

THE NORTHERN CHEYENNE EXODUS: A REAPPRAISAL
OF THE ARMY'S RESPONSE

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Military History

by

MATTHEW W. FREEBURG, MAJOR, AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY
B.A., Oklahoma Panhandle State University, Goodwell, Oklahoma, 2002

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2015

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved</i> OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 12-06-2015		2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) AUG 2014 – JUN 2015	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Northern Cheyenne Exodus: A Reappraisal of the Army's Response			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Major Matthew W. Freeburg			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301			8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT After spending approximately 13 months on a reservation with their Southern Cheyenne cousins in the Indian Territory of present-day Oklahoma, nearly 300 men, women, and children of the Northern Cheyenne, under Chiefs Dull Knife and Little Wolf, decided reservation life in the south did not suit them. They left the reservation in September 1878 without the US Government's permission hoping to return to their former homelands on the Northern Plains. Alerted to the escape, the US Army dispatched troops in pursuit and asked every military department in the Plains to assist, or be prepared to assist, in the containment of this group of escapees. A running fight ensued through Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska, and in every engagement, the Indians emerged either victorious or escaped the soldiers until one group, under Dull Knife, finally surrendered to the US Army in northwestern Nebraska, nearly two months and 700 hundred miles later. The last group, under Little Wolf, surrendered five months after that in southeastern Montana--a journey of nearly 1,000 miles. This thesis answers why it took the Army so long to subdue the "outbreak" and capture the fleeing Northern Cheyenne.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Northern Cheyenne, Exodus, Pursuit, Darlington Agency, Dull Knife, Little Wolf, 4th Cavalry					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code)
(U)	(U)	(U)	(U)	123	

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: Major Matthew W. Freeburg

Thesis Title: The Northern Cheyenne Exodus: A Reappraisal of the Army's Response

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
Tony R. Mullis, Ph.D.

_____, Member
Troy D. Fodness, M.S.

_____, Member
Dennis K. Clark, M.P.A./M.S.

Accepted this 12th day of June 2015 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE NORTHERN CHEYENNE EXODUS: A REAPPRAISAL OF THE ARMY'S RESPONSE, by Major Matthew W. Freeburg, 123 pages

After spending approximately 13 months on a reservation with their Southern Cheyenne cousins in the Indian Territory of present-day Oklahoma, over 300 men, women, and children of the Northern Cheyenne, under Chiefs Dull Knife and Little Wolf, decided reservation life in the south did not suit them. They left the reservation in September 1878 without the US Government's permission hoping to return to their former homelands on the Northern Plains. Alerted to the escape, the US Army dispatched troops in pursuit and asked every military department in the Plains to assist, or be prepared to assist, in the containment of this group of escapees. A running fight ensued through Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska, and in every engagement, the Indians emerged either victorious or managed to escape the soldiers until one group, under Dull Knife, finally surrendered to the US Army in northwestern Nebraska, nearly two months and 700 hundred miles later. The last group, under Little Wolf, surrendered five months after that in southeastern Montana--a journey of nearly 1,000 miles. This thesis answers why it took the Army so long to subdue the "outbreak" and capture the fleeing Northern Cheyenne.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis committee readers, Mr. Dennis K. Clark and Mr. Troy D. Fodness for their candid and productive feedback. Likewise, I would like to thank my committee chairman, Dr. Tony R. Mullis, who gave me so much guidance and direction in research and writing. Over the past nine months, he was always willing to answer my questions and provide constructive criticism on a timely basis. Very professional and patient, Dr. Mullis is a true academic who really cares and I could not have completed this project without him. Editing my drafts, he added to the overall quality of the final product. Everything about this experience was rewarding. Learning more about the Cheyenne and frontier Army during my research was the most rewarding part of all. In spite of missed weekends, my family always understood the reasons I wasn't always able to visit. So many times I would have liked to have been there but couldn't. Everything about completing this thesis was to make them more proud of me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
ACRONYMS.....	viii
ILLUSTRATIONS	ix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2 THE CHEYENNE	15
Origins, Tribal Structure, and Tribal Split.....	15
Treaties and Agreements	19
Dull Knife, Little Wolf and the Fighting Cheyenne	26
Removal to the South and Reservation Depredations	30
CHAPTER 3 THE FRONTIER ARMY	36
Army Demobilization and Reorganization.....	36
Training and Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs).....	40
US Army’s Indian Fighting Experience	43
CHAPTER 4 THE EXODUS AND PURSUIT	67
Their Preparations and Departure	68
First Responders	70
Battle of Turkey Springs.....	73
The US Army’s Contingencies.....	75
Captain Hemphill’s Turn	76
Sandy Creek Fights.....	79
Battle of Punished Woman’s Fork.....	85
The Pursuit Continues While Indians Raid the Northwest Kansas Settlements.....	89
The Band Splits and Dull Knife Surrenders	93
The Fort Robinson Outbreak and the Surrender of Little Wolf.....	94
CHAPTER 5 EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSION	102
The Army’s Reaction.....	102

Fate of the Northern Cheyenne	103
Successes and Failures	105
BIBLIOGRAPHY	110

ACRONYMS

BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
IT	Indian Territory
US	United States

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Northern Cheyenne’s travel route, from Indian Territory to Montana.....	2
Figure 2. Sioux Reservation System and Unceded Territory	5
Figure 3. Cheyenne Sociopolitical Structure	17
Figure 4. Federally recognized Arapaho and Cheyenne lands, 1851-1861	21
Figure 5. Military Division of the Missouri, 1869-83	38
Figure 6. Bozeman Trail and Trail Forts, 1866-68	45
Figure 7. U.S. Military Columns of the Red River War	56
Figure 8. Cowboy Cemetery. Supposed First Victims of the Northern Cheyenne Exodus	78
Figure 9. Remnants of rifle pits overlooking valley of Punished Woman’s Fork	86
Figure 10. Western Kansas Flight Route	91

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On the moonlit night of 9 September 1878, Chiefs Dull Knife and Little Wolf led 353 Northern Cheyenne men, women, and children away from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency (also known as Darlington Agency) located in Indian Territory (IT).¹ They departed the reservation without permission from their Indian Agent, John D. Miles, to return to their homeland (figure 1). From their perspective, the Northern Cheyenne did not belong in IT. After a little over thirteen months at Darlington, they were determined to return to the Powder River country of Wyoming and Montana. Their exodus, however, violated agreements between the Northern Cheyenne and the United States (US) Government. After weeks and months of evading their pursuers, the Northern Cheyenne almost succeeded. But why did they attempt such a seemingly futile escape? Moreover, from the government's perspective, a better question is why did it take the US Army so long to capture and return these recalcitrant Northern Cheyenne to their treaty reservation? These questions provide the foundation for this study. The answers explain the difficulties and highlight the tactical challenges associated with implementing and enforcing government policy with an indigenous people who opted to resist and to seek to live in their traditional homeland.

The Northern Cheyenne, along with other tribes the US Government forcibly removed to IT, never considered it home. Their home was on the Northern Plains. Treaty misrepresentations had left the Northern Cheyenne tribe in limbo for most of the past decade because the past treaties did not deal with them as an individually separate tribe, independent from their cousins, the Southern Cheyenne. They never had a reservation of

their own, but instead shared reservation lands with the numerically superior Lakota Sioux. The US Government's officials tended to deal with specific tribal chiefs as spokespersons for the entire tribe. Whether they were culturally ignorant or knew exactly what they were doing in their dealings with the various indigenous peoples is open for debate.



Figure 1. Northern Cheyenne's travel route, from Indian Territory to Montana

Source. John H. Monnett, *Tell Them We Are Going Home* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 48.

The Cheyenne were never a very large tribe, but there were many different bands within it. Although they were all Cheyenne, they did not have one paramount chief that spoke for all. Government officials needed to consider this when dealing with the tribes. If one was to expect desired and lasting results, cultural sensitivity and awareness was just as important in the 1800s as it is today. It would be foolish to walk into a village in Paktika Province, Afghanistan, make a deal with the tribal elder of that village, and expect all Afghans within the province to honor that arrangement. This was the way of it for years when it came to treaties and agreements, not only for the Northern Cheyenne, but for hundreds of other tribes as well.

The termination of the Great Sioux War of 1876-1877 helped seal the Northern Cheyenne's relocation to the IT--at least temporarily. Since 1872, the Northern Cheyenne were part of the Red Cloud Agency of northwest Nebraska and northeast Wyoming.² The Oglala band of the Teton or Lakota Sioux dominated the Red Cloud Agency. The Oglala were one of the Northern Cheyenne's closest allies. Many of the Northern Cheyenne left the Red Cloud Agency during the spring and summer of 1876 to join the "winter roaming" Sioux under the leadership of Hunkpapa, Chief Sitting Bull, in the Unceded Territory of southeastern Montana. The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 established the Unceded Territory. While not a part of the official reservation lands, the treaty specified it as hunting grounds that the signatory Indian tribes could use for sustenance hunting (figure 2).

Before 31 January 1876, most Indians, with the exception of the non-treaty, winter roamers, wintered on their respective reservation. They would leave in the spring, summer and fall to hunt in the Unceded Territory in accordance with treaty stipulations.

For this reason, many referred to them as summer roamers.³ Winter roamers, or non-treaty bands, were the Indians that never came into the agencies no matter what time of the year it was. As long as they stayed in the allocated treaty reserve, they were within their rights to do so. They were the holdouts (traditionalists) who never signed nor honored any treaty made with the US Government, and they included Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho. Leaving the main reservation for hunting and gathering was a practice widely accepted as a way for the tribes to offset annuity and subsidy shortfalls. The Indian agents preferred this practice. It enabled the tribes they were responsible for to sustain themselves to a certain degree and it helped to keep them pacified, preemptively quelling possible unrest.

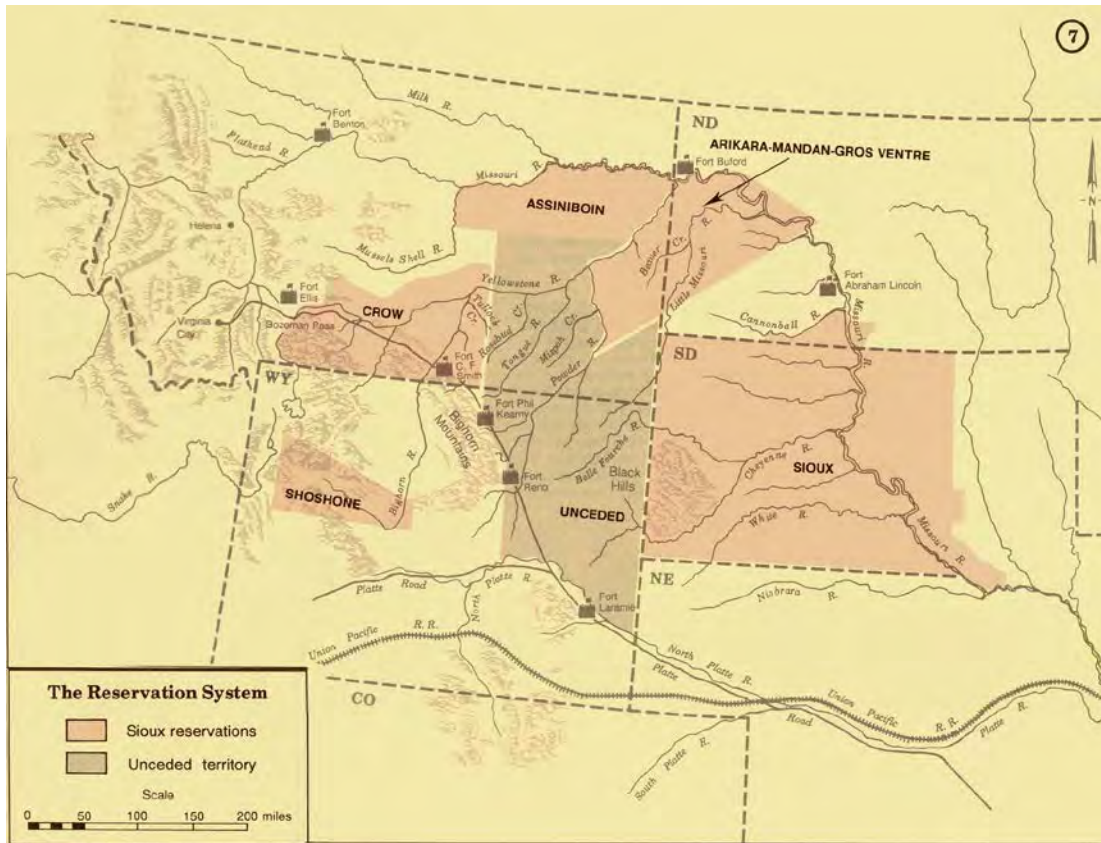


Figure 2. Sioux Reservation System and Unceded Territory

Source: Dr. William G. Robertson, Dr. Jerold E. Brown, Major William M. Campsey, and Major Scott R. McMeen, *Atlas of the Sioux Wars* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1995), 7.

The Sioux reserve lay predominantly in western South Dakota, while the Unceded Territory took up a large portion of southeastern Montana and northeastern Wyoming. The origin of the most recent troubles with the Northern Plains tribes began in late 1875. An inspector from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), E.C. Watkins, conducted a survey of the assigned reserves in late 1875. He later reported that he Sioux had been making war on the “Arickarees, Mandans, Gros Ventres, Assinaboines, Blackfeet, Piegans, Crows, and other friendly tribes on the circumference.”⁴ He failed to mention that these

same tribes also conducted raids on the Sioux within the treaty reserves from their reservations. Watkins' report prompted then President Ulysses S. Grant to act.

In December 1875, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Edward P. Smith, instructed the Sioux Indian agents to send out runners to the appropriate regions and instruct the Indians to return to their respective reservations by 31 January 1876. If they failed to do so, the government would consider them hostile.⁵ Moving an Indian village hundreds of miles in the middle of winter on the Northern Plains, however, was no small feat. Chances are, by the time the winter roamers got the message; it would have been too late to comply with the ultimatum's deadline. It is also safe to speculate the winter roamers would not have complied with the deadline even if they could have because they did not see themselves bound to any treaty. They lived their lives on their own terms, not on the wishes of the US Government. On 1 February 1876, the day after the deadline, the US Army assumed responsibility for capturing and returning the hostiles to their assigned reservations.

Sitting Bull sent his own runners to the reservations to invite the Indians to join him for traditional hunting and living the old way of life. Many of the Northern Cheyenne left the reservation in early 1876 to hunt in the Unceded Territory, just as they had always done. In doing so, the military considered them hostile and subject to military retribution.

The Army intended to deploy three columns into the field in March 1876 in an effort to round up the hostiles and force them to return to their reservations. The column out of Wyoming, under Brigadier General George Crook, was the only one to depart during the intended month. They met with little success, only attacking and destroying a small village of Northern Cheyenne in March. Most of the inhabitants of that particular

village escaped. The Soldiers only succeeded in destroying the village and most of its contents. They also managed to capture the Indian pony herd for a short time, but the Indian warriors eventually recaptured it. Cold and homeless, the Northern Cheyenne moved further into the reserve to join the winter roamers thereby increasing the Indians' overall numbers. Since the other two columns failed to deploy, Crook retired to Fort Fetterman, Wyoming. His column remained there until later in the spring when he would go on the offensive.

The most notable of the three Army columns in that campaign was the one that contained the bulk of the 7th U.S. Cavalry under Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer's command. Custer and his cavalry would eventually meet defeat at the Battle of the Little Bighorn on 25 June 1876, a battle of which the Northern Cheyenne were active participants.

Although this paper is only tangentially concerned with the Great Sioux War of 1876-1877, it is important in understanding how the Northern Cheyenne got to IT in the first place. However, Chapter 3 addresses the Great Sioux War of 1876-77 to gain a better understanding of the Army's Indian fighting experience by the time of the Northern Cheyenne exodus. In retaliation for Custer's "Last Stand," the US Army relentlessly pursued the tribes responsible for the massacre. Taking approximately a month to reorganize, the Army began their search in August 1876. In November 1876, Brigadier General Crook's men learned of a Northern Cheyenne village on the Red Fork of the Powder River. The Army suspected that Chief Little Wolf and Chief Dull Knife, also known by his Cheyenne name, Morning Star, were there. The camp consisted of approximately 200 lodges and 1,200 Northern Cheyenne.⁶

Crook dispatched Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie with most of the column's cavalry to find and destroy the Indian village. Mackenzie had approximately 1,100 men at his disposal. An estimated one-third were allied Indian scouts representing various tribes such as the Shoshone, Pawnee, Lakota Sioux, Arapaho, and even Northern Cheyenne.⁷ If it was one thing that the Army learned since conducting Indian warfare, the use of Indians as scouts was essential. There were white men that could track just as well, but they were limited in number. To offset this, the Army employed various indigenous peoples as scouts.

At dawn on 25 November 1876, after a forced night march, the Soldiers and Indian scouts attacked the Northern Cheyenne village. Attacking a camp at dawn was an accepted frontier tactic.⁸ This was true primarily for two reasons. First, it was nearly impossible to engage targets effectively at night because of the difficulty in distinguishing friend and enemy. Second, Indians were usually asleep and caught off guard at this time of morning. The attack commenced with a cavalry charge that began about a mile from the village. It took the troopers considerable time to make that distance due to the severity of the terrain.⁹ The approach to the village contained numerous draws and washouts that made it nearly impossible to keep the charge at a gallop, or even a lope. The attack surprised the village, but it did not keep the Northern Cheyenne from defending their position.

Many of the Indians fled in the opposite direction of the attack while the warriors formed a defense in the broken country beyond the village. They executed a delaying action in order to allow the women, children, and elderly a chance to get away. The warriors engaged the Soldiers and scouts from various ravines, bluffs, and boulders. They

used whatever weapons they were able to grab from their lodges before falling back. Fighting between the two sides lasted most of the day. The assault ended when Mackenzie decided it was too costly to charge the Indians' defensive positions to drive them from the rocks.¹⁰ Mackenzie and his men returned to the village, destroyed it, and drove off most of the Indian pony herd. He previously used this tactic in the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon in the Texas Panhandle during the Red River War of 1874-75. Chapter 3 will also cover that war in more detail. After the battle, the soldiers left the Northern Cheyenne to deal with the elements of the Northern Plains' winter.

With their village burned and most of their possessions destroyed, the Northern Cheyenne retreated west toward the Bighorn Mountains in hopes of joining Crazy Horse and his followers. Given the tribal alliance and intermarriage between the Northern Cheyenne and the Oglala Sioux, Crazy Horse accepted the refugees.¹¹ However, this influx of Northern Cheyenne strained the dwindling supplies of Crazy Horse's camp.

Not long after the convergence with the Oglala Sioux, ad hoc Indian delegations began arriving from the agencies. They hoped to convince the defiant bands to go to the reservations and turn themselves in. Throughout the first few months of 1877, multiple villages arrived at the various agencies in Nebraska and the Dakota Territory to surrender. By late April 1877, the bands of Little Wolf and Dull Knife arrived at the Red Cloud Agency and surrendered to Brigadier General Crook at Camp, later Fort Robinson, Nebraska.¹²

Due to past treaty stipulations, the US Government sent the Northern Cheyenne to live with their cousins, the Southern Cheyenne, in IT. The Northern Cheyenne, although reluctant, finally agreed to go. On 28 May 1877, 972 Northern Cheyenne departed Camp

Robinson under the escort of a cavalry detachment under Lieutenant Henry W. Lawton of the 4th Cavalry Regiment.¹³ On 5 August 1877, 937 Northern Cheyenne enrolled at Darlington Agency, IT. Apparently, 35 Cheyenne had slipped away during the trek south.¹⁴

Initially, conditions at the Darlington Agency were good. The Indians ate adequately and a reunion-like atmosphere permeated the reservation. It had been close to a decade since the Northern Cheyenne engaged with their southern counterparts. Unfortunately, things eventually worsened as relationships strained and subsidies grew sporadic. Chapter 2 covers this strained relationship in detail. Moreover, sickness plagued both the Northern and Southern Cheyenne. The northern people had trouble acclimating to their new environment and grew more homesick every day. The bands under Little Wolf and Dull Knife were the most displeased, and they expressed their desire to return to the North Country. It was a little over a year (approximately 13 months) since their arrival to the reservation that they departed IT on 9 September 1878.

Two companies from the 4th Cavalry at nearby, Fort Reno, IT pursued the departed bands the following morning. Over the next month and a half, nearly every military department in the Military Division of the Missouri went on alert in response to the so-called Cheyenne Outbreak, as it was called at the time. Ironically, the Northern Cheyenne either forced the withdrawal of, or escaped, every military detachment it met throughout its movement in northwest IT and western Kansas.

By the autumn of 1878, the Army had plenty of experience fighting Plains Indians. This experience passed through the ranks and grew through operations on the Plains, veterans' tutelage of new Soldiers, and various professional readings found in

sources included but not limited to the *Army and Navy Journal* and engagement after action reports. Given these training sources, or the lack thereof, this essay answers this primary question: Why did the Army take so long to contain the Northern Cheyenne that escaped from Darlington Agency, IT in 1878?

This thesis has five chapters and multiple sub-chapters, including the introduction that answers the primary research question and the associated secondary research questions. The second chapter is entirely dedicated to the Cheyenne nation, their origins, tribal split, fighting experience, removal of the Northern Cheyenne to the IT, and reservation depredations. This chapter specifically answers these secondary research questions: What advantages and disadvantages did the Cheyenne have or overcome in their exodus from the IT reservation that thwarted the US Army's attempts to contain them? Moreover, why did the Northern Cheyenne opt to leave the Darlington Reservation? It is important to answer these questions to grasp the type of foe the US Army was up against and the motivation that drove the Northern Cheyenne to flee or fight when necessary.

The third chapter of this thesis is devoted to understanding the condition of the US Army on the frontier in 1878-79. Leadership, training, equipment, and operational experience of the US Army, including successes and failures when fighting the Plains tribes, offer insight regarding the primary research question. This chapter reinforces the primary research question by answering the following secondary research questions: What issues did the Army face in attempting to contain the Cheyenne exodus? What were the primary TTPs associated with Plains Indian warfare prior to 1878?

The fourth chapter covers the nature of the Army's approach to the exodus from start to finish. It covers the initial Army response, subsequent engagements, and the Indian raids on the settlements along the escape route. Additionally, this chapter covers the bands' split in Nebraska, the incarceration of Dull Knife and his people at Fort Robinson, and their subsequent breakout from that stockade. This chapter analyzes how this pursuit** and accompanying fights resembles those of the past and examines if the Army applied any of those lessons learned to this scenario. The answers to the following secondary research questions are contained in this chapter: What TTPs did the Northern Cheyenne use to facilitate their escape? Why did the Army fail to contain this flight at the earliest stages? In the absence of formal doctrine, to what degree did the Army adhere to the current TTPs associated with fighting Plains Indians during the 1878 chase?

The fifth and final chapter assesses what worked and what failed from both the Army's and the Indians' standpoint. It will also address the fate of the Northern Cheyenne tribe at the end of the pursuit. Based off primary and secondary source documents, the conduct of the Army in its operations against the Indians reveals why the Army failed to contain the fleeing Cheyenne at a much earlier stage. The importance of training, self-development, operational experience, determination, and the application of

* According to ADRP 1-02 and ADRP 3-90, pursuit is defined as an offensive operation designed to catch or cut off a hostile force attempting to escape, with the aim of destroying it. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines pursuit as the act of pursuing. This thesis will adopt the Merriam-Webster definition of pursuit for the purpose this pursuit was a chase bent on containment and not destruction of the opposing force. In addition, the civilian definition of pursuit is much more understandable for both civilian and military populations.

lessons learned played a critical in the military operations associated with the Cheyenne exodus.

Although this event is not as well documented as other pursuits, such as the Nez Perce campaign of 1877, historians have written a fair amount on the incident. In many cases, it is a short reference to the exodus in a larger work. The most well known work is Mari Sandoz's *Cheyenne Autumn*, which later became a movie project that Hollywood legend John Ford directed. She wrote her book mainly from the Cheyenne point of view. Since the publishing of Mari Sandoz's book, others have attempted to cover this episode. The respected historian and author, Stan Hoig, wrote an admirable piece, *Perilous Pursuit*, which is the basis for this thesis. It, more than any other document, offers a tactical, military perspective. Another work worth mentioning is John H. Monnett's *Tell Them We are Going Home*. Sandoz, Hoig, and Monnett did a great job from their perspectives. Sandoz tended to be biased towards the Cheyenne cause. Monnett had an objective position and tried to fill in the blanks left by Sandoz, but his work still lacked Hoig's level of detail. Hoig remained the most objective, portraying neither the Army nor Indians as heroes or villains throughout his book. This thesis addresses the Cheyenne exodus from a tactical, military perspective with a focus on the lessons learned from previous engagements. Most importantly, it assesses if those lessons learned from earlier operations informed the Army's actions against the Northern Cheyenne in 1878.

¹ Thomas R. Buecker, *Fort Robinson and the American West 1874-1899* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1999), 127-128. Indian Territory would later become the state of Oklahoma.

² US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the Year 1872* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1872), 267.

³ Charles D. Collins, Jr., *Atlas of the Sioux Wars*, 2nd ed. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2006), Map 13.

⁴ Peter John Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1979), 933.

⁵ Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian 1866-1891* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), 247.

⁶ Paul L. Hedren, *Great Sioux War Orders of Battle* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), 69.

⁷ Fred H. Werner, *The Dull Knife Battle* (Greeley, CO: Werner Publications, 1981), 18.

⁸ Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1941* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1965), 61.

⁹ *Army and Navy Journal*, December 9, 1876.

¹⁰ Thomas Goodrich, *Scalp Dance: Indian Warfare on the High Plains 1865-1879* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1997), 292.

¹¹ Powell, 1073.

¹² Stan Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit: The U.S. Cavalry and the Northern Cheyennes* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2002), 20.

¹³ John H. Monnett, *Tell Them We Are Going Home: The Odyssey of the Northern Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 25.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 2

THE CHEYENNE

The Cheyenne were a formidable foe, not only for the US Army, but also for other Plains Indian tribes as well. Their warriors' capabilities and dominance is widely accepted. To gain a better understanding of the Army's pursuit of that band of Northern Cheyenne from Darlington Agency in 1878, it is important to understand the character and culture of the Cheyenne people. Where did they come from? Why was there a Northern and a Southern division and what was the relationship between the two? Why was the Southern Cheyenne reservation in IT and why were the Northern Cheyenne sent there? Lastly, what were the conditions like on the reservation that made them want to leave? The answers create an image of the adversary the US Army faced during the fall and winter of 1878-79 and explain the why of the Northern Cheyenne exodus.

Origins, Tribal Structure, and Tribal Split

In their native language, the Cheyenne call themselves Tsistsista, which means "the People." Cheyenne is a derivative of the Sioux word shahiyena, meaning "red talkers," or "people of alien speech."¹ The Sioux called people they could better understand, "white talkers."² Today, the Cheyenne constitute two separate, federally recognized tribes. The Northern Cheyenne primarily occupy the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in and around Lame Deer, Montana, and the Southern Cheyenne, along with the Arapaho, call modern-day western Oklahoma home. Even with the years of separation, the two tribes are still related, and there was a time when they were one. The Cheyenne belong to the western-most, Algonquian-speaking family of Indians. Most

believe that the Cheyenne first inhabited the Great Lakes region of Canada during the 1600s before moving south and west to the Missouri River valley in present-day North and South Dakota. Some believe that they moved west after bigger and more powerful tribes compelled them to do so. Others believe they moved west to avoid the newly arriving European settlers that were beginning to appear from the east beginning in the 17th century.³

While in the Great Lakes region, as well as along the banks of the Missouri River in present-day North and South Dakota, the Cheyenne led a sedentary life, growing crops, hunting locally, and living in earth lodges. However, during their time along the Missouri River, several Cheyenne pushed even further west to live and hunt on the Plains. These groups would still return periodically to the sedentary Cheyenne along the Missouri to bring meat from their hunts and visit family and friends. It is unknown exactly when the Cheyenne gave up their primarily agrarian existence for a more nomadic lifestyle, but by the early 1800s, nearly all Cheyenne were living out on the Plains, following the great herds of bison, or American buffalo.⁴ Their acquisition of the horse around 1760 no doubt acted as a catalyst to this choice.⁵

While in the Missouri River region, the Cheyenne met the Suhtai tribe. The Suhtai were also an Algonquian-speaking people. During their first encounter, they found that despite minor differences in their dialect, both could understand each other. Eventually, the Cheyenne absorbed the Suhtai, and they became one of the ten primary Cheyenne bands. It is unknown when, perhaps by the 1830s that the Suhtai tribe simply ceased to exist as an independent nation, but instead existed as a sub-band of the Cheyenne.⁶

The foundation of the Cheyenne political structure began with bands. There were ten main bands of Cheyenne. Each had four chiefs, totaling forty in all. Each of these band chiefs combined to elect four tribal head chiefs. The forty band chiefs, with the addition of the four tribal head chiefs, made up the Council of the Forty-four (figure 3). This council was the primary Cheyenne political institution. As the Cheyenne moved west from the Missouri River region, they roamed about the Central and Northern Plains, namely modern-day Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, and South Dakota. This was the prime grazing region of the massive buffalo herds, which the Cheyenne depended upon for nearly all sustenance, including food, shelter, clothing, eating utensils, and weapons.



Figure 3. Cheyenne Sociopolitical Structure

Source. Charles D. Collins, Jr. *Cheyenne Wars Atlas* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2010), 5.

The Cheyenne continued their nomadic existence throughout the Plains for the better part of the 19th century. The tribal structure, namely the chiefs of the Council of the Forty-four, dictated everyday life and provided civil leadership.⁷ As shown in figure 3, aside from the original ten bands, four separate groups were strictly military societies. They were the Swift (Kit) Foxes, Elk Horn Scrapers, Red Shields, and the more widely known Dog Soldiers. The Cheyenne prophet, Sweet Medicine, formed these bands when he instructed the creation of the Council of the Forty-four. There would be other soldier societies, like the Bowstring Warriors and the Crazy Dogs, formed among the Cheyenne in later years, but originally there were only the four previously mentioned.

These military bands were responsible for conducting the tribe's warfighting. Their chiefs were not part of the Council of the Forty-four and did not have as much say in the day-to-day life of the Cheyenne--at least not in the beginning. It would not be until the mid-1800s, with increasing hostilities with whites and the US Army, that these warrior societies would take on a more important role in tribal decisions, and increase the divide between peace-seeking and hostile chiefs. Both Dull Knife and Little Wolf, who would lead the Northern Cheyenne escape from Oklahoma in 1878, were members of the Council of the Forty-four. In fact, Little Wolf was the only chief to hold dual chieftainships at the same time, one being as a chief in the Elkhorn Scrapers, and the other as the Sweet Medicine Chief in the Council of the Forty-four--the most important position in the Cheyenne tribal structure.⁸ This occurred in 1864 during the regularly scheduled ten-year renewal of the Council of the Forty-four, at which time both the Northern and Southern Cheyenne were present.

There is no specific date associated with the separation of the Cheyenne into a northern and southern element. Multiple sources generally agree that the split occurred around 1830. There were no heated tribal arguments that led to this division. Even after the split, both groups saw themselves as one tribe. George Bird Grinnell concluded, “the arbitrary and modern division into Northern and Southern sections means nothing more than that part of the tribe elected to reside in one region, and a part in another.”⁹ It was just as much of a geographic preference as much as any other motive. Even with the geographic separation, the Cheyenne tribal structure, customs, ceremonies and traditions continued as they always had. They still governed with the Council of the Forty-four when they could and they still congregated for the renewal of Sacred Arrows every ten years in conjunction with the renewal of the Council. The Sacred Arrows, along with the Sacred Buffalo Hat, are the two most sacred symbols of the Cheyenne. In Cheyenne mythology, the Creator gave these sacred objects to the People. Today, the Keeper of the Sacred Arrows maintains the bundle of the Sacred Arrows with the Southern Cheyenne in Oklahoma. The Northern Cheyenne are the caretakers of the Sacred Buffalo Hat in Montana. These items serve as symbols of the covenant between the People and the Creator.¹⁰

Treaties and Agreements

Over the course of the 19th century, the US Government made many deals, treaties, and agreements with the Plains tribes. More often than not, they broke these deals in some way, shape, or form. The Cheyenne and the US Government signed their first treaty in 1825. General Henry Atkinson and a small body of troops paddled up the Missouri River with the intent of making treaties of “friendship and trade” with all of the

tribes they could find. The US Government sought treaties because of the increasing fur trade and the need to protect its economic interests. In July of 1825, Atkinson met with the Cheyenne at the mouth of the Teton River near present-day Pierre, South Dakota. It was not the intent of the treaty to levy restrictions on the tribes, but to instead to “receive the Cheyenne tribe of Indians into their friendship and under their protection.” This initial treaty had little effect on the Cheyenne’s livelihood.¹¹

The next treaty of note was the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. Aside from the emigrants traversing the Oregon and Mormon Trails on their way to Oregon and Utah, the discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill, California in 1848 led to even more white travel across the roads and routes of the Plains. This increase in traffic would no doubt lead to confrontation between the tribes and the whites. Some of the same tribes that were a part of the Treaty of 1825 were also involved in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, including but not limited to the Cheyenne, Sioux, Crow, and Arikara. The Cheyenne received reserve lands that constituted most of modern-day eastern Colorado. The reserve was approximately 44 million acres and stretched from the North Platte River to the Arkansas River (figure 4). Article V of the Treaty described the reserve.

The territory of the Cheyennes and Arrapahoes, commencing at the Red Bute, or the place where the road leaves the north fork of the Platte River; thence up the north fork of the Platte River to its source; thence along the main range of the Rocky Mountains to the head-waters of the Arkansas River; thence down the Arkansas River to the crossing of the Santa Fé road; thence in a northwesterly direction to the forks of the Platte River, and thence up the Platte River to the place of beginning.

The Treaty forbade the Cheyenne from attacking white travelers, and granted the Cheyenne protection from the US Government if the travelers attacked them.¹²



Figure 4. Federally recognized Arapaho and Cheyenne lands, 1851-1861

Source. Eric Sainio, "Between Fort Laramie and Fort Wise-A Tale of Two Treaties," *The Prowers Journal*, last modified February 24, 2014, accessed 18 March 2015, <http://theprowersjournal.com/2014/02/between-fort-laramie-and-fort-wise-a-tale-of-two-treaties>.

The Great Father, or the President of the United States, wished the tribes to make peace with each other as well. The president asked the tribes to appoint a head chief, or spokesperson, for their entire tribe. For years, the Cheyenne had chiefs and the Council of the Forty-four. Now they were asked to pick one head chief to speak for all. The Cheyenne Sweet Medicine Chief, High-Backed Wolf, chose Stone Forehead. He was a holy man and the Keeper of the Sacred Arrows at the time. He was also a Southern Cheyenne.¹³

Stone Forehead, along with three Southern Cheyenne chiefs, signed the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. The Southern Cheyenne found the treaty acceptable because it kept them in the lands that they were already occupying anyway. The treaty did not require them to “surrender the privilege of hunting, fishing or passing over any of the tracts of country heretofore described.” With that wording, the tribes could still go to other territories mentioned in the treaty, for the purpose of hunting, fishing, and traveling. In addition to the previously mentioned stipulations of the treaty, the Indian tribes were to acknowledge the “right of the United States Government to establish roads, military and other posts, within their respective territories.”¹⁴

The signing of the treaty took place on 17 September 1851. Less than seven years later, the discovery of gold and silver in 1858 on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado brought a great influx of miners. The emigrant roads soon filled with thousands of whites on their way to the Colorado gold fields. This took them straight through the heart of the Cheyenne and Arapaho territory. The tribes did not seem to mind, for the whites were going to the mountain regions and only passing through. Most thought that when all of the yellow metal was out of the ground, the whites would be on their way.¹⁵

By 28 February 1861, the US Government made Colorado a territory, and it would remain so until it finally achieved statehood in 1876. Amid the gold rush and the huge onslaught of whites passing through the Cheyenne and Arapaho lands, and prior to Colorado becoming a territory, the signing of the Treaty of Fort Wise occurred on 15 February 1861. Some among the Council of the Forty-four wanted a lasting peace, whatever the costs. In an attempt to seize a sizeable portion of the lands set aside during

the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, US Government officials called Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs to council with them at Fort Wise, in present-day Colorado, downriver from Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River (figure 4). Six Cheyenne chiefs and four Arapaho chiefs actually signed the new treaty, restricting the tribe to new boundaries. Figure 4 shows that the new territory established by the Treaty of Fort Wise. The reservation was only about one-tenth the size of the lands established in the earlier treaty. Among the signers was legendary peace chief, Black Kettle. Another legendary witness to these proceedings was First Lieutenant J.E.B. Stuart, who was a US Army cavalry officer at the time.¹⁶ As with the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, the Treaty of Fort Wise allowed the Cheyenne and Arapaho to leave their designated reserve for hunting, fishing, and traveling.

Black Kettle was a prominent Cheyenne chief, and he expressed his concern with the Indian Commissioners that they were only a few and they did not have the consensus of all of the bands. The commissioners assured them they would get the other necessary signatures later. The Treaty of Fort Wise was unpopular among the majority of the Cheyenne and the peace chiefs who signed it lost some of their influence among the Council of the Forty-four.¹⁷

Even after the signing of the treaty, trouble persisted. There was plenty of danger in the form of Indian attacks across eastern Colorado and western Kansas during the early 1860s. Some Indian attacks were provoked; others were not. Regardless of who started the troubles on the Plains, many Coloradans felt obligated to help solve their territory's "Indian problem." This led to the attack of a peaceful band of Southern Cheyenne along Sand Creek in southeastern Colorado in 1864. Colonel John M. Chivington of the Colorado Volunteer Cavalry attacked Black Kettle's band in what became known as the

Sand Creek Massacre. The aftermath of the Sand Creek Massacre further divided the Cheyenne, with some Southerners moving north to join the Northern Cheyenne, and the rest moving south of the Arkansas River.¹⁸

Black Kettle and his wife survived the attack and yet he remained a strong peace advocate. News of Sand Creek spread to many of the Plains tribes and there were a series of retaliatory attacks soon after. Still wanting peace for his people, Black Kettle later signed the Treaty of the Little Arkansas in 1865. This treaty was almost as ineffective as the Treaty of Fort Wise since not all the Cheyenne supported it. The treaty created a new reservation in south-central Kansas and north-central Oklahoma. It also denounced those responsible for the Sand Creek Massacre and offered reparations.¹⁹ Raids and confrontations, however, continued throughout 1865-67. Eventually, another peace delegation called for a council along Medicine Lodge Creek in the fall of 1867.

The Medicine Lodge Treaty brought the Kiowa, Comanche, Plains Apache, Southern Cheyenne, and Southern Arapaho together. The treaty's terms established reservations in IT and south-central Kansas for the Cheyenne. Tribal members could venture north of the Arkansas River for the purposes of hunting, but they were to stay away from the main white travel routes and settlements. Again, the Northern Cheyenne had no representation since they were in the North Country. By this time, they were more closely allied with the Oglala Sioux and Northern Arapaho. The next time the Northern Cheyenne dealt with the US Government would be during the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 negotiations.

In the spring of 1868, commissioners arrived at Fort Laramie, Wyoming with the intent of creating a treaty with the Northern Plains tribes--the Northern Cheyenne among

them. The peace commission, made up of civilians and Army officers, “made a treaty with the confederated northern Arapahoes and Cheyennes on the 10th of May.”²⁰ Article

II of this treaty stated:

The Indians hereby agree for their permanent home some portion of the tract of country set apart and designated as a permanent reservation for the Southern Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians by a treaty entered into at Medicine Lodge Creek, on the 28th day of October, 1867, or some portion of the country and reservation set apart for the Brulé and other bands of Sioux Indians, by a treaty entered into by and between said Indians and the US, at Fort Laramie, D. T., on the 29th day of April, 1868. And the Northern Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians relinquish, release, and surrender to the US, all right, claim, and interest in and to all territory outside the two reservations above mentioned, except the right to roam and hunt while game shall be found in sufficient quantities to justify the chase . . . and that within one year from this date they will attach themselves permanently either to the agency provided for near the mouth of Medicine Lodge Creek, or to the agency about to be established on the Missouri River, near Fort Randall, or to the Crow agency near Otter Creek, on the Yellowstone River, provided for by treaty of the 7th day of May, 1868, entered into by and between the United States and said Crow Indians, at Fort Laramie, D. T.

Both Little Wolf and Dull Knife signed the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868.

According to the treaty, multiple options lay with the Northern Cheyenne when it came to choosing a reservation. The only condition was they had to choose within one year of the treaty signing. Even with the treaty conditions, the Northern Cheyenne still did not have a reservation of their own. They knew they wanted to stay in the North Country, so they eventually attached themselves to the Oglala reservation. They spent most of their time in the Unceded Territory; they only went to the designated agency for supplies and annuities. Eventually, the US Government encouraged the Northern Cheyenne to move south to IT.

In 1873, a delegation of Northern Cheyenne chiefs traveled to Washington to visit with President Ulysses S. Grant. At this meeting, Grant expressed his wishes they go to IT to live with their Southern relatives. Dull Knife and Little Wolf were among the

delegation. The other delegate chiefs selected these two men to speak for them. They wanted the Northern Cheyenne to stay in their northern homelands. President Grant stated the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 dictated they go south, and if there were any misinterpretations on the chiefs' part, it was the mistake of the interpreters at the time. The chiefs, trying to salvage the situation, stated they would go back and talk to their people before they made any decisions.²¹

The delegation returned home knowing that neither they nor their people would want to go to the south. In the summer of 1874, the US Army sent an expedition into the sacred Black Hills of South Dakota, which happened to lie on the Great Sioux Reservation established during the 1868 treaty. This expedition, under command of Lieutenant George A. Custer, discovered gold in the Black Hills. Once news of this discovery spread, miners, prospectors, and all other types of entrepreneurs trying to make their fortune flooded the Black Hills. The US Government could not stop the onslaught of white people and offered to buy the contested region. The Indians refused to sell. Moreover, many reservation Indians left their agencies for the Unceded Territory between 1875 and 1876. The US Army attempted to round up the "hostile" bands and force their return to their respective agencies. The actions led to the Great Sioux War of 1876-77. At the war's conclusion, the Northern Cheyenne bands under Little Wolf, Dull Knife, and others surrendered to authorities at Camp Robinson, Nebraska.

Dull Knife, Little Wolf and the Fighting Cheyenne

Dull Knife was a warrior all his life.²² Born around 1810 on Rosebud Creek in Montana, Dull Knife was once a prominent warrior of the Dog Soldier military society.²³ The Dog Soldiers were the watchdogs of the People appointed by Sweet Medicine

himself and they were fierce fighters. Throughout his youth, Dull Knife fought the tribal enemies of the Cheyenne. After the Sand Creek Massacre, he helped organize retaliatory raids against soldiers and settlers alike. As the Southern and Northern Cheyenne separated, Dull Knife chose to stay in the North. He fought with Red Cloud and his Oglala against the whites when they built forts along the Bozeman Trail between Wyoming to Montana. He is thought to have helped plan and execute the Fetterman Massacre in December of 1866. This was a well-executed Northern Cheyenne and Sioux ambush of a detachment of 80 troopers under Captain William Fetterman. The Indians killed Fetterman and his command.²⁴ The Fetterman Massacre was a classic example of how the Plains Indians fought. They conducted textbook ambushes and usually fought set-piece battles when they had superior numbers and were assured of victory.

During Red Cloud's War throughout the Bozeman Trail country, Dull Knife fought in the renowned Hayfield Fight and Wagon Box Fight. Both of these engagements taught the Cheyenne to avoid the precise firepower of the blockaded soldiers. After the closing of the forts on the Bozeman Trail, Dull Knife did not fight much with the whites until the Great Sioux War. He and his villagers were participants in the Custer fight on the Little Bighorn River, and soon endured the brunt of the US Army's wrath during the remainder of the Great Sioux War. Colonel Ranald "Three Fingers" Mackenzie attacked and destroyed his village in November 1876, forcing his band into the Bighorn Mountains. They eventually surrendered at Camp Robinson, Nebraska in April 1877.

Little Wolf, like Dull Knife, was a Dog Soldier. He later left the Dog Soldiers and became head chief of the Elk Horn Scrapers. Little Wolf, also known as Two Tails, was born around 1830, which made him approximately 48 during the Cheyenne exodus from

Darlington Agency in 1878.²⁵ In 1864, during the 10-year renewal of the Council of the Forty-four, Little Wolf became the Sweet Medicine Chief of the Cheyenne. He was reelected to this position in 1874. Therefore, Chiefs Little Wolf and Dull Knife had made it to the top of the Cheyenne sociopolitical structure by serving as “Old Man Chiefs,” the top four head chiefs on the Council of the Forty-four. For the better part of his life, Little Wolf primarily fought other tribal enemies, namely the Utes, Pawnee, Crow, and Arikara. He also fought the Kiowa and Comanche before the People made peace with them. Much like Dull Knife, he stayed with the Northern Cheyenne when the tribe drifted further apart. He fought in the Fetterman Massacre and Red Cloud’s War against the travelers and forts along the Bozeman Trail in the late 1860s. He was, though, too late to Custer’s Last Stand on 25 June 1876. Although he missed the Custer fight, he did make it to the large village on the Little Bighorn River shortly thereafter. He and his villagers arrived in time to fight the remainder of Custer’s 7th Cavalry on top of Reno Hill the following day before departing the valley and heading toward the Bighorn Mountains. He was with Dull Knife’s village when “Three Fingers” Mackenzie attacked in November 1876. He surrendered to authorities at Camp Robinson in February 1877, two months earlier than Dull Knife.²⁶

Both Dull Knife and Little Wolf grew up in a culture that placed great value on bravery and being a warrior. That is why they became Dog Soldiers and Elk Horn Scrapers. In the early days, the Cheyenne rarely fought to acquire territory. They normally raided to strike against enemies for revenge, count coup, and steal horses or some other type of loot. Most Indian raids involved horse thievery and revenge raiding. When faced against great numbers, self-preservation took precedence and the Indians

usually fled to safety in order to fight again another day. Limited in size, the Cheyenne protected their small numbers. They had the families and the tribe to look after. Too many losses could jeopardize the tribe's safety and longevity. Army officers have noted that the Indian war party was the best light cavalry force in the world. They could ride hard and fast into enemy territory, raid a village or attack another war party, kidnap and steal, and then retreat back into the safety of their own country. Moreover, demonstrated courage and bravery were the surest ways to achieve honor in Cheyenne society.²⁷

Many of those that left IT for the North Country in September 1878 had spent years fighting and many were members of the different Cheyenne warrior societies. From childhood, males learned the way of the warrior. At an early age, their fathers taught them how to read "sign," hunt wild game and buffalo, and just be all-around good outdoorsmen. This is why the soldier-chiefs wanted them to serve as scouts. A white man, or non-Indian, could scout well, but he generally learned scouting later in life, whereas the Cheyenne male lived the scouting lifestyle his entire life.²⁸

Above all else, the Cheyenne valued the safety of family. When soldiers attacked an Indian village, or when something threatened the women and children, warriors fought ferociously to allow time for families to escape. The dawn attack on the Indian village by the US Army became a preferred technique because warriors would stand and fight long enough to give the women and the children time to escape. This time gave the Army the opportunity to use its strengths against the Cheyenne. They were far more successful in pitched battles than maneuver engagements. Of course, there were chiefs that led in battle, but when the battle began, warriors conducted the majority of the fighting individually, with little control over fires and formations. There were exceptions. In some

cases, warriors would wait for a volley fire and then charge during the reload. Again, when this happened it was because the warriors had a superior numerical advantage. Even with the numerical advantage, things did not always work out. The Hayfield Fight, Wagon Box Fight, and the Battle of Beecher's Island attest to this circumstance. In each of these fights, the Indians had a numerical advantage, but due to the white men's defensive posture and advanced weaponry, the Indians were unable to prevail. This was the type of foe the US Army faced during its attempt to interdict the Northern Cheyenne on their escape from IT in 1878. When the Northern Cheyenne left their agency in September 1878, they were a determined people familiar with the trails and country. And proven, battle-hardened leaders led them in their quest to return to the Power River region.

Removal to the South and Reservation Depredations

Not long after surrendering, Little Wolf and Dull Knife departed for IT in May. They did not want to go, but other Northern Cheyenne chiefs, Standing Elk in particular, spoke up in favor of removal to the south. General "Grey Wolf" Crook and Colonel "Three Fingers" Mackenzie assured them that they could go the reservation in the IT and if they did not like it, they could return north.²⁹

Upon arrival to Darlington Agency on 5 August 1877, 933 Northern Cheyenne and four Northern Arapaho reported to Fort Reno's commanding officer, Colonel John K. Mizner. Colonel Mizner handed them over to the Darlington Agency Indian Agent, John D. Miles, on 7 August. Agent Miles reported that after their arrival, they joined the Southern Cheyenne in camp and a "time of rejoicing and feasting was kept up for several days."³⁰ After a few days, the Northern Cheyenne began to settle into their new

surroundings as best as they could, but for many, it was difficult. The climate in IT was much different from the north. The hot, humid climate was unlike the cooler, drier air found on the Northern Plains. In his 1877 annual report, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs stated:

Experience has demonstrated the impolicy of sending northern Indians to the Indian Territory. To go no farther back then the date of the Pawnee removal, it will be seen that a radical change of climate is disastrous, as this tribe alone, in the first two years, lost by death over 800 out of its number of 2,376. The northern Cheyennes have suffered severely, and the Poncas who arrived there in July last, have already lost 30 by death, which, by an ordinary computation, would be the death-rate for the entire tribe for a period of four years.³¹

Their lack of acclimation, and the mosquitoes that were abundant in the IT, made them susceptible to a malaria epidemic that hit Darlington shortly after their arrival. Hardly a lodge among them avoided the sickness. The malaria epidemic also helped deplete the agency medicinal supplies.

Climate aside, the government issued rations were not at all what the Northern Cheyenne expected. The way the Agency issued rations was also not to the Northerners' liking. At Red Cloud Agency, they received allotments in bulk, and then the warriors and chiefs distributed the materials. At Darlington, the families received tickets, which they would then turn in to the agency commissary for their goods. Using this method, the chiefs felt they lost importance among the tribe. Miles felt his way was the fairest in order to keep the lion from getting his share.³²

Agent Miles knew that the Indians relied on hunting to offset the annuity shortfalls. Usually, the Indians at Darlington Agency would go on a winter and summer buffalo hunt in western Oklahoma, and if need be, off the reservation and into the Texas Panhandle. In the few months preceding the Northern Cheyenne's arrival, the Southern

Cheyenne and Arapaho had a successful buffalo hunt and they were hopeful for another that winter. The winter of 1877-78, hunters from the Arapaho, Southern Cheyenne, and Northern Cheyenne headed west for a hunt under a military escort from the 4th Cavalry.³³

Miles heard there were still buffalo herds west of Camp Supply, IT so that is where the Indians intended to look. Throughout the late 1860s and 1870s, buffalo hides were in great demand. Hunters decimated the herds by the thousands. After the herd sizes began to dwindle on the buffalo ranges between the Arkansas and Platte Rivers, the hunters turned their sights south of the Arkansas to southwest Kansas and the Oklahoma and Texas Panhandles. In the time between the Indians' 1877 summer and winter hunt, the hunters were still at work slaughtering the herds. By the time the agency Indians went on their winter of 1877-78 hunt, they could not find any buffalo to kill. This failed hunt was disheartening to all Indians involved. Sad and hungry, the Indians returned to Camp Supply, drew what rations were available, and headed east to the Darlington Agency.

Back at Darlington, rations remained the same as they had been. It was typical for a seven-day issue of beef, flour, corn, coffee, sugar and beans, to barely last three days.³⁴ The US Government expected the Indians to become self-sufficient farmers after settling down to reservation life. If they could grow their own crops, they might have been able to make up for the poorly supplied government rations. Unfortunately, there was only one farmer assigned to Darlington Agency. He was to teach over 5,000 men, women, boys and girls to farm the white man's way. Farming implements were rarely available or issued as promised, so even if the Northern Cheyenne were willing to learn it would have been virtually impossible to do so. Moreover, Cheyenne men saw digging in the dirt as

women's work. These warriors would rather be hunting or striking their enemies. In addition to the inhospitable climate, sickness, and hunger, there were often quarrels between the Southern and Northern Cheyenne. Although related, it had been some years since the tribes had spent considerable time together. There were some among the Northern Cheyenne who longed for the high country and it would not be long until they began their arduous journey north, with or without the US Government's permission.

¹ William K. Powers, *Indians of the Northern Plains* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969), 31.

² George B. Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians* (New York: Cooper Square, 1923), 2.

³ Powers, 30-31.

⁴ Grinnell, *Cheyenne Indians*, 4-6.

⁵ Powers, 31.

⁶ Grinnell, *Cheyenne Indians*, 4.

⁷ Charles D. Collins, Jr., *Cheyenne Wars Atlas* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2010), 4.

⁸ Powell, 273.

⁹ Grinnell, *Cheyenne Indians*, 1.

¹⁰ For more on these sacred items, Peter John Powell's book, *The People of the Sacred Mountain*, is a good source.

¹¹ Stan Hoig, *The Peace Chiefs of the Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 23.

¹² Eric Sainio, "Between Fort Laramie and Fort Wise-A Tale of Two Treaties," *The Prowers Journal*, last modified February 24, 2014, accessed 18 March 2015, <http://theprowersjournal.com/2014/02/between-fort-laramie-and-fort-wise-a-tale-of-two-treaties>.

¹³ Powell, 110.

¹⁴ Charles J. Kappler, ed., “Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, Vol. II: Treaties,” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), accessed 18 March 2015, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol2/treaties/sio0594.htm#mn11>. This citation deals with the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. Charles J. Kappler compiled and edited multiple government documents dealing with American Indian tribes, namely treaties and agreements. See website for more information.

¹⁵ Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (London, UK: Barry and Jenkins, 1971), 68.

¹⁶ Charles J. Kappler, ed., “Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, Vol. II: Treaties,” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), accessed 18 March 2015, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol2/treaties/ara0807.htm>. This citation is in reference to the Treaty of Fort Wise in 1861.

¹⁷ Jerome A. Greene, *Washita: The U.S. Army and the Southern Cheyennes, 1867-1869* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 26-27.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 23-27.

¹⁹ Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, Vol. II: Treaties*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), accessed 18 March 2015, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol2/treaties/che0887.htm>. This citation references the 1865 Treaty of the Little Arkansas. Check URL for more information on this treaty between the US Government and Cheyenne.

²⁰ US Office of Indian Affairs, *Commissioner of Indian Affairs Annual Report for the Year 1868* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1868), 4.

²¹ Powell, 827.

²² Dull Knife was his Lakota name, his Cheyenne name was Morning Star.

²³ Monnett, 17.

²⁴ James Warren Covington, “Causes of the Dull Knife Raid,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 26 (Spring 1984): 1.

²⁵ Powell, 100.

²⁶ Jerome A. Greene, *Morning Star Dawn, The Powder River Expedition and the Northern Cheyennes, 1876* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 189.

²⁷ George B. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915), 9.

²⁸ George B. Grinnell, *When Buffalo Ran* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1920), 23-36, accessed 18 May 2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t9j38vx8m;view=1up;seq=11>.

²⁹ Mari Sandoz, *Cheyenne Autumn* (New York: McGraw Hill Books, 1953), 1.

³⁰ US Office of Indian Affairs, *Commissioner of Indian Affairs Annual Report for the Year 1877* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1877), 85.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 38.

³⁴ *Army and Navy Journal*, October 5, 1878.

CHAPTER 3

THE FRONTIER ARMY

The US Army in 1878 was thirteen years removed from the end of the American Civil War. The post-Civil War years saw the Army serving in two primary roles-- Reconstruction duty in the South, and Indian fighting in the West. With a better understanding of the Cheyenne from the last chapter, it is important to understand the role of the US Army as a police force on the Plains. What did the Frontier Army look like in the West? In lieu of a formal guerrilla warfare doctrine, what tactics, techniques, and procedures did the Army use when fighting Indians? How much Indian fighting experience did it have? What advantages should the Army have had over the Indians-- leadership, logistics, communications, etc.? Answering these questions should make it easier to visualize the force that was responsible for capturing the Northern Cheyenne when they left their reservation.

Army Demobilization and Reorganization

The end of the Civil War saw a monumental reduction of the US Army. With the rebellion of the southern states crushed, there was no need to have a large standing army. By November 1, 1866, the Army mustered out 1,023,021 volunteers, leaving only 11,043.¹ The mustering out of the remainder of the volunteers occurred before the end of 1867. With conscription ended, the last of the draftees finished their enlistments, and the US Army once again became an all-volunteer force.

The US Army became an army built around the regiment. Gone were the days of armies, corps, divisions, or even brigades--the regiment was the biggest organization. On

July 28, 1866, President Andrew Johnson signed an act that allowed the Regular Army to increase from six to ten cavalry regiments, two of which were the black units of the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments, commonly known as the Buffalo Soldiers. The number of active infantry regiments increased from nineteen to forty-five, four of which were all black, but commanded by white officers. Under the act, there were five artillery regiments. The cavalry and artillery regiments consisted of twelve companies while the infantry regiments contained ten. The end strength of the Regular Army by the end of 1866 was 54,302.² This was far better than the Regular Army pre-war strength of 18,000, but the reductions were far from over.³ Over the next five years, the Regular Army shrank even more to 30,000 enlisted men and officers. Cavalry regiments remained at ten but the number of infantry regiments decreased to twenty-five. By 1878, the Army had a grand total of 24,761.⁴ Thus, the US Army had gone from well over a million men to less than 25,000 in less than thirteen years. This type of demobilization occurs at the end of every major conflict in American history, but it was particularly noteworthy after the Civil War.

If a seeming lack of manpower were not enough, the expansive distances the Army patrolled made their daunting task of keeping law and order on the Plains that much more difficult. To enable a more effective command and control system and devise a better division of labor, the US Army divided the Plains, Mountain, and Western states and territories into different areas of responsibility. The largest geographic areas of responsibility were the Military Divisions.⁵ Within the divisions, there were departments, and within the departments, there were districts.⁶

Arguably, the biggest and most active division during the 1860s and 1870s was the Military Division of the Missouri, named for the Missouri River and commanded by Lieutenant General Philip Sheridan. Within the Division of the Missouri, there were four different departments--the Department of Dakota, Department of the Platte, the Department of the Missouri, and the Department of Texas (figure 5).



Figure 5. Military Division of the Missouri, 1869-83

Source. Raphael P. Thain, *Notes Illustrating the Military Geography of the United States, 1813-1880* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1881), 99-100.

The Division of the Missouri encompassed most of the interior of the continental United States, with the Rio Grande to the south, the Canadian border to the north, the Mississippi River to the east, and the Continental Divide to the west. Within these different departments and districts were numerous frontier Army posts. Arrayed with operational and strategic significance across the frontier, many were equivalent to today's Combat Outpost, or COP. Given the size of the frontier, these posts sprang up in areas that allowed the troops that manned them to provide the most protection for American citizens, namely along heavily traveled overland routes and rail lines. Some would grow and last longer than others, such as Fort Sill in Oklahoma, which is still an active Army post today, but most would serve their temporary purposes until the US Army eventually abandoned them.

Most of these posts were small and housed only a company or two at a time-- infantry, cavalry, artillery, or all three. It had to be that way due to the Army's size, and its scope of duties. In the Division of the Missouri in 1878, there were seventy-three posts alone. Lieutenant General Sheridan stated in his 1878 annual report to the General of the Army that "we have only four companies of artillery averaging 53 men each, eight regiments of cavalry averaging 765 men each, and eighteen regiments of infantry averaging 452 men each."⁷ There were only ten regiments of cavalry, twenty-five regiments of infantry, and five regiments of artillery in the entire US Army. The Division of the Missouri possessed the bulk of the Army's forces in 1878. Sheridan still felt they were spread too thin. He observed that the Division had about "one man to every 120 square miles in the Department of Texas, and one to every 75 square miles in the Department of Dakota, and about the same ratio in the Departments of the Platte and the

Missouri.” Sheridan believed that other countries would not try with a regiment or brigade, what the US Army was attempting with sometimes just a company or two.⁸

The men that made up the US Army on the frontier came from varying backgrounds. A large population of immigrants filled the enlisted ranks, but they still did not account for more than half of the total numbers. Many were so-called dregs that came from the lower socioeconomic class and saw service as a much better alternative than remaining destitute. There were also Civil War veterans within the Army’s ranks-- Confederate and Union alike. Accustomed to military life, they saw it as a decent way to make a living, or at least better than any civilian employment they were likely to get.⁹

The majority of the Army’s officer corps during the postwar years were Civil War veterans. Either they received their commissions through the typical commissioning source at the Military Academy at West Point, or they received their commissions as volunteers during the War. After the Civil War, many volunteer officers applied for and received commissions into the Regular Army.¹⁰ The officer corps and the enlisted corps had its share of combat experience within its ranks, but that experience for the most part was associated with a different kind of war against a different kind of enemy.

Training and Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs)

The training level of troopers on the frontier varied from company-to-company, regiment-to-regiment, and post-to-post. Soldiers would normally enlist at any number of recruiting stations across the country, spend some time at a designated recruit depot, get issued military clothing, do minimal basic drill, and then deploy to a regiment. During the 1860s and 1870s, the training a recruit received was undoubtedly insufficient. It was not until the 1880s that recruit depots became effective training posts. Depending on their job

specialty, recruits received basic soldier skills training for three to four months before leaving to the line. At Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, the recruit depot for cavalry recruits, aspiring troopers learned mounted and dismounted saber techniques, received marksmanship training, and even practiced horseback riding, both bareback and with a saddle.¹¹ For many soon-to-be cavalrymen, it was their first exposure to horses and any form of horsemanship. However, as previously stated, prior to the overhaul of the recruit depots in the 1880s, new soldiers received little training prior to arrival at a unit.

Since recruit depot training was minimal, soldiers learned what they really needed to know after assignment to a regiment, and then to a specific company. The frontier Army was a tight-knit group at the company level. Upon assignment to a company, an enlisted man or an officer could expect to stay with that company for many years. Typical enlistments lasted anywhere from three to five years, so it was common for a soldier to spend his entire enlistment in the same company.¹² Training received varied by assignment, but a common trend across all units was lack of marksmanship training, and that was due largely to a lack of training ammunition. The US Army Chief of Ordnance stated in his 1877 annual report to the General of the Army that the soldier had an average of ten rounds of ammunition per month for target practice. It is hard to imagine that being adequate for anyone to gain any level of marksmanship proficiency. A lack of ammunition for target practice should have meant officers and noncommissioned officers would have to focus their training efforts elsewhere, primarily in horsemanship, and in cavalry and infantry drills.

The Army published the first tactics manual for the cavalry in November 1861. A veteran cavalry officer, Philip St. George Cooke, wrote his *Cavalry Tactics* manual that

discussed everything from marching and battle formations to introducing horses to gunfire. The manual served as doctrine for the US Army during the Civil War and remained so for the postwar army as well. It was not until 1873 that a new cavalry tactics manual emerged. Emory Upton wrote it. Upton's manual, like Cooke's, kept the single-rank formation, but added the mounted skirmish order, "which, like the single-rank line, was designed primarily for employment in partisan and Indian warfare."¹³ As detailed as these tactics manuals were, they offered few answers on Indian fighting.

The frontier Army had little in the way of guerilla warfare doctrine, and the Indian way of war was most certainly a form of guerilla war. Fighting Indians in the West was more of an unconventional fight than what the Army was used to conducting. In his book, *The Prairie Traveler*, Captain Randolph Marcy stated the Indian is "every where without being any where" and "assembles at the moment of combat, and vanishes whenever fortune turns against him."¹⁴ The Army found this out all too well when hunting down hostile Indians. Highly mobile and self-sufficient, the tribes successfully evaded the Army in many of its searches and pursuits. In light of this, the Army adopted two primary strategies in finding and engaging the Plains tribes. One was the method of converging columns and the other was the winter campaign.¹⁵

One column in the field, seeking out a skilled enemy in his own expansive backyard, had a limited chance of success. The converging column method was just as it sounds. After receiving intelligence on prospective Indian locations from various sources such as Indian allies, scouts, and Indian agents, multiple columns would take to the field and attempt to converge on a suspected Indian location with the hopes that one of the columns would be able to find, fix and attack them. If the Indians fled from the column

that posed the immediate threat, it was also hoped they would go in the direction of one of the other converging columns.¹⁶ The converging column method proved to work in Sheridan's campaign on the Southern Plains in the winter of 1868-69, and during the Red River War of 1874-75.¹⁷ Sheridan's campaign in 1868-69 used both the strategies of converging columns and winter campaigning.

The reason for the winter campaign was that the summer campaigns proved ineffective. The Indians were far more mobile in the summer. Their ponies, which gave them that mobility, were dependent on grass for sustenance. When winter set in, the nutritious grasses of the summer died, and the Indian ponies weakened substantially. The villages felt a sense of increased safety during winter months, making them more vulnerable to attack. Attacks by the US Army in the middle of winter demoralized the tribes and reduced their sense of security. The psychological blows of a winter campaign was sometimes enough to force the tribes into submission.¹⁸ The ability to wait for winter before engaging the tribes was not always an option. When the Army clashed with Indians, it was often punitive in nature.

Wherever the encounters took place, the army units preferred to fight on foot--even the cavalry. The cavalry was the premier combat arm during the Indian Wars, but the typical image of a gallant charge with drawn sabers rarely occurred. In fact, by the early 1870s, most cavalry units left their sabers at home when campaigning. It was just an additional, cumbersome five pounds, unsuited for Indian fighting.

US Army's Indian Fighting Experience

The Civil War halted western expansion and settlement but as soon as the war concluded, Americans looked to the West once again. As miners, settlers, and railroads

pushed west into the heart of Indian country, hostilities erupted. The US Army found itself in a bad position on both sides of the fence in many instances. At times, they protected Indians from white incursions on reservation lands and at other times, they were protecting whites from Indian raids and retaliation. The latter was most prevalent as is evident in the various campaigns against and engagements with the hostile tribes.

During the Plains Indian Wars in the Military Division of the Missouri, the US Army fought the Sioux, Northern and Southern Cheyenne, Kiowa, Comanche, Arapaho, Ute and Apache.¹⁹ The first significant test for the post-Civil War Regular Army on the frontier came with the Sioux War of 1866-68, also known as Red Cloud's War. In 1863, John Bozeman and John Jacobs created a route that linked the Virginia City, Montana goldfields with the already established Platte Road near Fort Laramie, Wyoming (figure 6).



Figure 6. Bozeman Trail and Trail Forts, 1866-68

Source. Demis, “Route of Bozeman Trail (1863-1868),” accessed 1 April 2015, www.demis.nl. Note: Demis is a German website so massacre is spelled as massaker in middle of map. The thesis author edited this map with the addition of naming Fort Phil Kearny. Original map only had an unnamed red dot indicating location.

The route became the Bozeman Trail and greatly shortened the journey for gold seekers. Prior to this trail settlers used an indirect approach to the Montana goldfields. The downside to the Bozeman Trail was that it ran through Lakota Sioux country granted to them by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851.²⁰ It was not long before the Lakota and their allies, mainly Cheyenne and Arapaho, attacked whites using the trail. In response to the

travelers' outcries for protection, the US Army planned the construction of a series of forts along the Bozeman Trail. The implementation of the plan triggered Red Cloud's War.

Colonel Henry Carrington of the 18th Infantry Regiment was responsible for building the forts. In the summer of 1866, he started construction. He and his regiment expanded on Fort Reno, the first post on the Bozeman Trail north of Fort Laramie. They also established Fort Phil Kearny north of Fort Reno and Fort C.F. Smith north of Fort Phil Kearny. Fort Phil Kearny became Carrington's regimental headquarters.²¹ Even with the Army's presence, the Indians continued their attacks on the emigrant traffic. There were so few soldiers and they were preoccupied with the construction of their forts and preparing for the winter than countering local Indian raids.

The primary concerns for winter preparation included hay cutting for the Army horses and cattle, and woodcutting for construction as well as for heating and cooking fires. The Army hired hay and woodcutting contractors to fulfill these requirements and during the summer and fall, these contracting crews left the forts under armed escort and headed for the hayfields and woodlands. The Indian warriors liked to prey on these work details and it was a common occurrence for them to come under attack. December 1866 was an especially active time for the hostile warriors.

According to Colonel Carrington, "from the 6th to the 19th of December Indians appeared almost daily about the wood party or within sight of the fort."²² On a few occasions throughout the month, the warriors attacked the Fort Phil Kearny wood train. Sentries placed between the fort and the wooded area where the party would cut, had observation on the wood train in the event of trouble. When the train came under attack,

it was commonplace for Carrington to dispatch troops to chase the attackers off and relieve the train before returning to the fort. During these attacks, it appeared the Indians would pull back from the train just far enough to entice the soldiers to pursue. Carrington began to see that the Indians were trying to set up an ambush. On 21 December, the Indians attacked and Captain William Fetterman requested permission to lead the relief party.²³ Indicative of Fetterman's hubris, he reportedly stated that, "with eighty men he could ride through the Sioux nation."²⁴

Fetterman departed the fort with forty-nine infantrymen with orders to relieve the wood train and return to the fort. Shortly after his departure, Carrington dispatched Lieutenant George W. Grummond with an additional mounted relief party of thirty men with orders to join and reinforce Fetterman. Carrington reiterated to Grummond that he was to relieve the wood party and return to the fort, but he was not to pursue the Indian attackers. He feared the Indians might ambush his troops. Grummond joined Fetterman and they did in fact pursue the Indians even after they had broken contact with the wood train.²⁵

The Indians had planned this ambush effectively. They used a decoy detachment designated with volunteers on good horses. The famed Oglala leader, Crazy Horse, led this decoy. As the relief party approached, the decoys rode back and forth in an effort to taunt the soldiers into a pursuit. The taunting paid off and the soldiers followed the decoy directly into an ambush. A force of perhaps 2,000 killed Fetterman and his detachment of eighty men.²⁶ Eastern newspapers soon labeled this event the Fetterman Massacre.

The Fetterman fight revealed how the Indians "practiced a simple strategy--so often and so effectively used among the plains tribe--of sending out a few men on swift

horses to induce the enemy to pursue them into an ambush where a large force was concealed.”²⁷ The Indians must have learned something about the troopers as well. The majority of men in the Fetterman fight had single-shot, muzzle-loading rifles. Only a few had breech-loading Spencer carbines. The Indians knew that after soldiers fired a round from their muskets, there would be a pause while they reloaded. By summer 1867, the soldiers in the Bozeman Trail forts received upgraded weapons--breech-loading Springfield rifles.

During the fiscal year of 1867, there were “23,083 Springfield rifle muskets converted into breach loaders.”²⁸ By the summer of 1867, “All of the converted arms have been issued to troops, and nearly all the infantry serving in the departments of the Missouri and the Platte have been armed with them.”²⁹ Aside from the Fetterman Massacre, the next two significant fights of the Red Cloud’s War were the Hayfield and Wagon Box Fights.

After the Fetterman fight, the harshness of the Northern Plains winter kept both sides relatively dormant until spring. When warmer weather arrived, Red Cloud and his Indian allies began their offensive on the trail and forts once again. The Lakota, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho came together in July 1867 to formulate a plan to attack and destroy the troublesome forts for good. The Sioux and Cheyenne chiefs were unable to come to a consensus on which fort to attack first--Fort Phil Kearny or Fort C.F. Smith. Divided on the issue and under the leadership of Dull Knife and Two Moon, the Cheyenne opted for Fort C.F. Smith. The Lakota, on the other hand, left for Fort Phil Kearny.³⁰

On 1 August 1867, the Northern Cheyenne, with a small contingent of Lakota, arrived near Fort C.F. Smith with approximately 500 to 800 warriors.³¹ Finding six hay cutting contractors in the hayfields northeast of the fort, they attacked in force. The civilians retreated from the hayfield to the defenses of a makeshift corral that held horses, mules, supplies, and a small security element of nineteen soldiers. The warriors charged to within a short distance of the corral and withdrew to draw the white men from the relative safety of their defenses. It did not work. Seeing this, the Indians regrouped and attempted an assault on the hay corral but the quick firing of the newly acquired breech-loading Springfield rifles repulsed them. The fighting continued for most of the day until a relief force arrived from the nearby fort, which had with it a mountain howitzer whose shot so impressed the warriors that they withdrew. The Indians killed three and wounded three. The Indian casualties were unknown.³² Having been defeated, the warriors withdrew and joined the Lakota who had travelled further south to attack Fort Phil Kearny.³³

On 2 August 1867, a day after the Hayfield Fight, a Lakota and Cheyenne force of approximately 1,000 warriors attacked a woodcutting detail from Fort Phil Kearny.³⁴ The woodcutters, much like the hay cutters at Fort C.F. Smith, had a makeshift corral for sleeping, eating, and supplies. They constructed their corral primarily by laying dismounted wagon boxes on the ground. The defenders within the wagon corral numbered thirty-two soldiers and civilians. Captain James Powell of Company C, 27th Infantry Regiment was the ranking officer.³⁵

Much like the Hayfield Fight, the defenders of the wagon corral outside Fort Phil Kearny possessed breech-loading Springfield rifles. The war party that attacked the hay

cutters near Fort C. F. Smith learned a hard lesson about these new rifles. Since these two posts were ninety miles apart, and the attacks happened one day apart from each other, the Indians that attacked the woodcutters were unaware of the outcome of the Hayfield Fight. If they had known, perhaps they would have changed their tactics. Since they were unaware, they attempted to charge the wagon corral in an attempt to force the defenders to fire and reload. On the first charge, the defenders fired, but there was no long pause for reload as what would be typical with the muzzle-loaders. The engagement raged on for the better part of the day as the defenders repulsed one attack after another. Like the Hayfield Fight, a relief party came from the nearby fort and forced the hostiles to break contact with a shot from its mountain howitzer. The fight left three soldiers killed and two wounded, while the exact number of Indian casualties was unknown.³⁶

This fight became known as the Wagon Box Fight and was the last major action of the Sioux War of 1866-68. The Wagon Box and Hayfield Fights gave the US Army greater confidence in light of the Fetterman Massacre. With new Springfield rifles, overwhelming numbers did not necessarily mean hopelessness. The Army saw these fights as tactical victories but it also showed the policy makers that Indian resolve was far from broken. Indians continued to raid the Bozeman Trail and the road was unsafe to all but military traffic. The feasibility of the forts remained in question and by 1868, the Indians had signed a new treaty. The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 stipulated that the US Government would close the forts along the Bozeman Trail. The treaty brought a peace to the Northern Plains for the time being, but hostilities on the Central and Southern Plains were more intense than ever.³⁷

Throughout Red Cloud's War, the Southern tribes harassed settlers throughout Kansas, Colorado, and Texas. The Sand Creek Massacre in November 1864 caused a great rift between the Plains tribes and the US. Every summer since that fateful day, bands of warriors raided and killed throughout the formerly mentioned states and territories. The Army's attempts to hunt them between 1866 and 1868 proved fruitless. The Army soon found the Plains Indian warriors a formidable foe; experts of the terrain who possessed incredible stamina. Unlike the soldiers, the warriors were not dependent on long logistical supply lines.

Throughout the summer of 1868, various bands of Indian raiders, namely the warrior society of the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers, attacked settlers and emigrant trains throughout western Kansas. The previous year and spring of 1867, Department of the Missouri commander, General Winfield Scott Hancock led an expedition into western Kansas that resulted in the burning of a large, unoccupied Sioux and Cheyenne village on the Pawnee Fork of the Arkansas River. Hancock's intent was to "convince the Indians within the limits of this department that we are able to punish any of them who may molest travelers across the Plains, or who may commit other hostilities against the whites."³⁸

Hancock intended to parley with the chiefs of this village and arranged a meeting with them near Fort Larned, Kansas. Two chiefs arrived and said a buffalo hunt delayed the rest. Hancock chose to move his troops closer to their village to convince the chiefs. Apparently, the soldiers got too close to the village, and the Indians, fearing another Sand Creek Massacre, left their lodges standing and slipped away during the night. The

Northern Cheyenne would employ this stealthy trick almost eleven years later along the banks of the North Canadian River in the IT under the watchful eye of the 4th Cavalry.

Hancock sent Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer in pursuit with his 7th Cavalry. The band scattered and made the trail too hard to follow for Custer and his scouts. After arriving on the Smoky Hill overland route, Custer discovered the attacks had occurred on several stage stations and was convinced the band he had been pursuing were the culprits. He reported his findings to Hancock, who in turn burned the deserted village on 19 April 1867.³⁹

Whether the burning of this village ignited a war is debatable. Nonetheless, Indians continued to raid stages, stations, and railroad crews throughout western Kansas, eastern Colorado and southern Nebraska. Hancock returned to his headquarters at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in May and Custer continued his pursuit of hostiles throughout the summer to no avail.⁴⁰ This went on through 1867 and into 1868. Since the Army could not catch the Indians during the summer, they chose to adopt a winter campaign.

In October 1868, the Army prepared for a winter campaign against the Southern Plains tribes. It was the Army's intent to punish the Indians for a summer full of depredations. The atrocities included "one hundred and fifty-seven people killed, fifty-seven wounded, including forty-one scalped, fourteen women outraged and murdered, one man, four women and twenty-four children taken into captivity, one thousand six hundred and twenty-seven horses, mules and cattle stolen, twenty-four ranches or settlements destroyed, eleven stage coaches attacked, and four wagon trains annihilated."⁴¹

By November 1868, Sheridan had hoped to have three columns in the field. The goal was to find the hostile Cheyenne, largely blamed for the summer depredations, in their winter camps on or near the South Canadian River in present-day western Oklahoma and the eastern Texas panhandle. Sheridan employed his converging columns strategy with Major Eugene Carr leading a cavalry force from Fort Lyon, Colorado, Major Andrew Evans with a mix of cavalry and infantry out of Fort Bascom, New Mexico, General Alfred Sully with a mix of cavalry and infantry out of Fort Dodge, Kansas. The 19th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry was to meet Sully's column near Camp Supply in present-day northwest Oklahoma.⁴²

Lieutenant Colonel Custer was in the Sully column and on 23 November, he departed Camp Supply with his cavalry in search of the hostiles. Shortly after departure, Custer dispatched Major Joel Elliott with three companies to reconnoiter for any sign of Indians. Custer kept eight companies under his immediate command. His reconnaissance picked up the trail of a large war party of approximately 150 Indians heading in a southeasterly direction toward the Washita River.⁴³ After receiving the intelligence of the Indian trail, Custer conducted a linkup with Elliott and they followed the trail to the Cheyenne village of Black Kettle. At dawn on 27 November, to the opening notes of the regimental song "Garry Owen," Custer and his regiment attacked and destroyed the village in the Battle of the Washita.⁴⁴

The Battle of the Washita was the first test of Sheridan's winter campaign that was far from finished. After the battle, the other villages that had been camped along the Washita dispersed. Some moved closer to the security of the Indian Agent at Fort Cobb, IT, while others moved south and west. In late December 1868, Major Evans' New

Mexico column found and destroyed a Comanche village at Soldier Springs in far southwestern present-day Oklahoma. The capture of their village and winter food stores forced the Comanche to seek peace and return to their reservation. The Army's relentless pursuit that winter also compelled the hostile Kiowa villages to return to their agency. The remaining Cheyenne and Arapaho villages on the Southern Plains were still defiant but they too eventually returned to their agency.⁴⁵

Only the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers failed to return to their reservation. They headed north in 1869 and continued their raids in the Republican River country of Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado. Colonel Eugene Carr and his 5th Cavalry, who had failed to contribute significantly to Sheridan's winter campaign, caught up with the Dog Soldiers at Summit Springs, Colorado. In July 1869, they delivered a crushing blow to their village. After that battle, the Central Plains region between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers became relatively quiet once more.⁴⁶

The peace that the winter campaign and Carr's expedition brought to the Southern Plains was short-lived. The next challenge for the US Army presented itself with the arrival of the Red River War of 1874-75. The Army adopted several Indian-fighting principles from the engagements of the late 1860s--winter campaigns when practical, total war, encirclement of villages, relentless pursuit to exhaust your opponent, keeping on the offense, and the dawn attack.

The Southern Plains had never been completely quiet after the Battle of Summit Springs in July 1869. The Kiowa and Comanche tribes continued raiding primarily in Texas. The spring of 1874 brought a new wave of hostilities to the Texas frontier. Unrest on the Kiowa-Comanche and the Cheyenne-Arapaho reservations in the IT had several

causes. The Indians were tired of seeing the endless slaughter of the buffalo herds in the Texas Panhandle, as well as weary of having white thieves slipping into their reservations and stealing their horses.⁴⁷

The Red River War was the result of two big raids and subsequent engagements. One being the Lost Valley Fight between the allied Kiowa and Comanche, and the Texas Rangers. The other being between the Kiowa, Comanche, and Cheyenne, against a group of buffalo hunters at Adobe Walls in the northeast Texas Panhandle. Those fights implored the Army to act in an effort to force the raiding Indians to return to their reservations and stay there.⁴⁸

Colonel Nelson A. Miles took charge of the expedition into the Panhandle and onto the Llano Estacado, or Staked Plains, to bring the fight to the hostile Indians. Again, the Army employed the converging column method to ensure success. Circumstances dictated the Army could not wait until winter to begin their excursion into Indian country (figure 7). Division of the Missouri commander, Lieutenant General Sheridan stated,

All of these columns were pushed out much sooner than was desirable, especially that of Colonel Miles and Major Price; but I deemed it necessary we should take the field at once, to prevent hostile Indians from forcing out those of their tribes who had made up their minds to remain at piece, and, also to prevent accumulation of winter supplies from the buffalo herds.⁴⁹

This expedition was different from previous ones. This time, the US Army had the authorization to pursue the hostile Indians onto their reservations. Prior to the summer of 1874, the Indians could raid into Kansas, Texas and Colorado and then slip back onto their reservations to avoid a military pursuit.⁵⁰



Figure 7. U.S. Military Columns of the Red River War

Source: Texas Historical Commission, “The Red River War of 1874,” accessed 18 April 2015, <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net>.

Between August and December 1874, there were over 20 different engagements between the Army and the hostile Southern Plains tribes.⁵¹ The columns of Colonel Miles, Lieutenant Colonel John W. Davidson, and Major William R. Price kept pressure on the Indians in the northern panhandle, sometimes pushing them south into contact with

the columns under Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie and Lieutenant Colonel George P. Buell, who in turn would push them back north. The Army never allowed the hostiles to breathe and a superb logistical system enabled them to stay in the field almost uninterrupted.⁵² Eventually all of the hostile tribes who had left their IT reservations returned and sought peace. The Red River War finally calmed the Southern Plains and reinforced to the Army that staying on the offense and relentlessly pursuing the Indians were keys to success.

With relative peace returned to the Southern Plains, the Army's next test was the Great Sioux War of 1876-77. The Introduction briefly discussed this expedition. The campaign led to the surrender of the Northern Cheyenne under Chiefs Dull Knife and Little Wolf. For this undertaking of forcing hostile bands of Lakota, Northern Cheyenne, and Northern Arapaho to their reservations, the Army employed the converging columns strategy in winter. The winters in the north can be much more severe than in the south, as the Army discovered since it only managed to get one of its three columns in the field during March 1876.⁵³

This column, under Brigadier General George Crook, managed to destroy one Northern Cheyenne village along the Powder River in present-day Montana, but few of its inhabitants were killed or captured. They managed to capture the Indians' pony herd, but only briefly before the Indian warriors recaptured them. In addition to destroying the village, they destroyed the Indians' winter food stores, which the soldiers could have used themselves. Lacking supplies, Crook withdrew to Fort Fetterman, Wyoming less than a month after taking the field. He would not resume his campaign until late May.⁵⁴

In early April 1876, Colonel John Gibbon and his command from Fort Ellis, Montana, was the second of the three columns to deploy. Knowing that Crook had turned back to Fort Fetterman in March, Gibbon decided to busy himself with establishing a base camp and spend the latter half of April and the first half of May employing scouting parties in an attempt to locate the hostile camps. Chief of Scouts, Lieutenant James H. Bradley, and his Crow Indian scouts located a camp of approximately 400 lodges of the supposed winter roamers on the Tongue River in Montana. Bradley was killed a little over a year later during the Nez Perce War. He immediately reported this information to Gibbon who in turn decided to mobilize his command, proceed to the village, and attack it. Unfortunately, he was unable to cross the high, swift moving, Yellowstone River. The Crow scouts offered to swim the horses over for the cavalymen, but they refused. Deep and fast moving rivers rarely posed an obstacle for Indians.⁵⁵

In the meantime, the hostile village moved its camp from the Tongue River to the valley of Rosebud Creek. Further south, Crook got underway in late May and moved his column north into Montana. On 17 June, while at a scheduled halt near the headwaters of the Rosebud Creek, the hostile warriors attacked in force. Though Crook's forces managed to force the hostiles to retreat, they were unable to continue their offensive and chose to withdraw to base camp near Goose Creek to the south. The Battle of the Rosebud proved to the Army that the Indians were capable of venturing away from their villages for offensive operations against a large conventional force.⁵⁶

At the time of the Battle of the Rosebud, the third column, under command of Brigadier General Alfred Terry was a month out of Fort Abraham Lincoln, near present-day Bismarck, North Dakota. In mid-June, Terry linked up with the Gibbon column. A

reconnaissance led my Major Marcus A. Reno of the 7th Cavalry had discovered a large Indian trail that led into the valley of the Rosebud. After Reno reported his findings, Terry dispatched Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer to take his 12 companies of 7th Cavalry and follow the trail. Terry and Gibbon took the remainder of their forces, traveled up the Yellowstone River to the mouth of the Bighorn River, then moved up the Bighorn in an attempt to block any Indians trying to flee north. Custer discovered the trail Reno described. He then crossed the divide and headed west into the Valley of the Little Bighorn River. Once Custer's Indian scouts located the village, in keeping with Indian fighting practice, they went on the offensive. Custer divided his forces to strike the village from multiple sides in an attempt to prevent escape.⁵⁷ Grossly outnumbered, Custer and five companies under his immediate command were destroyed. The troopers under Reno's command lasted the battle out until the village withdrew to the south at the approach of Terry's and Gibbon's forces. The battle inflicted casualties on nearly half of the entire regiment.⁵⁸

The Battle of the Little Bighorn was no doubt a great victory for the hostile tribes but the Great Sioux War was far from finished. Regrouped and reorganized, the Army resumed the hunt in August 1876. Both the Terry and Crook columns received reinforcements, and Colonel Nelson Miles, of Red River War fame, joined the expedition. Not long after the Battle of the Little Bighorn, the large hostile encampment began to break up. Some stayed in the Unceded Territory while others returned to their reservations. Scouts would discover trails and then trails would go cold. The last major engagement of the summer happened on 9 September when Captain Anson Mills, from Crook's column, came across a Sioux encampment at Slim Buttes near present-day Reva,

South Dakota. At daylight, he attacked and then destroyed the village after securing enough of the Indians' food for his soldiers.⁵⁹

With the summer campaign concluded, Terry retired to Fort Abraham Lincoln. Colonel Miles continued to search for hostiles, operating from his base camps along the Yellowstone River. Crook returned to Fort Fetterman for reconstitution and headed north for the Powder River Country in southeastern Montana. As mentioned in the Introduction, Colonel Ranald Mackenzie attacked the Northern Cheyenne village under Chiefs Dull Knife and Little Wolf on 25 November 1876. It was a dawn attack but the terrain did not allow Mackenzie to encircle the village. The canyon walls forced him to conduct his charge from a single direction. This battle pushed the Indians out into the wilderness in the cold of a Montana winter. They surrendered within six months.⁶⁰

The last major test for the US Army, before the Northern Cheyenne exodus, was the Nez Perce War of 1877. This war began in the Military Division of the Pacific and eventually crossed into the Division of the Missouri. The origins of this conflict resided in the fact that certain bands of "nontreaty" Nez Perce refused to adhere to the Treaty of 1863, which greatly reduced their lands from the previous Treaty of 1855.⁶¹ They, namely Chief Joseph and his Wallowa Valley band, wanted to remain in their homelands in eastern Oregon, but the 1863 treaty set aside lands for them in Idaho--the Lapwai Reservation.⁶²

A BIA commission was unable to convince Chief Joseph and his band to leave their homes in the Wallowa Valley. Other nontreaty Nez Perce, such as White Bird and Looking Glass supported Chief Joseph. In May 1877, the BIA commission, led by Brigadier General Oliver Otis Howard, gave Chief Joseph and his band 30 days to vacate

the valley and report to the Lapwai Agency. Not long after the meeting with the commission, some drunk Nez Perce warriors killed four white men. Fearing retribution, the nontreaty bands came together and moved toward the Salmon River.⁶³

Captain David Perry departed to Fort Lapwai in an attempt to locate the Nez Perce village and on 17 June, near the mouth of White Bird Canyon in Idaho, he found them. Perry only had a little over 100 men at his disposal. He attacked and a force of perhaps 135 warriors defeated his command. The Indians had several wounded but none killed. The soldiers lost one officer and 33 enlisted men.⁶⁴

The battle was a hard loss for the Army. Robert Utley stated the loss resulted from, “overconfidence, weak leadership, and poor marksmanship, horsemanship, and discipline.” He goes on to say that, “exhaustion of men and horses afforded some measure of explanation.”⁶⁵ A counterargument could be the Indians suffered some from some level of exhaustion as well. In light of the trouble at White Bird Canyon, General Howard assembled more troops from his department and asked for reinforcements from his Division commander, Lieutenant General Irvin McDowell.⁶⁶

The next big fight ensued on 11 July at the Battle of the Clearwater, northeast of White Bird Canyon. Howard and his combined arms force of cavalry, infantry and artillery fought for the better part of the day until reinforcements arrived from Fort Klamath, Oregon. The arrival of these fresh troops forced the Nez Perce to retreat across the Clearwater River and withdraw from their village. Howard’s losses were 13 dead and 27 wounded. The Nez Perce later claimed four dead and six wounded.⁶⁷

After the Battle of the Clearwater, the Nez Perce slipped into Montana, crossed the Continental Divide, and made camp in the Big Hole River valley. Colonel Gibbon,

from the Department of Dakota, in the neighboring Division of the Missouri, went in search of this camp. He found it and attacked it at dawn on 9 August. His surprise attack pushed the Indians from the village, which he soon occupied. The Nez Perce retreated to cover on the sides of the village and soon began picking off the soldiers. Their fire was so accurate and deadly that Gibbon decided to withdraw from the village. Gibbon suffered 30 killed and 39 wounded. At the conclusion of the fight, Gibbon counted 89 bodies of Nez Perce men, women, and children.⁶⁸

Howard finally arrived at Gibbon's battle site on 11 August. He continued the pursuit, albeit slowly. Throughout August and into September, the Army kept up on the Indians' heels. Howard fought them at the Battle of Camas Meadows on 20 August, and Colonel Sturgis engaged them with his 7th Cavalry at the Battle of Canyon Creek on 13 September. The final battle took place at Bear Paw Mountain in which Chief Joseph finally surrendered to Colonel Nelson "Bear Coat" Miles on 5 October.⁶⁹

The frontier Army had many things going for it prior to the Northern Cheyenne exodus of 1878-79. They had a considerable number of battle-hardened Civil War veterans, officers and enlisted alike. Red Cloud's War of 1866-68 gave the new Regular Army their first taste of Indian warfare. It showed them how the Indians preferred raiding, hit-and-run tactics, and their perfection of the ambush. It also showed them that superior firepower in the defense could offset Indian numerical advantage, as was evident in the Hayfield and Wagon Box Fight. Campaigns such as Sheridan's Winter Campaign of 1868-69, the Red River War of 1874-75, the Great Sioux War of 1876-77, and the Nez Perce War of 1877 solidified the effectiveness of the winter campaign when practical,

total war, encirclement of villages, relentless pursuit, keeping on the offense, and the dawn attack.

However, the frontier Army had many things going against it as well. Lack of manpower on the vast expanses of the West, having to adapt to an unconventional enemy trained to live off of the land, being tied to long logistical lines to remain in the field, and lack of training for its recruits, were some major concerns. The US Army had a lot to overcome when fighting the Indian tribes of the West. However, the operational experience gained between 1865 and 1878, the US Army's use of telegraph for communication, the railroad for supply and troop movement, and dispersal of troops across the Plains should have been enough to give them an edge over the Northern Cheyenne when they left Darlington Agency in September 1878.

¹ US War Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1866* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1866), 1.

² Ibid.

³ Utley, 12.

⁴ US War Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1878* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1878), 4.

⁵ Note: The term military division in this context is more an area of responsibility based on geographic factors and not a particular sized unit or echelon

⁶ Utley, 13.

⁷ US War Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1878*, 33.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Don Rickey, Jr., *Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay: The Enlisted Soldier Fighting the Indian Wars* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 20.

¹⁰ Utley, 13.

- ¹¹ Rickey, 43.
- ¹² Ibid., 49.
- ¹³ Birtle, 66.
- ¹⁴ Randolph B. Marcy, *The Prairie Traveler: A Handbook for Overland Expeditions* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), 200-201.
- ¹⁵ Birtle, 67.
- ¹⁶ Collins, *Atlas of the Sioux Wars*, Map 14.
- ¹⁷ Utley, 50-51.
- ¹⁸ Philip H. Sheridan, *The Personal Memoirs of P.H. Sheridan* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), 452-453.
- ¹⁹ Military Division of the Missouri, *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians Within the Military Division of the Missouri from 1868-1882* (Chicago, IL: Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, 1882), 7.
- ²⁰ Collins, *Atlas of the Sioux Wars*, Map 14.
- ²¹ Ibid., Map 6.
- ²² Goodrich, 26.
- ²³ Utley, 104.
- ²⁴ Grace Raymond Hebard and E. A. Brininstool, *The Bozeman Trail: Historical Accounts of the Blazing of the Overland Routes and the Fights with Red Cloud's Warriors*, Vol. 1 (Cleveland, OH: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1922), 313.
- ²⁵ Collins, *Atlas of the Sioux Wars*, Map 8.
- ²⁶ Brown, 135.
- ²⁷ Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 224.
- ²⁸ US War Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1878* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1878), 17.
- ²⁹ Ibid., 17.
- ³⁰ Brown, 140.
- ³¹ Utley, 123.

- ³² Collins, *Atlas of the Sioux Wars*, Map 11.
- ³³ Brown, 140.
- ³⁴ Utley, 123.
- ³⁵ E. A. Brininstool and Samuel S. Gibson, "Wagon Box Fight," in *The Long War for the Northern Plains*, ed. Peter Cozzens (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003), 93.
- ³⁶ Grace Raymond Hebard and E. A. Brininstool, *The Bozeman Trail: Historical Accounts of the Blazing of the Overland Routes and the Fights with Red Cloud's Warriors*, Vol. 2 (Cleveland, OH: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1922), 68-69.
- ³⁷ Collins, *Atlas of the Sioux Wars*, Map 12.
- ³⁸ Custer, 27.
- ³⁹ Utley, 118.
- ⁴⁰ Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 249.
- ⁴¹ Cyrus Townsend Brady, *Indian Fights and Fighters* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1904), 148.
- ⁴² Collins, *Cheyenne Wars Atlas*, 48.
- ⁴³ Custer, 224.
- ⁴⁴ William H. Leckie, *The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 101.
- ⁴⁵ Collins, *Cheyenne Wars Atlas*, 104.
- ⁴⁶ Greene, *Washita*, 181.
- ⁴⁷ Wilbur Sturtevant Nye, *Plains Indian Raiders: The Final Phases of Warfare from the Arkansas to the Red River* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), 167.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.
- ⁴⁹ US War Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1874* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1874), 27.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁵¹ Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians Within the Military Division of the Missouri from 1868-1882*, 46-49.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 51.

⁵³ John S. Gray, *Custer's Last Campaign, Mitch Boyer and the Little Bighorn Reconstructed* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 125.

⁵⁴ Collins, *Atlas of the Sioux Wars*, Maps 15-16.

⁵⁵ Gray, 153.

⁵⁶ *Army and Navy Journal*, July 1, 1876, 75.

⁵⁷ Hedren, 53-54.

⁵⁸ Utley, 260-261.

⁵⁹ *Army and Navy Journal*, September 23, 1876.

⁶⁰ Greene, *Morning Star Dawn*, 106-108.

⁶¹ Utley, 297.

⁶² United States History, "The Nez Perce War," accessed 19 April 2015, <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1549.html>.

⁶³ US War Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1877* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1877), 9.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Utley, 301.

⁶⁶ US War Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the 1877*, 10.

⁶⁷ Utley, 305.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 307.

⁶⁹ Mathyn D. Williams, "Indian Wars: Failing of the US Army to Achieve Decisive Victory During the Nez Perce War of 1877" (Master's thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2005), 22-23.

CHAPTER 4

THE EXODUS AND PURSUIT

This portion of the Cheyenne tribe numbers 970 people, for whom few words of commendation can be said. About one-half refuse to affiliate with the Southern Cheyennes, invariably camp by themselves, and away from the others, and act as in all respects as if a different tribe. They have shown no desire to engage in farming, and in council and elsewhere profess an intense desire to be sent north, where they say they will settle down.¹

— John D. Miles, US Indian Agent

When the Northern Cheyenne broke away from Darlington Agency on 9 September 1878, it presented the Army with some insightful military challenges. Current literature regarding the Army's response to the exodus has not fully addressed some critical questions. Some of these questions include a detailed assessment of how the Army responded to the exodus and why it responded the way it did? Was the Army's response appropriate to the situation given its recent experiences, current capabilities, and ongoing limitations? From the Northern Cheyenne perspective, did they respond as expected after they left the reservation? What methods did the Northern Cheyenne use to facilitate their escape? And most importantly, why did the Army fail to stop the Northern Cheyenne exodus during the earliest stages of the incident? In the absence of formal doctrine, to what degree did the Army adhere to the current TTPs associated with fighting Plains Indians during the 1878 chase? The pursuit challenged the Army in many ways and made those involved in the capture of the Northern Cheyenne keenly aware of the exceptional determination of a people who sought their own destiny regardless of the consequences. This chapter provides answers to these generally ignored questions.

Their Preparations and Departure

Throughout the summer of 1878, rumors spread across the agency that the Northern Cheyenne under Dull Knife and Little Wolf were going to head north. John D. Miles, Cheyenne-Arapaho Agency Indian Agent, noted this in his annual report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. In late August and early September, the village in question began preparing for their upcoming journey. Other indicators existed as well. During the annuities draw, instead of the usual one-week rations issue, they asked for two. Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho tribesmen also made accusations to Agent Miles that the Northern Cheyenne had stolen some of their horses and were putting together a herd on the Cimarron River for their escape.²

On 5 September, Miles informed the commander of Fort Reno, Major John K. Mizner, that he had reports the Northern Cheyenne had already fled. Mizner, in turn, dispatched Captain Joseph Rendlebrock of the 4th US Cavalry with two companies to pursue the fugitive Indians. Captain Rendlebrock was no newcomer to the military. In 1878, he was in his 27th year of service. He served with distinction in the Civil War, and spent considerable time with Colonel Ranald Mackenzie and the 4th Cavalry in Texas in the late 1860s and early 1870s. As ordered, he moved to the vicinity of the dissenters' village further up the North Canadian River from the agency and discovered that the Northern Cheyenne were still encamped. The soldiers made camp a couple of miles from the village in order to observe them. Rendlebrock originally requested Fort Reno's two 12-pound Napoleon artillery pieces in case he had to drive the Indians from their fortifications and rifle pits they had reportedly built. Mizner, fearing the Indians would

see the cannon as a threat, refused the request, an act Rendlebrock would later openly criticize.³

Mixed-blood interpreter, Edmond Guerrier, a survivor of the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864, visited Little Wolf and Dull Knife's camp on 9 September and asked Little Wolf to come to the agency to speak with Agent Miles.⁴ Little Wolf obliged. He reported to Miles, who had heard that three Northern Cheyenne men had already started north. Little Wolf denied the claim. Miles then asked for ten of Little Wolf's band to keep as hostages until he could complete a count of all of Little Wolf's people. With an accurate count, he could confirm or deny the reports that some had already left the reservation. Little Wolf refused. He thought he would never get those ten men back if he handed them over. As he stood to leave the council, Little Wolf shook hands with all present and stated:

My friends, I am now going to my camp. I do not wish the ground around this agency to be made bloody, but now listen to what I say to you. I am going to leave here; I am going north to my own country. I do not want to see blood spilt about this agency. If you are going to send your soldiers after me, I wish that you would first let me get a little distance away from this agency. Then if you want to fight, I will fight you and we can make the ground bloody at that place.⁵

After the council, Little Wolf departed for his village, some 20 miles upriver. That night, the Northern Cheyenne people prepared to leave. They brought the horse herd in closer to camp, cut pieces of buffalo hide from the teepees for shelter on the trail, packed food, weapons, and ammunition. They were going to have to move fast and could not bring their lodges with them. With their fires still burning and their teepees still standing, the Northern Cheyenne slipped away under the cover of darkness at approximately 10 p.m. on 9 September and headed north. There were 92 men, 120 women, 69 boys, and 72 girls or 353 who left the reservation.⁶

First Responders

Little Wolf and Dull Knife led their people away under the unsuspecting eyes of the soldiers camped nearby. They left their lodges standing for two primary purposes. First, it deceived the soldiers, and second, they could travel lighter and faster without them. Additionally, the Army would have difficulty tracking them without their lodges. Bringing their lodges required a travois, which left more “signs” for the soldiers to follow. This trick was eerily similar to the way the Sioux and Cheyenne left their village on the Pawnee Fork of the Arkansas River back in April 1867 in an effort to flee General Hancock’s forces. Traveling light and with a head start enabled the Sioux and Cheyenne to evade Custer’s pursuing soldiers in 1867.

Not everyone in the village left. Chief American Horse decided to stay. At 3 a.m. on 10 September, American Horse and the Indian Police awakened Agent Miles and informed him of the Northern Cheyenne’s departure.⁷ Miles immediately informed Major Mizner of the escape. Mizner then dispatched First Lieutenant Abram E. Wood with a wagonload of ten days’ rations to find Rendlebrock and inform him he was to pursue the fleeing Indians.⁸ Rendlebrock received the message at 6 a.m.⁹

The soldiers quickly transferred the supplies from the wagon to their twenty pack mules in preparation for the pursuit. The country they would have to traverse was too rugged for supply wagons, and the pack mules provided them with the utmost speed.¹⁰ This was a wise decision because the Indians had a head start of almost half a day. Overtaking them before they got out of IT would prove difficult. Miles summoned the Indian Police and seven Arapaho volunteers joined Rendlebrock to serve as scouts to locate and follow the escapees’ trail. Another prudent choice was the use of Indian

scouts. By 8 a.m., Companies G and H of the 4th Cavalry were heading upriver in pursuit. Eighty-one enlisted men, four officers, seven Indian scouts, and one white scout made up the detachment.¹¹ They had neither a medical officer, nor a map or compass to support them.¹²

To this point, the Army's response was typical. They chose pack mules over wagons, and they gained the assistance of Indian scouts as trackers. Meanwhile, back at Darlington Agency and Fort Reno, couriers rode to the nearest post with a telegraph office, Fort Sill, IT, some 80 miles to the southwest. Miles and Mizner had to notify their superiors of the outbreak. Miles' immediate concern was controlling the remainder of Indians at his agency. The departure of Companies G and H left Fort Reno minimally manned. Mizner's concern was containing this flight at the earliest stage possible. He hoped to stop the Northern Cheyenne before they could cross the rain-swollen Arkansas River.¹³

Rendlebrock and his command located the Indians' trail by mid-morning and followed it for 20 miles before calling their first halt at approximately 2:45 p.m. During this halt, a courier departed for Camp Supply, IT with a dispatch for the commanding officer, Major Henry W. Hambright. The dispatch stated he was in pursuit of about 300 Northern Cheyenne who had fled the Darlington Agency and that their escape route would take them to the vicinity of the military road connecting Fort Dodge, Kansas to Camp Supply. This dispatch would put Company I, 4th Cavalry on alert and they would later join the pursuit.¹⁴

The soldiers resumed the march until 10 p.m. when they made camp after having traveled 52 miles in 14 hours. The next morning, 11 September, the command broke

camp and continued north along the trail. Throughout the day, the tracks grew fresher but the soldiers were still unable to overtake the Indians. As soon as they ran out of sufficient light to follow, the command went into camp. The following day, 12 September, the troops made 45 miles and encamped near a waterhole that was heavy in alkali and brine. Soldiers that drank from it became sick. The horses would not drink it and the men could not refill their canteens from it.¹⁵

On 13 September, the command finally caught sight of the fleeing Indians in vicinity of Turkey Springs, north of the Cimarron River near present-day Freedom, Oklahoma.¹⁶ Scouts, or “wolves,” as the Cheyenne called them, had spotted the soldier’s approach. The Indian leadership hurried the women and children north to the water source of Turkey Springs, while the warriors moved south to interdict the cavalry’s advance.¹⁷ Rendlebrock stopped his command on an open plain flanked by canyons and ravines. In ordinary cavalry fashion, he employed his men in a dismounted skirmish line.¹⁸ The dismounted skirmish line tactic called for three out of four troopers to dismount and deploy in a line with about three to five meters between each man, while every fourth man acted as horse holder. This tactic was widely accepted but it did reduce the overall fighting strength by one quarter.

At this point, Rendlebrock still wanted to contain the flight and return the Indians to the reservation as peacefully as possible. Employing his men in a skirmish line may or may not have been the best way to display peaceful intentions, but he needed to be prepared in the event the Indians attacked him. Accompanying the troops was an Arapaho scout named Chalk, or Ghost Man. Once the soldiers had established their skirmish line, Rendlebrock sent Chalk forward to parley with Little Wolf, who had ridden forward.¹⁹ It

remains unknown why Rendlebrock did not meet Little Wolf since it was common for the senior officer in charge to do so.

Chalk rode out to converse with Little Wolf. He explained that the soldiers did not wish to fight. They wanted the Northern Cheyenne simply to return to Darlington. Whether Chalk spoke Cheyenne remains a mystery. It is likely that the parley took place through the universal sign language known to all Plains tribes at that time. Captain Sebastian Gunther, another officer with the detachment and a veteran of the recent Red River War of 1874-75, later testified that Chalk and Little Wolf used sign language for the meeting. Whatever method of communication used, Little Wolf's reply was that they would not go back to the reservation; they were going home. Based on that response one of Rendlebrock's junior officers, Lieutenant Wood, ordered his men to fire.²⁰ The Battle of Turkey Springs was on.

Battle of Turkey Springs

With the first shots fired, the chance of any peaceful resolution vanished. Rendlebrock later stated that the Northern Cheyenne had approximately 120-150 warriors, far larger than the 85 he originally presumed. This was probably an exaggeration, but nonetheless, the Northern Cheyenne outnumbered him once he employed a skirmish line. The Indians knew that they controlled the water source in the area and that there was no water behind the soldiers. As soon as the fighting broke out, the mounted Indians began moving down the ravines on the soldiers' flanks. Rendlebrock did not wish to fight there, but he had no choice.²¹

The fighting raged throughout the day with the soldiers remaining on the defensive, with the exception of a handful of counterattacks to keep the Indians from

overrunning their positions. The sun beat down that afternoon and it was not too long until both men and animals craved water. When night fell, the besieged troopers were unable to get much rest. Even though the Indians called off their main attack, they continued firing into the soldiers' camp. The end of the day saw Rendlebrock's command suffer two killed and three wounded, as well as the loss of six horses. The lack of a surgeon meant the wounded received little more care than what their untrained comrades provided. The lack of water was even more traumatic. One account proclaimed that thirst was so great some of the men attempted to drink horse urine.²² The night of 13 September, Rendlebrock decided to withdraw from the field the next morning. A shortage of water and dwindling ammunition reserves took a toll on the detachment's morale and safety.²³

As light dawned on 14 September, the command prepared to retrograde on their back trail to locate a drinkable water source near the Cimarron River, some seven miles distant. The back trail led them through a defile where they would have to go through in a single column to make it out. Once in the designated march order, the command headed south although the Cheyenne constantly harassed the troops. During the retreat, the Indians killed an additional soldier. Captain Gunther reported the Indians kept pressure on them for nearly six miles until they called off their attacks, rejoined their families, and continued the trek north.²⁴ Once the warriors departed, the Battle of Turkey Springs was over. It also ended the Army's opportunity to return the Northern Cheyenne to the reservation peacefully. During this fight, the US Army learned how determined and well armed the warriors were. In addition to a multitude of 1873 Springfield carbines taken

during the Custer battle, the Northern Cheyenne had shotguns, Henry and Winchester repeating rifles, pistols, and of course, bows and arrows.

The US Army's Contingencies

At the outset of the Northern Cheyenne's escape, the Army planned for more than just the 4th Cavalry's two-company pursuit. Once word got to Fort Sill, the telegraph wires buzzed with activity. The "talking wires" were a distinct advantage the US Army had over the Plains Indians. Messages arrived at Major General John Pope's headquarters, the Department of the Missouri commander, informing him of the Northern Cheyenne escape. Pope informed Sheridan, Division of the Missouri Commander, who in turn alerted his other department commanders, Brigadier General George Crook, Department of the Platte, and Brigadier General Alfred Terry, Department of Dakota. All departments took immediate action. The Department of the Missouri took the first actions since the Northern Cheyenne were in its area of operations.²⁵

Captain Clarence Mauck received orders to take two companies of the 4th Cavalry at Fort Elliott, located in the northeastern Texas Panhandle, and depart at once to Fort Dodge, Kansas.²⁶ Major Hambright of Camp Supply, having received notification from Mizner at Fort Reno, and Rendlebrock on the trail, dispatched Captain William C. Hemphill with his Company I, 4th Cavalry on 12 September. His orders were to intercept the Indians or to linkup with Rendlebrock.²⁷

In addition to Camp Supply and Forts Reno and Elliott, the other posts in the Department of the Missouri that contributed to the chase were Fort Lyon, Colorado and Forts Dodge, Wallace, Riley, Hays, and Leavenworth in Kansas. Fort Lyon troops patrolled east between them and the garrison at Fort Wallace, Kansas. Elements of the

19th Infantry Regiment would block the Northern Cheyenne advance along the Arkansas River where they believed Rendlebrock's troops were pushing the fugitive Indians. One hundred soldiers from the 23rd Infantry Regiment from Fort Leavenworth acquired horses and traveled west by rail to Fort Hays to join the intercept mission. The 23rd was traditionally a dismounted unit so the fact they acquired horses specifically for this pursuit did not automatically make them horsemen. The 3rd Infantry Regiment dispatched three companies west from Fort Hays to close the gap between them and Fort Wallace, while two companies of the 16th Infantry Regiment pushed east from Fort Wallace to close with the soldiers from Fort Hays.²⁸

While the Department of the Missouri made their preparations, the Departments of the Platte and Dakota made arrangements of their own. If the Indians got past the Arkansas River and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad, the next roadblock they would be along the Kansas Pacific Railroad. If they made it past that, the next opportunity was along the Union Pacific Railroad in southern Nebraska, which was in the Department of the Platte.²⁹ Typically, once Indians crossed into another department, they became that department's responsibility. Of course, during the Nez Perce War of 1877, troops had authorization to continue the pursuit regardless of boundaries in order to increase chances of success.

Captain Hemphill's Turn

After disengaging from the fight at Turkey Springs, Rendlebrock reached the Cimarron River, watered his horses and men, and then turned west-southwest to Camp Supply for reconstitution. He and his battalion finally staggered into that post on the evening of 16 September. By this time, Hemphill and his Company I were four days out

of Camp Supply. Hemphill, Second Lieutenant Matthew Leeper, and forty-six enlisted men embarked with six pack mules and four days' rations. Also accompanying the group was the post interpreter and famed scout, Amos Chapman.³⁰ Chapman, a seasoned frontiersman, was a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions in the Buffalo Wallow Fight during the Red River War of 1874-75, a fight that led to the amputation of one of his legs.

Moving north and unable to locate the Indians or Rendlebrock, Hemphill pushed to Fort Dodge. This deviation from Hambright's orders would haunt Hemphill. Arriving there on 14 September, he came under command of Lieutenant Colonel William H. Lewis, the Fort Dodge commander. Lewis had orders to take control of all troops coming into his post and direct operations from there. Lewis agreed to let Hemphill go back south to try to locate the Indians. Drawing rations, Hemphill left Fort Dodge to scout the area around Bluff Creek.³¹

Several days prior to this, and even before the Battle of Turkey Springs, the Northern Cheyenne had killed two unsuspecting cowboys on 12 September. Fred Clark and Reuben Bristow were hauling salt for the Comanche Pool Cattle Company, when they encountered Northern Cheyenne scouting out in front of the main body. The Indians attacked, killed them, and stole their mules. Later, a local rancher and some cowboys found them dead in the box of their wagon and buried them (figure 8).³²



Figure 8. Cowboy Cemetery. Supposed First Victims of the Northern Cheyenne Exodus

Source: Exploring Oklahoma History, “Cowboy Cemetery,” accessed 3 May 2015, <http://www.blogoklahoma.us/place.aspx?id=595>.

If Clark and Bristow were the first victims of the Northern Cheyenne Exodus, they certainly were not the last. After scouting Bluff Creek south of Fort Dodge, Hemphill went into camp on the night of 15 September. Early the next morning, a cowboy showed up at the soldiers’ camp and informed them of an Indian attack at the Henry Kollar spread further down Bluff Creek. Hemphill immediately got his men in the saddle and rode to the scene of the reported attack.³³ The killing of the cowboys and the attack on the Kollar ranch were not isolated incidents. Following the battle with troops at Turkey Springs, the Indians trekked north and fanned out for foraging purposes. They attacked several ranches in Clarke and Comanche Counties in southwest Kansas, stealing

cattle, horses, food, firearms, and ammunition while also killing several civilians in the process.³⁴

On 16 September, the soldiers reached the Kollar ranch and discovered an Indian trail. They spent the night by the ranch and started on the trail the following day. Along the way, two head ranchers and 11 of their cowboys joined the troopers, bringing their total of fighting men to 62. The cattlemen had engaged with a party of Indian warriors earlier, and even managed to kill one. They claimed the Indians stole a large number of their ranches' horses.³⁵ If true, this would only make the Indians harder to pursue because they increased their supply of fresh mounts. The soldiers, on the other hand, only had the mounts they were currently riding. Fortunately, Amos Chapman continued to prove his worth as a scout under these austere conditions. He led the troops on the trail until they intercepted the main body of Indians on the upper reaches of Big Sandy Creek, a tributary of the Cimarron River, on 18 September.

Sandy Creek Fights

The first fight on Big Sandy Creek occurred on 18 September.³⁶ The tracks that Chapman found were not only those of the raiding warriors, but that of the rest of the Northern Cheyenne as well. True to form, the warriors turned to face the approaching soldiers to allow the noncombatants to flee. Having raided, killed, stolen, and fought with the soldiers already, there was no parley precluding this encounter. As the soldiers approached, the Indians opened fire. Much like Rendlebrock at Turkey Springs, Hemphill had orders to force the return of the Northern Cheyenne to their reservation. Once fired upon, he deployed his men in a dismounted skirmish line, reducing his 49-man fighting strength by one-fourth to account for the horse holders, but not including the mostly

unarmed cattlemen that joined him along the way. Hemphill later reported that he faced anywhere between 75 to 100 warriors, a number more reasonable than the 120 to 150 Rendlebrock indicated. Once the Indians attempted to surround the command, Chapman recommended a withdrawal, which Hemphill promptly ordered. The men mounted and headed north to Bluff Creek and then to Fort Dodge.³⁷

Given his orders to return the Northern Cheyenne to Darlington, any other course of action other than fighting was hard to ascertain. Although, by withdrawing from the field he probably saved the lives of many of his men, he also left the Indians unchecked to continue their flight north. Hemphill later met a court-martial in March 1879 for his deviations from Hambright's orders after departing Camp Supply, and for his actions at the September 18 Big Sandy fight.³⁸

Upon arrival at Fort Dodge early on the morning of 19 September, Hemphill reported to Lewis and informed him of the fight. The day before, Lewis had dispatched a 42-man detachment from the 19th Infantry Regiment to the train station at Pierceville, Kansas in an attempt to interdict a prospective Indian crossing of the Arkansas River and rail line there. On 19 September, Company A, 16th Infantry Regiment arrived from Fort Riley under the command of Captain Charles E. Morse. That afternoon, Lewis sent that company and Hemphill's Company I on separate trains to Pierceville as well.³⁹

Once refitted, Rendlebrock's battalion of Companies G and H resumed the march from Camp Supply on 17 and 18 September. Marching north, he received a report the Indians were still in the Big Sandy Creek area and immediately headed in that direction. Meeting Morse's and Hemphill's companies along the way, they all proceeded together.⁴⁰

On the evening of 21 September, some of the cattlemen that were still with the command went out on a scouting mission that ran into the rear of the Indians at dusk. The warriors immediately drove them back to their camp. Rendlebrock prepared to secure the camp, and while doing so, Lieutenant Wood took his Company G and rode out without orders to attack the Indians. Knowing Company G needed support, Rendlebrock ordered Hemphill out with Company I. Wood halted short of the Indians and waited for the support of the entire command and was disgusted when only Company I showed for the purpose of providing cover back to camp.⁴¹ This was only the second time Wood had fought Indians, the first was at Turkey Springs. One engagement was hardly enough to become a well-informed Indian fighter. His confidence in his own abilities could have been dangerous. To rush forward on a seasoned enemy with unseasoned troops was ill advised. An inexperienced officer attempting to take charge when he had more experienced superiors in his chain of command was no more acceptable in 1878 than it would be in 2015. Disciplined initiative is one thing; insubordination is another. This was the second time Wood was insubordinate, the first involved firing on the Indians at Turkey Springs without authorization that led to a perhaps unnecessary fight.

The next morning, the command pursued the fugitive Indians along their last known direction. They ultimately found the Northern Cheyenne in fortified positions among the rocks along Little Sandy Creek. Deploying his men on the left and right flanks, and in a skirmish line to the warriors' front and center, Hemphill was unable to dislodge them from their defenses. The exact numbers of warriors in the defense were unknown. Hemphill reported 75 to 100 in his fight on September 17, and Rendlebrock reported he encountered 120 to 150 at Turkey Springs. Hemphill's report seems more

feasible. If that was the case, the soldiers and cowmen combined strength numbered from 170 to 200. Attacking a fortified position normally calls for a 3:1 ratio, a strength they did not have.⁴² In the afternoon, Rendlebrock sent a small mounted detachment around to the rear of the Indians' position to gather intelligence on the Northern Cheyenne's size and strength.⁴³ Seeing this reconnaissance as an attempt to attack his rear and right flank, Little Wolf led some of the warriors to drive the soldiers away.⁴⁴ The soldiers repulsed Little Wolf's "counterattack" and rejoined the rest of the command.

Occasional firing occurred throughout the day, but nothing significant. The soldiers pushed the Indians from their first line of rifle pits to a secondary rock wall fortification to their immediate rear.⁴⁵ Having judged the Indian defenses too strong to charge, and gathering little intelligence as to their strength and disposition, Rendlebrock chose to withdraw the command to camp at a place with adequate water and wood. Although the fighting was insignificant, a reporter later quoted Rendlebrock as saying "The Indians fought like devils, and with as much system as if they had been drilled."⁴⁶ During the day's fighting, the troops had only encountered warriors. The women and children were not among them. Where were they? Probably in the vicinity no doubt, but not entrenched among the rocks. On the march to Little Sandy Creek, scouts reported coming across a trail of the women and children. Hemphill knew about the trail, but later testified he was not sure if Rendlebrock received the information.⁴⁷

Perhaps scouting parties should have deployed to try to discover their whereabouts and then concentrate on the women and children instead of the warriors. Capturing the women and children might have encouraged the warriors to surrender. After all, Custer used women and children as hostages to his advantage at the Washita,

and there is a theory that he attempted to do the same thing at the Little Bighorn.⁴⁸ The fact that warriors would always stand and fight to allow the women, children and old people time to get away was a testament to the value of the noncombatants. At the very least, the soldiers could have attempted to lay siege to the warriors' defenses along Little Sandy, while receiving resupply from Fort Dodge.

Nonetheless, after making camp, a courier left for Fort Dodge to request supplies to replenish the command's dwindling stocks. On 23 September, the soldiers went to rendezvous with the resupply wagons and then returned to the site of their last skirmish with the Indians. Of course, the Indians had left.⁴⁹ To this point in the pursuit, the Army could not use its proven tactics against the Northern Cheyenne. There had been no sleeping village to find and attack at dawn or in the middle of winter. There had been no village at all really, only a constantly moving group of determined Northern Cheyenne defended by seasoned and fierce warriors. However, the Army maintained multiple groups of soldiers in the field to maintain unrelenting pressure on the Indians during the pursuit. Although unsuccessful in their first few engagements, the soldiers continued to push the Northern Cheyenne northward. With this push, the Army could trap the fleeing Indians along the Arkansas River and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad.

Once the fight was over, Little Wolf and his warriors rejoined the main body, and then pushed northwest to Crooked Creek, a tributary of the Arkansas River. Near this stream, they came across three buffalo hunters, went into their camp, took their guns and ammo without a fight, and stole the carcasses of 18 buffalo. This was much needed fresh meat and the Indians ate heartily on bison meat for the first time since leaving Darlington.⁵⁰ The significance of this find would have been extraordinary given the

probable absence of buffalo on the western Kansas Plains by 1878. The warriors would soon use the stolen buffalo, guns, and ammunition in their next fight.⁵¹

On or about 24 September, the Indians managed to cross the Arkansas River and railroad tracks approximately 25 miles southwest of Dodge City, Kansas. They had avoided the soldiers' blocking positions.⁵² In southwestern Kansas, the Arkansas River has multiple natural fords and there were not enough soldiers available to guard them all. Since the Northern Cheyenne slipped away from the soldiers at Little Sandy Creek on the night of 22-23 September, where they were going and where they would cross was anybody's guess. After the soldiers withdrew following the Little Sandy fight, there was no one to watch the Indians and report their movements.

Seeing their adversaries had departed, the soldiers pursued once again. They followed the trail to the river crossing on the Arkansas and crossed to the north side of the river. By this time, Captain Mauck with his Companies B and F, 4th Cavalry had arrived in Kansas. After the river crossing, Rendlebrock and his men linked up with Lewis who had made the trip from Fort Dodge to the Pierceville area with Mauck. With some wagons in need of repair, Lewis sent Captain Morse and his infantry company back to Fort Dodge. Lewis then took command of all remaining troops and set out on the trail of the fleeing Northern Cheyenne on 25 September. Lewis pushed north with five companies of the 4th Cavalry and one company of the 19th Infantry in an attempt to overtake them or push them into the next body of soldiers stationed along the Kansas Pacific Railroad. Two days after taking charge of the pursuit, Lewis and his men found their prey.⁵³

Battle of Punished Woman's Fork

Late in the afternoon of 27 September, Lewis' command approached a box canyon in the valley of Punished Woman's Fork, part of the Smoky Hill River watershed. The Northern Cheyenne rested in this canyon before pushing north, but they also wanted to make a stand against their pursuers. Familiar with the region that had once been the range of the infamous Dog Soldiers; the Northern Cheyenne knew it might have been the best spot to conduct an ambush. It also had strong defensive potential.⁵⁴ They had been in camp in the canyon for at least a day or two, and the warriors had taken the opportunity to hunt what few remaining buffalo were in the area. Collecting the fresh kills from the men, the women went to work roasting and drying the meat for packing on the horses. Some of the Indians had even gone scavenging for horses in the area to replenish their herd. These horse hunters were the first to spot the approaching soldiers.⁵⁵ The Indians had constructed rifle pits and other breastworks in preparation for the ambush they were about to conduct (figure 9).



Figure 9. Remnants of rifle pits overlooking valley of Punished Woman's Fork

Source. Kansas Trail Guide, "135th Anniversary of the Battle of Punished Woman's Fork," Photo by Mark Conard, accessed 5 May 2015, <http://kansastrailguide.com/tag/punished-womans-fork/>.

The advance scouts soon followed the fresh horse tracks into the canyon. They knew the Indians had to be close by, and they soon realized how close. The rest of the command was not far behind. Little Wolf designed the trap well. He intended to let the majority of the soldiers enter the canyon and then attack them from the front, center, and rear. Unfortunately, an overly anxious warrior fired too early and alerted the soldiers. This was the first time the fleeing Northern Cheyenne actually planned an ambush. In the other fights, they built breastworks and other defensive positions to delay the soldiers to

give time for the noncombatants to flee. This time, the women, children and old people were in the canyon, in close proximity to the fighting. Little Wolf intended to inflict enough damage on the soldiers that they would not be a threat anymore.

The freshness of the trail should have been an indicator of the Northern Cheyenne's proximity. Everything about it resembled an ambush. As the scouts went forward following the tracks, they rounded a bend and saw horses grazing in the valley. They sensed the danger. The first Indian shot rang out. Turning about, the scouts rushed back to the head of the command to warn the rest.⁵⁶ The premature shot perhaps saved the command from total defeat in the canyon because the Indians had strong defensive positions and held the high ground.

The command dismounted and halted while the scouts went forward, but as soon as the first shot rang out, the soldiers attempted to get back in the saddle to scramble for the heights behind them. Some soldiers' horses bolted down into the canyon and the riders then fled to the rear on foot. With the soldiers retreating, the Indians pressed from behind. Lieutenant Colonel Lewis rallied the troops for a counterattack in a draw near the entrance to the canyon.⁵⁷

Troopers dismounted, handed their horses over to the horse holders, and then deployed in a skirmish line. While reorganizing in the dry creek bed that fed into the main canyon, the Indians began to move up the canyon walls to secure the high ground to the soldiers' front. In response, the soldiers charged the bluff to gain the high ground first. Before long, the soldiers were in an advantageous position and found themselves above the Indian positions. Immediately, they began to pour fire down onto the Indians and their horses in the valley below. These were the most forward of the Indian positions,

but there were more further north up the valley. The cavalry deployed in dismounted skirmish lines on the left, or west of the canyon, and the one infantry company with the command deployed to the right, or east of the canyon. The plan was to move forward on both the Indian's right and left flanks.⁵⁸

Lewis was near the front of the action. He remained in the saddle and directed the battle from his horse until the Indians shot his horse out from under him. Troopers from Company B dragged him from harm's way and pleaded with him to exercise caution. He grabbed a carbine, joined the skirmish line, and pressed forward. Eventually, a bullet struck him in the femoral artery of his left leg and he went down. He examined his wound calmly and said, "I guess it's all over with me." He then pulled a buckskin strap from his revolver and applied a tourniquet above the wound. Shortly thereafter, his soldiers evacuated him to the rear and placed him in the ambulance that had recently joined the command.⁵⁹

Sundown was fast approaching by the time of Lewis' injury. After Lewis, Captain Mauck was the ranking officer. He called on his men to hold where they were but a storm blew in from the north, bringing clouds that blocked out all remaining light. Mauck believed the army had trapped the Indians and they would more than likely surrender in the morning. He withdrew to near the spot the command entered the canyon and made camp. He rode forward the next morning and found the Indians had fled, leaving one dead warrior, 17 dead horses, and 62 live horses--some packed with food and clothing.⁶⁰ On the morning of 28 September, Mauck dispatched a 26-man detail to escort the ambulance with Lewis and two wounded enlisted men to the nearest post, Fort Wallace. Lewis died en route.⁶¹

The soldiers did not realize there was a defile that led from the canyon to the Indians' rear. They thought the Northern Cheyenne could not escape. The troopers rode to the north end of the canyon and found a cave that hid the women and children during the fight. For two and a half weeks, they had been looking for this band and they finally had them all together in one location. But all was for naught.

Mauck was a veteran Indian fighter. He had served with Mackenzie in Texas and Mexico during the 1860s and 1870s. This was not his first time fighting the Northern Cheyenne either. He was with Crook and Mackenzie in November 1876 when the soldiers attacked the camp of Little Wolf and Dull Knife along the Red Fork of the Powder River. The Army, however, ran out of light on Punished Woman's Fork. Mauck had placed pickets out that night to provide early warning and to monitor the Indians as best they could, but the Northern Cheyenne still managed to escape. The Battle of Punished Woman's Fork was over.

The Pursuit Continues While Indians Raid the Northwest Kansas Settlements

Mauck sent word of the fight to Fort Wallace along with the slow moving ambulance escort, and then pursued the Indians once again. The next obstacle in the Northern Cheyenne's way was supposed to be along the Kansas Pacific Railroad. General Pope appointed Colonel Jeff C. Davis to command operations along this second net the Army had set to catch the Indians. Prior to Davis' arrival from Fort Leavenworth, Lieutenant Colonel Richard J. Dodge and Lieutenant Colonel James Van Voast were well at work. They had troops and supplies spread out approximately 50 miles along the rail line from Wallace to Monument, and an element from the 23rd Infantry scouting for the

Indians south of Fort Wallace. Davis arrived at Fort Wallace on 28 September and pushed even more of Van Voast's and Dodge's troops away from the rail line to conduct a movement to contact to the south. Early the next morning, the detachment with Lewis' body arrived with the news of the fight on Punished Woman's Fork. Unbeknownst to the soldiers, the Indians had crossed the rail line during the night of 28-29 September east of Carlyle, Kansas.⁶²

Had Mauck immediately dispatched a courier on a fast horse to reach Fort Wallace with his message, instead of having the ambulance detachment deliver it, that post could have alerted the stations along the railway as to the expected crossing point, which he suspected would be Sheridan station.⁶³ Sheridan station was actually about 25-30 miles from where the Indians crossed at Carlyle. At a minimum, Davis may have kept the majority of his troops along the line instead of pushing them south on a movement to contact. Regardless of the choices made, the Indians made good time and crossed the Kansas Pacific Railroad faster than anyone expected.

Mauck continued north on the Indians' trail, crossing the rail line on 29 September. After crossing, he halted his command for a rest and refit of supplies before resuming the pursuit. In the meantime, Davis dispatched his cavalry, and mounted and dismounted infantry to the north of the line in an attempt to overtake the Indians and perhaps get in their front to block their escape. All of these efforts failed. Davis then sent a courier to Dodge, informing him to take control of operations because he was returning to Fort Leavenworth.⁶⁴

The loss of horses and supplies at Punished Woman's Fork left the Indians in need of replenishment. Their line of flight took them through the Republican and

Solomon River tributary system in northwest Kansas, which by this time had a dense settler population (figure 10). There were killings and theft in southwest Kansas before this, but the raids on the settlements in northwest Kansas, primarily in present-day Rawlins and Decatur Counties, were particularly violent.

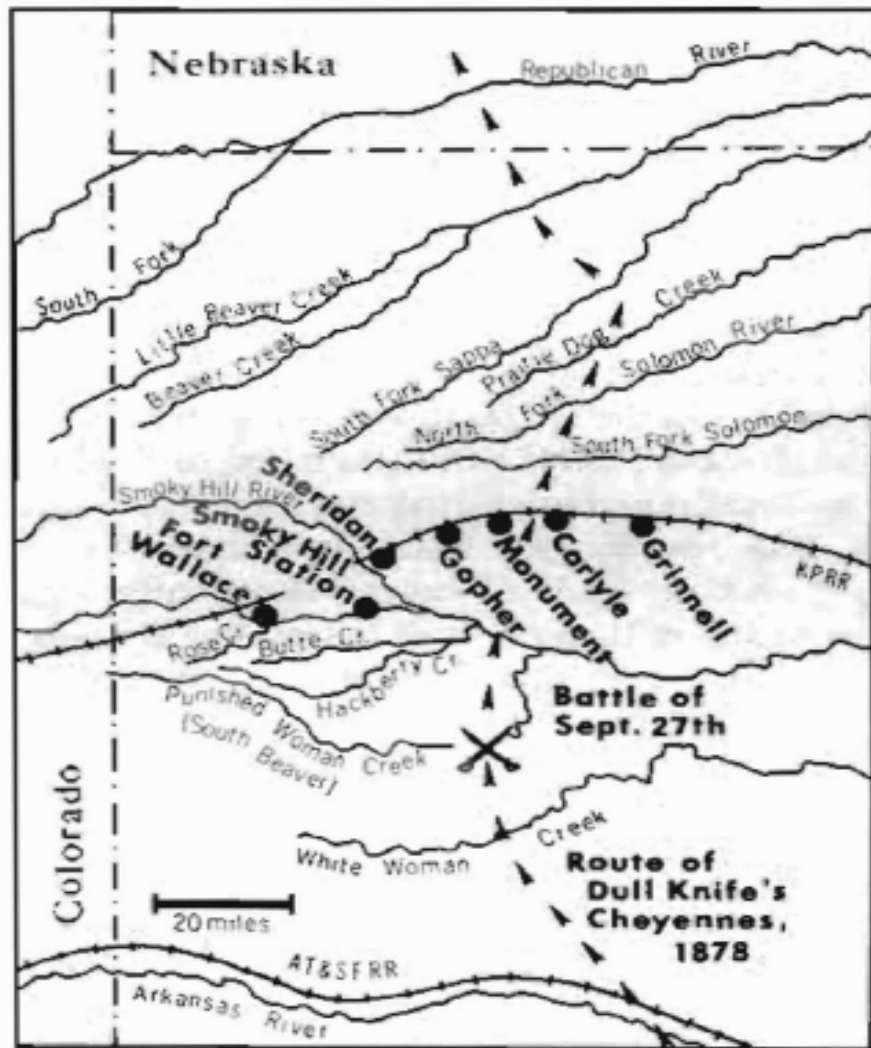


Figure 10. Western Kansas Flight Route

Source. Jerome A. Greene and Peter M. Wright, eds., "Chasing Dull Knife: A Journal of the Cheyenne Campaign of 1878, by Lieutenant George H. Palmer," *Heritage of Kansas—A Journal of the Great Plains* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1979): 29.

It is still unknown why the Northern Cheyenne became more violent in this part of the flight. There are theories that argue the Indians retaliated for the loss of their horses and supplies along Punished Woman's Fork. Others state they were taking revenge for an attack against the Southern Cheyenne at the Battle of Sappa Creek during the last stages of the Red River War in April 1875.⁶⁵ Whatever their motivation, on 30 September and 1 October, they descended on the citizens along Sappa and Beaver Creek with blood in mind.

Many believe that Little Wolf and Dull Knife did not condone attacks against the settlers, but they could not contain all of their younger warriors. After the Northern Cheyenne crossed the rail line near Carlyle, warriors began to split off in small groups for raids on the settlements. They caught unsuspecting settlers off guard. Many of the men were shot down, their houses plundered and burned, with their wives and daughters brutally raped. The youngest of the documented rapes was a nine-year-old girl, Elizabeth Laing. The Indians killed her father and three brothers, and gang-raped her and her 12-year old sister and mother.⁶⁶ The Indians created a scare and general panic set in. An officer involved in the pursuit north of the rail line, First Lieutenant George H. Palmer, observed, "They killed about 20 men and women and ravished a number of girls, one of whom, a school teacher, had been stretched on the ground and secured by stakes driven in the ground and outraged by fifteen of the fiends."⁶⁷

As soon as the raids began, they ended. The Northern Cheyenne pushed into Nebraska with at least 250 new horses and other supplies taken from the settlers. All told, they had killed "over forty men and ravished many women."⁶⁸ Crossing into Nebraska, they entered into the jurisdiction of the Department of the Platte.

Crook, the Department of the Platte commander, had anticipated the arrival of the escapees into his area of responsibility. Major Thomas Thornburgh had four companies from the 4th, 9th, and 14th Infantry Regiments at Sidney Barracks, Nebraska. When news of the Indians entry into Nebraska reached Thornburgh, he took his soldiers down the Union Pacific Railroad to the station at Ogallala, Nebraska. Five companies of the 3rd Cavalry left Fort Robinson, Nebraska under Major Caleb Carleton. He took his men east from Robinson to set up a blocking position in the Sand Hills in hopes that Thornburgh's troops would push the Indians into him.⁶⁹

Thornburgh and his men arrived at Ogallala on 4 October to find the Indians had crossed the rail line near there just several hours before their arrival. He immediately pursued. Mauck arrived with his command shortly after and proceeded up the trail that Thornburgh took. The Sand Hills proved too difficult to track the fugitives and the soldiers soon lost the trail.⁷⁰ Not long after their entrance into the Sand Hills, Little Wolf and Dull Knife pondered on what course of action to take next.⁷¹

The Band Splits and Dull Knife Surrenders

Little Wolf desired to push on to the Powder and Tongue River country of southeastern Montana while Dull Knife thought it wiser to go to Red Cloud Agency near Fort Robinson. Dull Knife did not know that when he was in the south, the Red Cloud Agency had relocated to South Dakota and been renamed the Pine Ridge Agency. In mid-October, the band decided to split, with most noncombatants opting to stay with Dull Knife.⁷²

Just prior to the split, Mauck received orders on 7 October to take his command to Sidney Barracks and prepare to escort another band of Northern Cheyenne, under Little

Chief, to Indian Territory. This band had recently surrendered in the north and was en route to the Cheyenne-Arapaho Reservation in IT when the exodus of Little Wolf and Dull Knife's people began. The Army waited to let the current situation evolve. Having waited long enough, the Army finally sent them south. The Department of the Missouri was now out of the fight.⁷³

Throughout mid-October, elements from the 3rd Cavalry scouted and waited in the northern portion of the Sand Hills. On 22 October, a cavalry detachment under Captain John B. Johnson, accompanied by Lakota scouts, found Dull Knife with his band of 149 souls moving in the direction of where they thought the Red Cloud Agency existed. They surrendered without a fight. They then escorted them to Fort Robinson. Little Wolf and his band wintered in the isolated Sand Hills.

The Fort Robinson Outbreak and the Surrender of Little Wolf

After arriving at Fort Robinson, Dull Knife and the rest of the Northern Cheyenne took up residence in an old log barracks building. The Army fed them regularly and they were content while the US Government determined their disposition. They knew there was a chance the US Government would try to send them south to IT again but they also held out hope they could go and live with the Lakota at the Pine Ridge Agency. Captain Henry W. Wessells, Jr. took command of Fort Robinson on 4 December 1878. Not long after taking command, he encountered his first major challenge.

Kansans called for justice against the Northern Cheyenne responsible for the crimes they committed in northwest Kansas. They wanted the guilty parties tried in civilian court. Wessells held council with the Indian leadership and informed them of the

Kansans' intent, and that his superiors had ordered him to march them to Sidney to board a train to Fort Leavenworth so white witnesses could identify the perpetrators. The council did not go well. The Indians foresaw they would have to go to the dreaded south after Fort Leavenworth. Finally, word came from Crook on 3 January 1879 that Wessells was to send the Indians to Fort Leavenworth. The Indians refused.⁷⁴

Wessells used a rather harsh approach to gain compliance. He cut off all food and heating sources to the Indians and kept them locked in their barracks. It got so bad that they had to scrape frost of the windows in an attempt to relieve thirst. On 9 January at 11 a.m., Wessells called for Northern Cheyenne headmen, Wild Hog and Old Crow, to have council with him. He asked them again if they were ready to comply with his orders and they again refused. He then had two soldiers subdue them and take them to the guardhouse. Seeing this from their barracks prison, the Indians prepared for the worst.⁷⁵

Prior to surrendering, the Indian women concealed a multitude of weapons to keep them from being confiscated. The men only handed over a handful to appease the soldiers, and they were probably the poorest weapons the Indians had. They disassembled the weapons they kept and hid them under the barracks floor. Upon seeing what happened to Wild Hog and Old Crow, the Indians tore up the floor, reassembled their weapons, and prepared to fight the soldiers who had gathered outside the structure. The soldiers never stormed the barracks and by late afternoon, the scene was quiet.⁷⁶

Extra guards were on duty that night, and at approximately 9:45 p.m., the Indians fired through the windows and killed two guards. They immediately burst through the windows. Soon afterwards, enough warriors gathered outside the building to engage the soldiers so the remainder of the Indians could escape. These warriors bought enough time

for the noncombatants to make their way away from the fort and into the darkness. A surprised Wessells rallied his troops and the pursuit was on again.⁷⁷ During the night, soldiers managed to recapture some of the escapees and return them to post. On the morning of 10 January, Wessells had four troops from the 3rd Cavalry in the field scouting along the White River and Soldier Creek. An officer with the command later wrote that, “For seventeen miles from the post, the trail showed that the fugitives had made no halt. A marvelous march on such a bitter night for a lot of men, women, and children, many of them wounded, all half clad and practically starved for five days.”⁷⁸

Shortly after their escape, many of the Northern Cheyenne split into smaller groups so that they could hide better. Over the next several days, the soldiers found many of them. If warriors were present, there was always a fight. By 14 January, there were only 45 Indians remaining that the soldiers had not killed or captured, 19 of which were warriors.⁷⁹ On 22 January, Wessells caught up with a group of 32 of them. A fight ensued and at the end 23 lay dead. This left nine and six of those were wounded. Later that month, the majority of the surviving members of Dull Knife’s band were sent to live at the Pine Ridge Agency. There were a total of 33 women and 22 children.⁸⁰

Dull Knife and his wife, son, and daughter made it to the relative safety of Pine Ridge Agency in late January 1879. The Lakota, Young Man Afraid of His Horses, welcomed them into his lodge on 7 February. At the urging of Chief Red Cloud, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Department of the Interior finally allowed Dull Knife and his surviving tribesmen to stay at Pine Ridge for the time being.⁸¹

Little Wolf and his followers seemed to have vanished into the Sand Hills. Staying the last half of October, and all of November, December, and January, he finally

made a move north again in February 1879. The US Army had not quit looking for them over the last few months, but since they had caused little disturbance in the sparsely populated Sand Hills, the search was not as relentless as it had been during the first six weeks of the exodus.

The Army received word of their movement and on 22 February, Brigadier General Terry, commander of the Department of the Dakota, ordered elements of the 2nd Cavalry out of Fort Keogh, Montana into the field. First Lieutenant William Philo Clark commanded the 2nd Cavalry detachment. He knew Little Wolf from the days the Northern Cheyenne scouted for the Army after their surrender in the north in the late winter and early spring of 1877, prior to their deportation south to IT.⁸²

The Northern Cheyenne trusted Clark, and he respected them too. Clark was very adept in Indian sign language and later published a book on the subject in the 1880s. Before setting out to locate the Little Wolf band, he employed Indian scouts from Fort Keogh. He sent several parties out in search of the Indians with a message that he did not wish to fight and if they would lay down their arms, he would do what he could to ensure they could stay in the north. Scouts finally found the Northern Cheyenne and delivered the message. Little Wolf agreed to the terms and he surrendered on 25 March. There were 38 men, 43 women, and 38 children.⁸³ After six-and-a-half months and over 1,000 miles, the pursuit was over.

¹ US Office of Indian Affairs, *Commissioner of Indian Affairs Annual Report for the Year 1878* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1878), 56-57.

² Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 48.

³ *Ibid.*, 51.

- ⁴ Brown, 340.
- ⁵ Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, 388.
- ⁶ Covington, 20.
- ⁷ Monnett, 44.
- ⁸ US War Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1878*, 45.
- ⁹ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 57.
- ¹⁰ *Army and Navy Journal*, September 21, 1878.
- ¹¹ Monnett, 45.
- ¹² Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 58.
- ¹³ US War Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1878*, 45.
- ¹⁴ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 58.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.
- ¹⁶ Stan Hoig, *A Travel Guide to the Plains Indian Wars* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 122.
- ¹⁷ Sandoz, 36-37.
- ¹⁸ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 66.
- ¹⁹ Powell, 1163.
- ²⁰ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 67.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 69.
- ²² “The Great Cheyenne Chase: A Truthful Account by a Dragoon Who Participated In It-Only Truthful Account Ever Published,” *Ford County Globe*, January 8, 1878.
- ²³ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 71-72.
- ²⁴ Monnett, 55.

²⁵ Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians Within the Military Division of the Missouri from 1868-1882*, 90.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 92.

²⁸ Monnett, 47.

²⁹ Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians Within the Military Division of the Missouri from 1868-1882*, 90-91.

³⁰ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 92-93.

³¹ Ibid., 93-94.

³² Exploring Oklahoma History, “Cowboy Cemetery,” accessed 24 April 2015, <http://www.blogoklahoma.us/place.aspx?id=595>. The date of September 12, 1878 is debatable. Some historians argue that since the kill site of these cowboys was northwest of the Turkey Springs battlefield, the Indians must have killed them only in retaliation for the fight with the soldiers on September 13-14.

³³ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 93-94.

³⁴ Vernon R. Maddux and Albert Glenn Maddux, *In Dull Knife's Wake: The True Story of the Northern Cheyenne Exodus of 1878* (Norman, OK: Horse Creek Publications, 2003), 48.

³⁵ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 94.

³⁶ Multiple sources conflict whether the first fight on Big Sandy Creek occurred on 17 or 18 September. The April 21, 1876 edition of the *Army and Navy Journal* list “on or about the 18th day of September, 1878” when referring to Hemphill’s court-martial. The September 21, 1874 issue of the *Leavenworth Daily Times* reported it as a Thursday, which would have made it September 19. Unable to clarify, this thesis uses what the majority of sources say, that the fight occurred on September 18.

³⁷ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 95.

³⁸ *Army and Navy Journal*, April 26, 1879.

³⁹ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 100.

⁴⁰ *Army and Navy Journal*, October 26, 1878.

⁴¹ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 101.

⁴² US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 6-0, *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 2014), 9-20.

⁴³ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 105.

⁴⁴ Powell, 1166.

⁴⁵ Monnett, 64.

⁴⁶ *Army and Navy Journal*, October 26, 1878.

⁴⁷ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 102.

⁴⁸ Paul A. Hutton, "Could Custer Have Won?," May 28, 2013, accessed 12 May 2015, <http://www.historynet.com/could-custer-have-won.htm>.

⁴⁹ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 106.

⁵⁰ Powell, 1167.

⁵¹ Maddux, 53.

⁵² *Leavenworth Daily Times*, September 27, 1878.

⁵³ Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians Within the Military Division of the Missouri from 1868-1882*, 91.

⁵⁴ Maddux, 82.

⁵⁵ Powell, 1168-1170.

⁵⁶ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 114.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 114-117.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 120-121.

⁵⁹ *Army and Navy Journal*, October 26, 1878.

⁶⁰ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 123; *Leavenworth Daily Times*, October 1, 1878.

⁶¹ *Leavenworth Daily Times*, October 1, 1878.

⁶² Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians Within the Military Division of the Missouri from 1868-1882*, 91.

⁶³ *Army and Navy Journal*, October 5, 1878.

- ⁶⁴ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 133.
- ⁶⁵ Sandoz, 99-100.
- ⁶⁶ Ramon Powers and James N. Leiker, *The Northern Cheyenne Exodus in History and Memory* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), 11.
- ⁶⁷ Jerome A. Greene and Peter M. Wright, eds., “Chasing Dull Knife: A Journal of the Cheyenne Campaign of 1878, by Lieutenant George H. Palmer,” *Heritage of Kansas—A Journal of the Great Plains* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1979): 29.
- ⁶⁸ Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians Within the Military Division of the Missouri from 1868-1882*, 92.
- ⁶⁹ Monnett, 106.
- ⁷⁰ Edgar B. Bronson, “A Finish Fight for a Birthright,” in *Eyewitness to the Indian Wars, 1865-1890, The Long War for the Northern Plains*, ed. Peter Cozzens (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2004), 492.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 495.
- ⁷² Monnett, 110.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, 108.
- ⁷⁴ Buecker, 138-139.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 140-141.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.
- ⁷⁸ Bronson, 508.
- ⁷⁹ Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians Within the Military Division of the Missouri from 1868-1882*, 95-96.
- ⁸⁰ Buecker, 146.
- ⁸¹ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 220-221.
- ⁸² Monnett, 165-166.
- ⁸³ Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians Within the Military Division of the Missouri from 1868-1882*, 96-97.

CHAPTER 5

EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSION

The story of the Northern Cheyenne did not finish when the pursuit ended. They still had to answer for the depredations committed during their flight. Moreover, the Northern Cheyenne were still a divided tribe with members living in Montana, South Dakota, and Indian Territory. In addition, the story of the US Army was incomplete. The Army knew the pursuit did not go as well as many had anticipated. The Cheyenne outbreak at Fort Robinson required investigation as well. After examining the Northern Cheyenne and the US Army during the exodus, it is important to reflect upon what each side did, and if there were viable alternatives. The Northern Cheyenne's escape, the Army's pursuit and the events that occurred offer insight into military operations against indigenous peoples and the methods and tactics employed that previous studies have not fully assessed.

The Army's Reaction

The units that bore the brunt of the pursuit for the first month were primarily from the 4th Cavalry Regiment. Early in 1879, at the urging of First Lieutenant Abram Wood, his superior officers, Captains Rendlebrock and Gunther met a court-martial for their conduct during the pursuit.¹ The trials occurred at Fort Supply, IT. The post's commanding officer, Major Hambright, also preferred charges against Captain Hemphill. All three trials took place in March 1879.

Hambright charged Hemphill with disobeying orders by proceeding to Fort Dodge instead of linking up with Rendlebrock or finding the Indians. He also failed to turn the

Indians back when he did encounter them along Big Sandy Creek. The convening board found him not guilty of both charges because they felt going to Fort Dodge was his only option for resupply and when he met the Indians for the first time, he and his men were outnumbered.

The charges against Gunther included abandonment of his command during the retreat from Turkey Springs and cowardice during the first night at Turkey Springs when a sentry's carbine shot was mistaken for an Indian's round. The court-martial board also found Gunther not guilty and he returned to his command.² Rendlebrock went to trial with four charges against him, including multiple specifications within each charge. The court-martial board found him guilty of "misbehavior before the enemy." The sentence carried his dismissal from service, but in light of his health, age (he was 60 during the pursuit), and credible service record, he was instead placed on the retired list.³

In response to the Fort Robinson fiasco in January 1879, Crook ordered an investigation. Three officers made up the board of inquiry. They interviewed soldiers and Indians alike and found no one at fault. They determined that under the circumstances, cutting off the Indians' food supply was the best viable option to compel them to go back south.⁴ The board also tried to identify a handful of Indians to send to Kansas for trial.⁵

Fate of the Northern Cheyenne

Early in 1879, seven men of Dull Knife's band traveled to Fort Leavenworth.irate Kansas citizens, outraged over the Indians' raid through their state in September and October 1878, demanded justice. Legendary lawman and Ford County Sheriff, Bat Masterson, along with five others, escorted the seven from Fort Leavenworth to Dodge City to stand trial in a civilian court. A change of venue moved the trial to Lawrence,

Kansas and failure of the lead prosecutor and any witnesses to appear when the trial got underway in October led to a dismissal. The authorities turned the seven defendants and their families over to Agent Miles at Darlington Agency.⁶

In the fall of 1878, as the exodus unfolded, the 4th Cavalry disengaged from their pursuit in Nebraska to escort Little Chief's band of Northern Cheyenne to IT from Sydney Barracks. The Army intended to hold the Indians there until the pursuit of Dull Knife and Little Wolf concluded. In December, the Indians and their cavalry escort arrived at Darlington Agency. On 9 December, Agent Miles enrolled Little Chief and 186 followers and they joined approximately 640 Northern Cheyenne that had remained there. It was not long before Little Chief began making the same complaints that Dull Knife and Little Wolf had made during their short stay. Finally, in 1881, he and a delegation traveled to Washington, DC to discuss the prospects of a northern reservation.⁷

Over the next few years, the US Government allowed Northern Cheyenne at Darlington to go north to Pine Ridge Agency if they wanted. Finally, in 1884, the Northern Cheyenne received a reserve on Rosebud Creek in southeastern Montana. By 1900, the reservation grew to 460,000 acres and encompassed parts of the Tongue River. After the creation of the reserve, the rest of the displaced Northern Cheyenne at Darlington and Pine Ridge received approval to go there. The Northern Cheyenne had a home in their own country at last.⁸ In respect to Dull Knife, he died in 1883 before seeing the creation of a Northern Cheyenne reservation. Little Wolf killed a fellow Cheyenne in 1880 while drunk and exiled himself from the tribe for a time. He died in 1904.⁹

Successes and Failures

The civilian and Army leadership were aware of the Northern Cheyenne discontent at Darlington. Even if game were plentiful and sickness nonexistent in IT, the Indians still would have longed for their home country in the north. Reservation conditions only expedited the departure process. When Miles and Mizner received word the Indians had fled, the Army pursued. After finding the Northern Cheyenne were still encamped on the reservation, the Army set up camp for observation purposes. Obviously, they were not close enough. The Indians escaped undetected during the night.

Once alerted to the Northern Cheyenne flight, the Army leadership at Fort Reno responded appropriately. They chose pack mules over wagons for the purpose of speed and mobility. They also gained the assistance of Indian scouts to assist with tracking. In addition to allowing the Indians to flee undetected, the soldiers made another mistake once they overtook the Indians. They let the Indians draw them into an unfavorable fighting position. The Indians, being the pursued, usually had the luxury of picking a suitable location in which to engage the soldiers and make a stand. During this first encounter, they commanded the terrain and the only potable water source on the battlefield.

Captain Rendlebrock lost the initiative at Turkey Springs because a junior officer, First Lieutenant Wood, commenced firing with his company before the decision to engage was made, leaving no other course of action but battle. Before the first shots rang out, the soldiers formed a skirmish line. Forming his soldiers in a dismounted skirmish line was standard practice, but this tactic may have been premature before conducting a proper parley. A successful meeting was probably not feasible because there was nothing

anyone could have said to convince the Northern Cheyenne to return to Darlington peacefully anyway. Outnumbered and in unfavorable terrain, the outcome of the first fight was predictable.

The next fight between Company I and the Indians along Big Sandy Creek was not much better. The Indians seized the initiative, picked the ground to fight on, and again outnumbered the soldiers, even more so than at Turkey Springs. The Army was outfought again. The remaining two fights of the Sandy Creek skirmishes found the Indians with a numerical disadvantage for the first time. They offset this with determination, firepower, and an impressive use of defensive terrain. The Army's withdrawal from the field after the final Sandy Creek skirmish, allowed the Indians to continue their flight.

The level of the Indians' fighting experience exceeded the soldiers. The First Sergeant of Company G, 4th Cavalry, John Feely, stated that most of his company consisted of raw recruits that had never been under fire.¹⁰ In addition to fighting experience, the Indians' sheer determination gave them an immeasurable edge over the soldiers. They were going to fight to the death before going back to Darlington. The soldiers, on the other hand, appeared to lack that kind of zeal. Their training prior to assignment on the frontier was minimal, and with the exception of the veteran noncommissioned officers and some of the senior officers, had never fought before, neither Indians, nor anyone else.

At the beginning of the pursuit, the Army alerted the different departments in the Military Division of the Missouri and prepared multiple interception points with various bodies of soldiers. The response resembled the converging columns approach that had

served the Army so well in the past. The problem with the converging columns concept this time was the vast distance the Army knew the Northern Cheyenne would traverse. The Indians were going 1,000 miles north. There would be no pushing them back and forth, north, south, east, and west into large able-bodied columns.

As with other Indian fights, the Indians had superior mobility, even though some of the Indians had to walk part of the way. They moved swiftly and were not afraid to ride a horse until it played out and then continue on foot until adequate foraging acquired more horses. The soldiers were reliant on logistics. In several instances, the soldiers had to withdraw to reconstitute. When they did, the Indians had freedom to continue their flight unimpeded.

The US Army's technological advantage of telegraph lines for communications and railroads for troop and supply transport also failed to balance the scales. These advantages allowed the Army to alert the departments with the utmost speed and bring additional men, horses and supplies closer to the fight in order to keep that relentless pressure on the Indians. Relentless pressure and pursuit was usually what it took to defeat the Plains Indians. Seldom was there one decisive engagement at the early stages of a campaign or operation. It was usually a series of engagements to wear the Indians down by keeping them on the move and not allowing them to rest, and this pursuit was no different.

Chapter 3 identified several Indian-fighting principles used by the army--winter campaigns when practical, total war, encirclement of villages, relentless pursuit, keeping on the offense, and the dawn attack. During the pursuit of the Northern Cheyenne, the US Army adhered to these principles as best it could. The Army could have conducted a

winter campaign into the Sand Hills of Nebraska to capture Little Wolf's band, but it was not interested in the cat-and-mouse potential a campaign like that would have had, especially if the Indians remained relatively quiet. The only times the pursuit resembled total war was during the Battle of Punished Woman's Fork when the Army destroyed the abandoned pony herd and supplies in the bottom of the canyon, and when the fighting took place in close proximity to the noncombatants. The Northern Cheyenne never presented a typical village for the Army to encircle. The Army definitely practiced the principle of relentless pursuit and staying on the offense when it could. Finally, the Army preferred a dawn attack to achieve surprise, but unfortunately, the Indians always knew when the soldiers were coming and usually had time to establish either hasty or deliberate defensive positions.

The pursuit of the Northern Cheyenne was the US Army's reaction to the Indians' escape. Although it was not a deliberate campaign, planned several months in advance, it still resembled a typical frontier Army operation. The Army applied all known principles that it could. Of course, there were probably missed opportunities and there will always be the "What ifs?" of any military action, but given the operations of the past, and knowing what it knew at the time, the US Army performed as well as could be expected under the circumstances. Looking back at previous operations and campaigns, the US Army that pursued the Northern Cheyenne in 1878-79 did not do so badly after all.

This thesis should assist in reducing the criticisms against the Army's performance during the pursuit. By studying and analyzing other campaigns prior to the exodus, and then comparing them to the pursuit, one will see the Army did many things wrong, but it did a lot of things right, too. The study of this pursuit should teach the

modern military officer that the use of best practices sometimes requires perseverance and tactical patience to work. When fighting a complex, determined, and masterful enemy, one should not expect a quick and decisive victory. More times than not, achieving measurable, positive results takes time.

¹ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 214-216.

² *Army and Navy Journal*, April 26, 1879.

³ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 217-218.

⁴ Buecker, 146.

⁵ Monnett, 174.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 179-182.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 189-190.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 194-198.

¹⁰ Hoig, *Perilous Pursuit*, 57.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Birtle, Andrew J. *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1941*. Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1998.
- Brady, Cyrus T. *Indian Fights and Fighters*. New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1904.
- Brininstool, E. A. and Samuel S. Gibson. "Wagon Box Fight." In *Eyewitnesses to the Indian Wars 1865-1890, Volume 4, The Long War for the Northern Plains*, edited by Peter Cozzens, 93-100. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2004.
- Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. London, UK: Barrie and Jenkins, 1971.
- Buecker, Thomas R. *Fort Robinson and the American West 1874-1899*. Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1999.
- Chun, Clayton. *US Army in the Plains Indian Wars 1865-1891*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2004.
- Collins, Jr., Charles D. *Atlas of the Sioux Wars*, 2nd ed. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2006.
- . *Cheyenne Wars Atlas*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2010.
- . *Staff Ride Handbook and Atlas: Battle of White Bird Canyon 17 June 1877*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2014.
- Connell, Evan S. *Son of the Morning Star*. San Francisco, CA: North Point Press, 1984.
- Covington, James W. "Causes of the Dull Knife Raid." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 26 (Spring 1984): 13-22.
- Custer, George A. *My Life on the Plains*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.
- Exploring Oklahoma History. "Cowboy Cemetery." BlogOklahoma.us, Accessed 24 April 2015. <http://www.blogoklahoma.us/place.aspx?id=595>.
- Goodrich, Thomas. *Scalp Dance: Indian Warfare on the High Plains 1865-1879*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1997.
- Gray, John S. *Custer's Last Campaign: Mitch Boyer and the Little Bighorn Reconstructed*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991.
- Greene Jerome A. *Morning Star Dawn: The Powder River Expedition and the Northern Cheyennes, 1876*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003.

- . *Washita: The U.S. Army and the Southern Cheyennes, 1867-1869*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004.
- Greene, Jerome A., and Peter M. Wright, eds. "Chasing Dull Knife: A Journal of the Cheyenne Campaign of 1878 by Lieutenant George H. Palmer." *Heritage of Kansas, a Journal of the Great Plains* 12 (Winter 1979): 25-36.
- Grinnell, George B. *The Cheyenne Indians*. New York: Cooper Square, 1923.
- . *The Fighting Cheyennes*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915.
- . *When Buffalo Ran*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1920. Accessed 18 May 2015. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t9j38vx8m;view=1up;seq=11>.
- Headquarters, Department of the Army. Field Manual (FM) 6-0, *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014.
- Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri. *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians Within the Military Division of the Missouri from 1868-1882*. Chicago, IL: Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, 1882.
- Hebard, Grace R., and E. A. Brininstool. *The Bozeman Trail: Historical Accounts of the Blazing of the Overland Routes and the Fights with Red Cloud's Warriors*, Vol. 1. Cleveland, OH: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1922.
- . *The Bozeman Trail: Historical Accounts of the Blazing of the Overland Routes and the Fights with Red Cloud's Warriors*, Vol. 2. Cleveland, OH: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1922.
- Hedren, Paul L. *Great Sioux War Orders of Battle: How the United States Army Waged War on the Northern Plains, 1876-1877*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011.
- Hoig, Stan. *The Peace Chiefs of the Cheyennes*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.
- . *Perilous Pursuit: The U.S. Cavalry and the Northern Cheyennes*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2002.
- . *A Travel Guide to the Plains Indian Wars*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006.
- Hutchins, James S. *The Army and Navy Journal on the Little Bighorn and Related Matters, 1876-1881*. El Segundo, CA: Upton and Sons, 2003.

- Hutton, Paul A. "Could Custer Have Won?" May 28, 2013. Accessed 12 May 2015.
<http://www.historynet.com/could-custer-have-won.htm>.
- Kappler, Charles J., ed. *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, Vol. II: Treaties*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904. Accessed 18 March 2015.
<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol2/treaties/sio0594.htm#mn11>.
- . *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, Vol. II: Treaties*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904. Accessed 18 March 2015.
<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol2/treaties/ara0807.htm>.
- . *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, Vol. II: Treaties*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904. Accessed 18 March 2015.
<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol2/treaties/che0887.htm>.
- Leckie, William H. *The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.
- Leiker, James N., and Ramon Powers. *The Northern Cheyenne Exodus in History and Memory*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011.
- Maddux, Vernon R., and Albert G. Maddux. *In Dull Knife's Wake: The True Story of the Northern Cheyenne Exodus of 1878*. Norman, OK: Horse Creek Publications, 2003.
- Marcy, Randolph B. *The Prairie Traveler: A Handbook for Overland Expeditions*. New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007.
- Monnett, John H. *Tell Them We Are Going Home: The Odyssey of the Northern Cheyennes*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001.
- Nye, Wilbur S. *Plains Indian Raiders: The Final Phases of Warfare from the Arkansas to the Red River*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968.
- Pierce, Michael D. *The Most Promising Young Officer: A Life of Ranald Slidell Mackenzie*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993.
- Powell, Peter J. *People of the Sacred Mountain*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1979.
- Powers, William K. *Indians of the Northern Plains*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969.
- Rickey, Jr., Don. *Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay: The Enlisted Soldier Fighting the Indian Wars*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.
- Sandoz, Mari. *Cheyenne Autumn*. New York: McGraw Hill Books, 1953.

Sainio, Eric. "Between Fort Laramie and Fort Wise-A Tale of Two Treaties." *The Prowers Journal*. Last modified February 24, 2014. Accessed 18 March 2015. <http://theprowersjournal.com/2014/02/between-fort-laramie-and-fort-wise-a-tale-of-two-treaties>.

Sheridan, Philip H. *The Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1992.

"The Great Cheyenne Chase: A Truthful Account by a Dragoon Who Participated In It-Only Truthful Account Ever Published." *Ford County Globe*, January 8, 1878.

Utley, Robert M. *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian 1866-1891*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1973.

US Office of Indian Affairs. *Annual Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1868*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1868.

———. *Annual Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1872*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1872.

———. *Annual Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1877*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1877.

———. *Annual Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1878*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1878.

US War Department. *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1866*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1866.

———. *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1867*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1867.

———. *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1874*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1874.

———. *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1877*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1877.

———. *Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1878*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1878.

Werner, Fred H. *The Dull Knife Battle*. Greeley, CO: Werner Publications, 1981.

Williams, Mathyn D. "Indian Wars: Failing of the US Army to Achieve Decisive Victory During the Nez Perce War of 1877." Master's thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2005.

Wooster, Robert. *The Military and United States Indian Policy 1865-1903*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988.