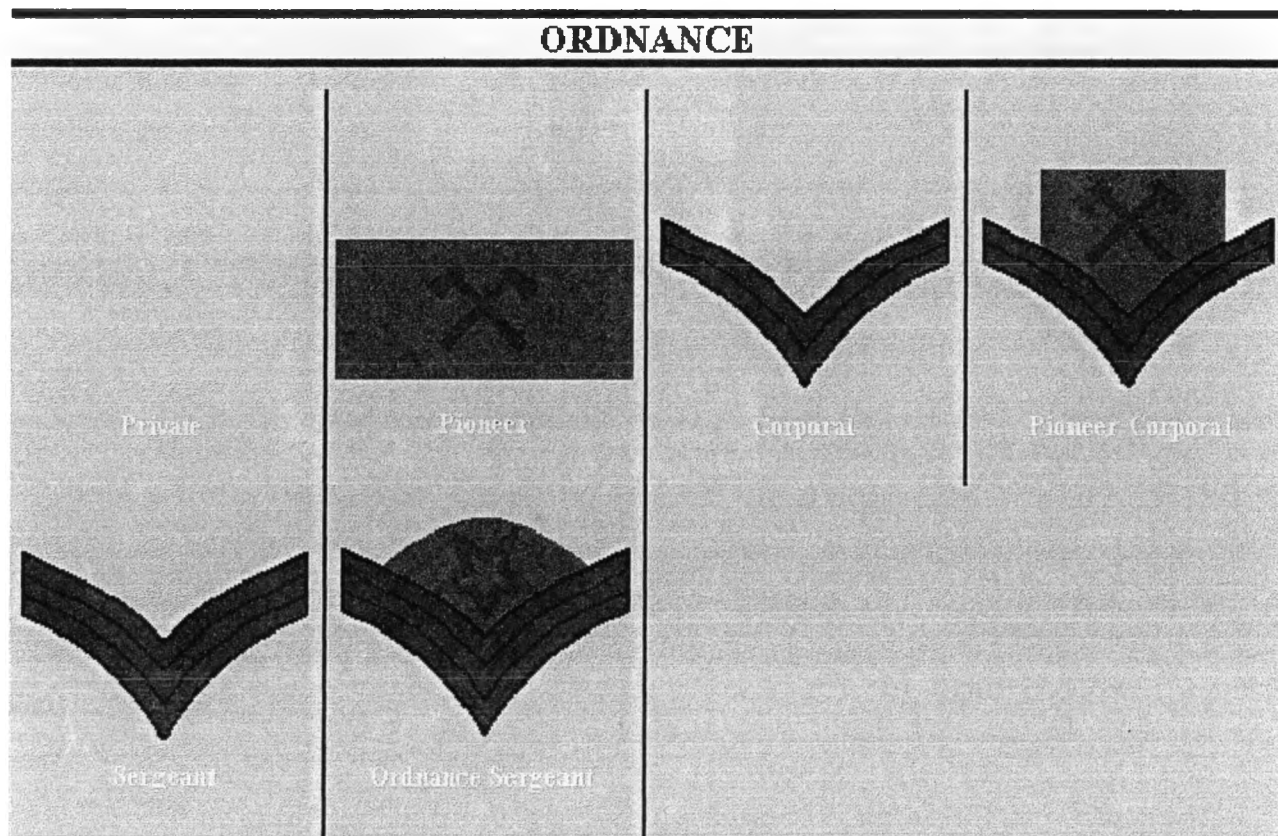
US Army Indian Wars Era (1876)**Enlisted Insignia of Rank**

INFANTRY			
 <p>Private</p>	 <p>Pioneer</p>	 <p>Corporal</p>	 <p>Pioneer Corporal</p>
 <p>Sergeant</p>	 <p>Company Quartermaster</p>	 <p>First Sergeant</p>	 <p>Principal Musician</p>
 <p>Quartermaster Sergeant</p>	 <p>Sergeant Major</p>		

US Army Indian Wars Era (1876)

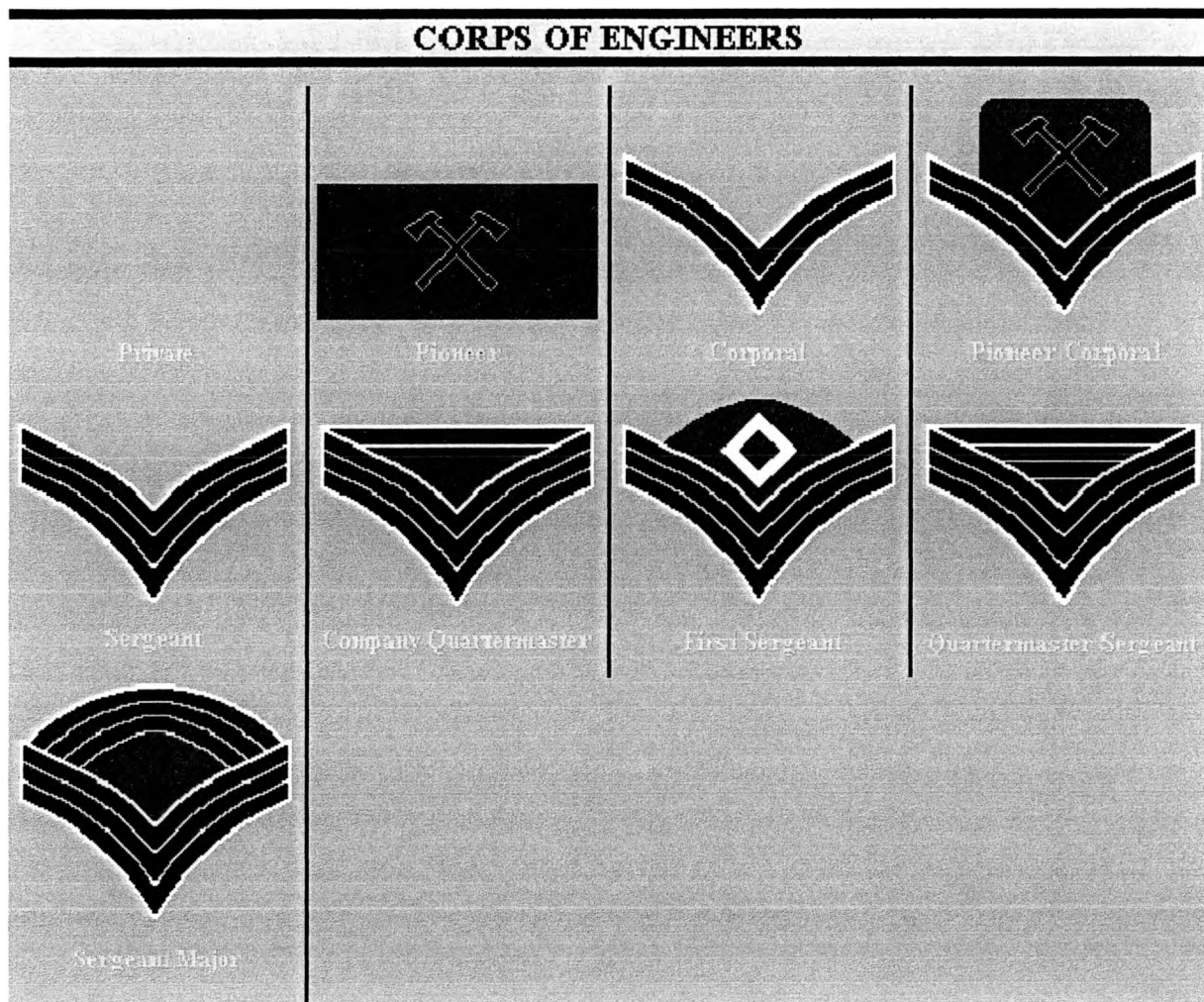
Enlisted Insignia of Rank

ARTILLERY			
			
Private	Pioneer	Farrier	Corporal
			
Pioneer Corporal	Sergeant	Battery Quartermaster	First Sergeant
			
Principal Musician	Quartermaster Sergeant	Sergeant Major	

US Army Indian Wars Era (1876)**Enlisted Insignia of Rank**

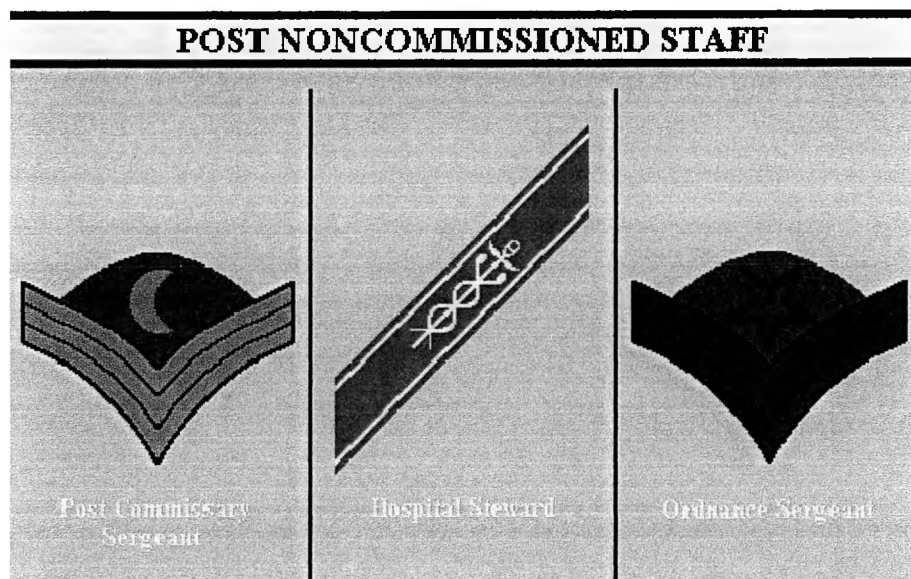
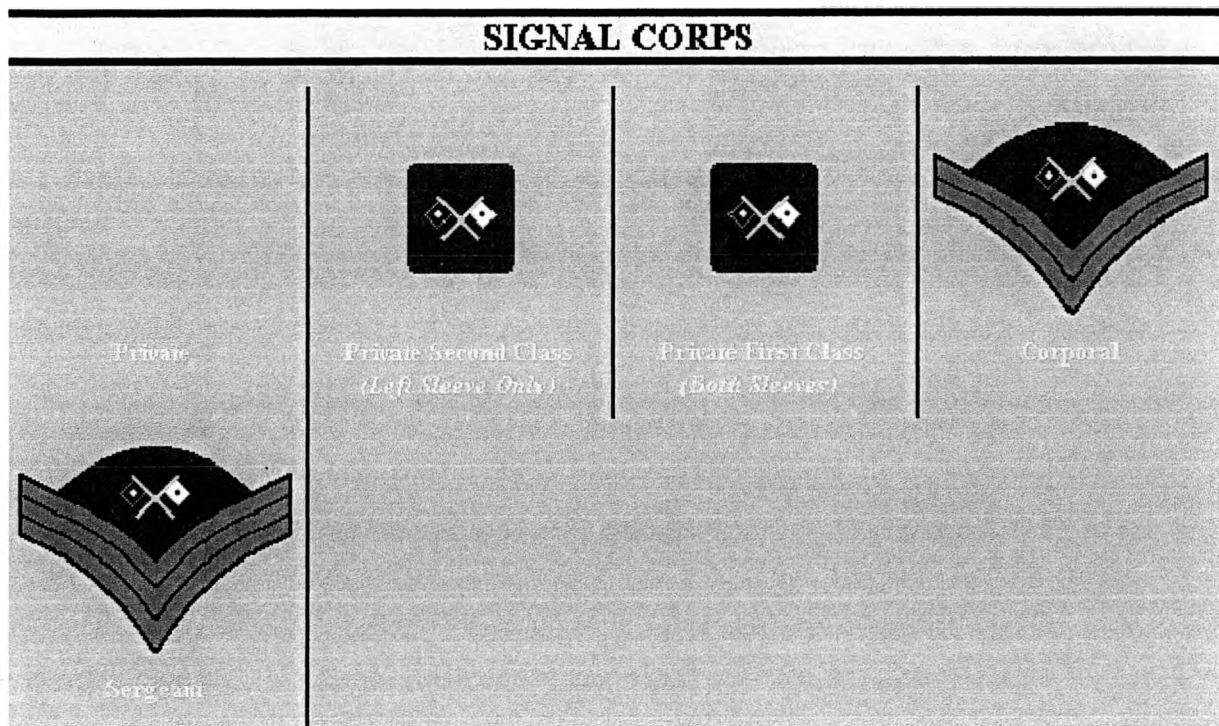
US Army Indian Wars Era (1876)

Enlisted Insignia of Rank



US Army Indian Wars Era (1876)

Enlisted Insignia of Rank



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Vita

Born and raised in Texas, I lived most of my life in small towns where you knew most individuals by sight, if not by name. I attended high school in Clyde, Texas, located due east of Abilene. Two years after graduating from high school I obtained a bachelors degree in anthropology from Ft. Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. After various jobs I decided my life required a major change of direction. So in 1981, I enlisted in the U. S. Navy for what turned out to be a twenty-two year career. It gave me a unique opportunity to visit many countries and travel to historic locations.

Once my naval career was over, I decided to turn my love of history into another career as a teacher. Quite by accident I discovered Texas State University-San Marcos. It was small enough that I would not feel overwhelmed but large enough to provide the history education I desired. My specific areas of interest are the U.S. Civil War, the Trans-Mississippi West and military history.

I have been happily married for almost twenty-two years. I can actually thank the Navy for meeting my wife, as she is from South Korea, and I met her during one of the numerous port visits to that wonderful country. We have been blessed with a daughter who will graduate from high school soon, and who is already attending college classes, and a son who will begin high school in the fall.

Barry D. Stevens

