

*Chasing Dull Knife: A Journal of the
Cheyenne Campaign of 1878
By Lieutenant George H. Palmer*

Edited by Jerome A. Greene
and Peter M. Wright

On a dark night in early September, 1878, a band of Northern Cheyenne Indians left their assigned place of imprisonment at Fort Reno, Indian Territory, and began a memorable trek northward to reach their Montana homeland. That episode, during which the destitute tribesman passed over a vast portion of the Great Plains while eluding numerous army troops sent to stop them, comprises a classic chapter in the history of Indian-white confrontations of the nineteenth century.

One of the army participants in the Cheyenne campaign was First Lieutenant George H. Palmer. A career soldier, Palmer was raised in upstate New York and Illinois before entering the volunteer forces in 1861 at the beginning of the Civil War. He took part in several significant engagements, notably that at Lexington, Missouri, and emerged from the war a captain of Illinois infantry.

In 1867 Palmer accepted a commission in the regular army and was sent with the Twenty-seventh U.S. Infantry to guard emigrant trails in Wyoming and Montana. Two years later he was sent to the South, then undergoing Reconstruction, where his new regiment, the Sixteenth Infantry, was active in overseeing state and local elections and in assisting federal revenue officials in Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Louisiana. With the close of Reconstruction in 1877, the regiment was shipped west, and Palmer's company took station at Fort Wallace, in western Kansas near the Colorado line. The assignment of manning this frontier outpost on the plains promised monotony of the worst kind. Scarcely a year passed, however, before Palmer found his unit embroiled in one of the more noted campaigns in the annals of Indian warfare.

The following account of the so-called Dull Knife chase and its aftermath, excerpted from the journal of Lieutenant Palmer, highlights one phase of the army's frustrating pursuit of the Cheyenne.

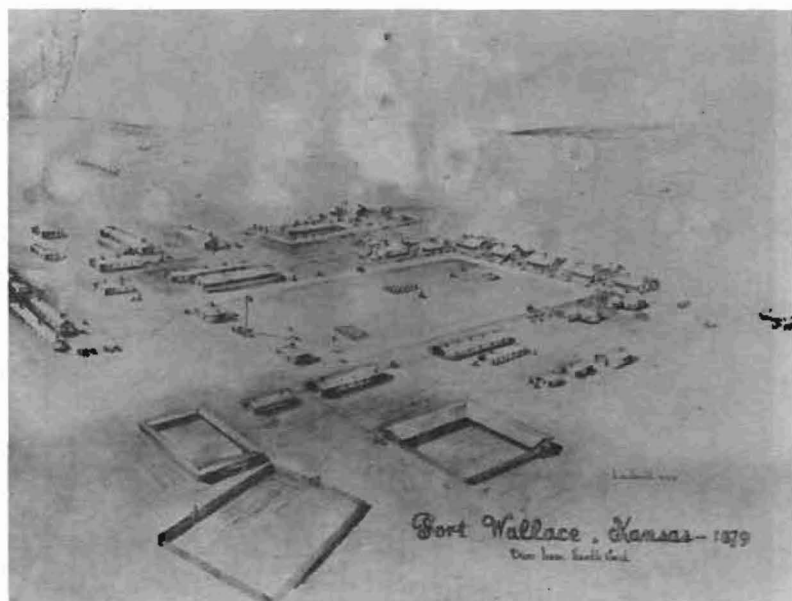
nes across western Kansas. Palmer herein recounts the day-to-day activities and incidents that affected his immediate command, and besides offers some critical insights into the overall conduct of operations against the Indians. The account begins with the arrival of Palmer's unit at Fort Wallace from the South.

In June, 1877, my regiment was ordered to the Department of the Missouri.¹ We left New Orleans and reached Fort Wallace, Kansas, on the 14th of June, 1877.² Col. [James] Van Voast commands the post . . . [In July] the Cheyenne Indians who were being taken to the Indian Territory camped 15 miles east of here.³ Many of them came to visit the post. I issued rations to 1000 of them. November 4th to 10th, went on buffalo hunt with [Captain Peter M.] Boehm, 4th Cav. Rode 90 miles. 4 buffaloes killed . . .

[In September, 1878,] Cheyenne Indians reported to have left their reservation in the Ind Territory and going north. They are raiding on the settlements.⁴ About 100 men of the 23d Inf, mounted, arrived at Wallace to assist in intercepting the Indians.⁵ Reported that Indians had been seen near Sheridan Station and had chased a party of emigrants. My Co. left the post at night on the 13th [of September]. Went by rail to Sheridan.⁶ From Sheridan I went with five men on an engine to Gopher Siding where we found an abandoned wagon but no evidence that Indians had been in the vicinity.⁷ At 2:30 A.M. of the 14th, left Sheridan and marched 7 miles to Gleason's Ranch where we remained until 10 A.M. when Captain [Richard I.] Eskridge with his Mounted Co., 23d Inf. arrived from Wallace. We marched in the P.M. to Gopher Siding and made dry camp, getting water from a passing engine. At daylight of the 15th, marched to Sheridan Station where we found Maj [Alexander J.] Dallas, 23d, with the remainder of his mounted command.⁸

The whole command returned to Wallace at 4 P.M. 23d [Infantry] went into camp. On the 16th I was detailed Post Adjutant. Scout with [on?] 17th reported that Rondlebroek [sic], 4th Cav,⁹ had had a fight with the Indians on the 13th and had lost 6 men on Bluff Creek¹⁰ north of Camp Supply [Indian Territory]. 26th, reported by several that the Indians have crossed the A.T. and S.F.¹¹ Rail Road—and confirmed by telegraph—But little has been done to find out just where the Indians are.

September 28th at 11 P.M., Lt. [Cornelius] Gardner [Gardener], Dr. [T.A.] Davis & 20 of the 4th Cavalry as escort came to the post with the body of Lt Col. [William H.] Lewis of the Inf who was killed by the Indians at Big Bend of the Beaver on the 27th



Fort Wallace, Kansas, from which post Lieutenant Palmer's company operated during the Cheyenne raid and after. Sketch prepared in 1953. Courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

inst in the evening.¹³ There were also brought in 2 wounded soldiers. This is the first intimation we had had of the whereabouts of the Indians. The officer in command at the Big Bend has made a fatal omission of duty in not sending a courier at once to inform us of the battle. It seems that the troops who fought were mostly of the 4th Cavly. That after Lewis was killed there was no one to properly direct affairs and the Indian moved off at dark on the 27th and gained a march on the troops. Capt. [Clarence] Mauck has assumed [command] of the column and will follow on the trail of the Indians.

Today the 29th [28th] Genl Jeff C Davis arrive at For Wallace and assumed direction of affairs.¹⁴ He withdrew Capt [Clayton] Hale and Lt [William H.] Vinal from Monument and Carlyle Stations east of here. The 29th we took the Cars and with Genl Davis went by rail to Monument. Returned at 1 P.M. At 4 P.M. the 29th, we heard that the Indians had crossed the K.P. Road¹⁵ going north on the night of the 28th at or near Carlyle Station, from which place Lt Vinal had been withdrawn.¹⁶ If Mauck had sent us word immediately after the fight we would have been in front of the Indians before they crossed.

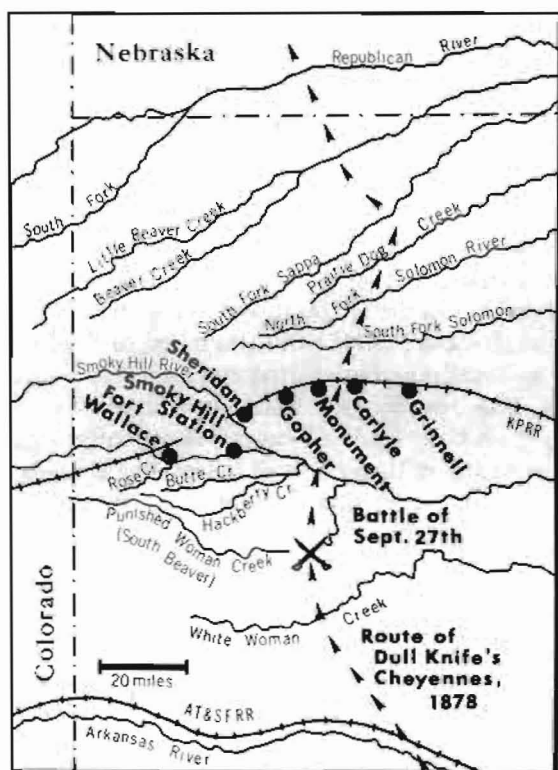
In the afternoon a command was got ready to go in pursuit of



Lieutenant George H. Palmer, Sixteenth Infantry, as he appeared in the 1890s. Note Medal of Honor Palmer received for his service at Lexington, Missouri, during the Civil War. Courtesy of General Bruce Palmer, Jr.

the Indians who are reported as raiding [and] killing the settlers north east of here. The command consisted of Co "F," Lt Palmer; Co "G," Lt [Leven C.] Allen; "H," Hale & Vinal. [Captain Duncan M.] Vance in command. The detachment of 29 men of the 4th Cavalry which brought in Lewis' body accompanied us, also Dr. Davis. Marched with 10 days ration & 5 wagons. On the 29th we camped at the RR station [near] Wallace.

Sept 30th, Marched at daylight—noon halt at Lake Creek—and after crossing north Smoky made dry camp. While here, Dodge, a Scout, arrived with orders from Genl Davis to change our course more to the east as the Indians were raiding on



Map of northwestern Kansas at the time of the Cheyenne Campaign of 1878.

Solomon river.¹⁷

October 1st, marched to Beaver Creek & made noon camp. October 2d, marched down Beaver & passed Major Dallas in camp with 23d Inf mounted. Camped 4½ miles above the forks. On the 3d, marched to the forks of Beaver and learned that the Indians had crossed 15 miles below on the 2d, going north with Capt Mauck of the 4th Cavly in pursuit.¹⁸ The Indians had raided on Beaver and Sappa Creeks and had secured about 100 fresh horses. [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. Her hair was cut off and after the Indians left her she crawled into the creek and remained there until the Indians had passed. At this time she is at a ranch at the forks of the Beaver.¹⁹ At 11 A.M. of the 3d we continued the pursuit with the mounted 23d in advance. We struck the Indian trail about 12 M and followed it to

the Republican and, marching during the night, reached the Republican at 1 A.M. of the 4th inst. A march of about 40 miles. On the 4th Maj Dallas continued on the trail. And a scout from Gen'l Davis carried an order for our return to Wallace. We (the 16th Inf) started on return march via forks of the Republican. (No water in South fork of the Republican.) At Big Timber found good supply of water, grass & wood.²⁰ On 5th, camped on divide between Big Timber and Beaver Creek. No water in this camp. On the 6th, marched to beaver dams on Beaver Creek—found no water in the north fork of the Beaver. On the 7th, camped on North fork of the Smokey where we found water. On the 8th, marched to Wallace, reaching there at 12 M Total marched during the raid, 220 miles.

On the 13th we learned that the Indians had crossed the U.P.R.R. and no body had yet caught them. After crossing three lines of rail road and as many lines of troops, the Indians were finally forced to surrender at Camp Robinson, Nebraska.²¹ It seems miraculous that two or three brigadiers, four or five colonels, majors and about a thousand men in good positions with wagons, rail roads and telegraphs were unable to stop the march of this party of 50 warriors who carried their women and children with them and rode broken down ponies from the Indian Territory away into Nebraska.²² When the Indians crossed the rail road on our line, Col [Captain Francis S.] Dodge [Ninth Cavalry] was wandering around in wagons on the Smokey, south of Sheridan [Station]. Dallas with all the mounted men was about 40 miles south of Wallace, and the 16th Infy were at Fort Wallace and at this time the Indians crossed at Carlyle 50 miles east of Wallace. We can now see that our troops should *all* have been on the rail road and all east of Sheridan with cars ready to carry them to where the Indians crossed.

A most fatal error was in the failure to send at once a messenger from the battle field at Big Bend of South Beaver to Fort Wallace. The battle at the Big Bend of South Beaver was on the eve of the 27th. News brought to Wallace by Lt. Gardner [*sic*], Dr. Davis and 20 eavly. [They reached Fort Wallace] with the body of Col Lewis at 11 P.M. of the 28th, at which hour the Indians were crossing at Carlyle. From Wallace to the battlefield is 46 miles. A messenger on a good horse could have brought us the news in 8 hours at most which would have enabled our troops to move in the proper direction early on the morning of the 28th and place themselves in front of the Indians some hours before they could have possibly reached the rail road. Lt Gardner [*sic*] would have done a good thing by detaching two of his twenty men and sending them with all



Chief Dull Knife of the Northern Cheyennes who led his tribesmen in their attempt to return to Montana in 1878. Courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

speed before him to Wallace.²³

On the 10th of October Capt Hale (H Co) returned to his station at Ft. Riley. On the 1st and 2d [of November] I went to Hays City & made entry of 160 acres land at Wallace. On the 3d of Nov. the Cheyenne Indians (Standing Elk) reached Wallace in Charge of Capt Mauck, 4th Cav., en route to the Indian Territory. These were not the band of Indians who made the raid in September.²⁴ On the 6th Lt. [Lea] Febbiger [Febiger] arrived with the horses of the 23d used in pursuit of the Cheyennes. My Co., "F," 16th Inf, is to be mounted on them for scouting duty south of Wallace. Co. mounted Dec 1, 1878.

The Co. mounted on the 9th of April, [1879,] started on scout. Camped at Allen Clarks Ranch on Rose Creek. 10th, marched S.E. 17 mi and camped on Punished Woman Creek at [Samuel B.] Schrack's Ranch. The forks of this creek are 4 mi above this camp. 11th, marched S.E. to Poison, or White Woman, Creek, 16 miles,

and camped at Schracks old hunting camp. 12th, marched down Poison Creek 6 mi and found water here. No water below here so reported. From here, marched due north $10\frac{1}{2}$ mi to Punished Woman or South Beaver and camped at 2:30 P.M.²⁵

April 19th, Co. scouted south east. Crossed Butte Creek 10 mi from Post. Camped on Chalk Creek 16 mi from Wallace. Found little water. We should have borne more to the east after crossing Butte Creek. Apl 20th, marched down Chalk, or Hackberry, 18 miles and camped—found but little water in holes. Apl 21st, continued down Chalk miles and made permanent camp on the trail from north fork of Smokey to Big Bend of Beaver. Here we found fine grass, wood and water. To Fort Wallace from here is about 36 miles. April 22d, Capt [William G.] W[edemeyer] returned to Wallace for forage.

On the 23rd I marched with Lt. [Charles R.] Tyler and 14 men on the Indian trail of last year and reached the battle field at Big Bend of South Beaver at 12:30 P.M., 14 mi from our camp. At 2 P.M., marched down Beaver 2 mi then east along canon and camped at Ed Court's Dugout, $2\frac{1}{2}$ mi from mouth of canon. Fine wood, water and grass here. A bad place to reach with heavy wagons. On the 24th, marched to camp which we reached 2 P.M. Total marched 28 miles.

On the 25th, marched to Spring Canon, east of camp. Marched around the head of the canon which puts in from the south, and down east side until about 2 mi from its mouth where we found a fine spring of excellent water, plenty of wood and grass. From camp via head of canon, 9 mi. Marched back to camp via valley of Hackberry, or Chalk, Creek, 7 miles. Total, 16 miles. 26th, Capt W. returned from Wallace.

On the 1st [of May], Co. marched east to Punished Woman Creek, 11 miles. With 2 men I went up the creek to Courts Ranch and returned, 14 miles. May 3d, marched to north west—crossed Hackberry and Butte Creeks which were dry—and reached the Smokey 10 miles from starting place and camped 2 mi east of Old Smokey Hill Stage Station.²⁶ Found here wood, water and grass.

On the 4th, [marched] to mouth of North Smokey 19 miles and camped near Mathews Ranch. To day near Smokey Hill Station we came upon a dead Indian who had been killed during the raid last summer. Some cowboy had dragged him to the road side an[d] thrust one of his legs into a prairie dog hole, leaving him half reclining with his [body] turned side ways and upward. His skin had dried and stiffened on his bones, his scalp was bare and he presented a

horrid appearance to passers by. We thought of taking him to Wallace but the stench was too much and we left him as we found him sitting at the side of the road. On the 5th we marched to Wallace 16 miles. Total marched on this scout, 150 miles. (Since 19th Apl)

On the 12th day of May I marched with 11 men to scout south of post. At the top of the bluffs five miles from the post a severe hail storm came on and we took shelter under the rocks. Just as the storm had abated a message came from the post with orders to return. The company was ordered to go into the Indian Territory to keep settlers off Indian lands. The papers report that thousands are pouring into the Territory. Our experience there proved that these reports were utterly groundless. We found no more than 3 unauthorized persons where we were stationed, although the presence of troops there had the effect of keeping people from coming in. Is there no place on this earth where an Indian can rest in peace?

Lieutenant Palmer's chronicling of his unit's participation in the pursuit of the Northern Cheyennes and its aftermath points up the tough reality of Indian campaigning in Kansas during the 1870s. Moreover, his account is particularly useful for two reasons: first, the campaign and any criticism therein of his superiors are above military politics. Unlike most army memoirs of the day, Palmer's views were neither colored by anticipated advancement nor tailored for eventual publication. Second, the detail provided in regard to western Kansas place names is helpful in locating with some precision the sites where local events occurred as described by Palmer. These factors combine to make Palmer's narrative a significant contribution to our knowledge of the Army's Cheyenne campaign in 1878.

For Palmer, the years immediately following the Dull Knife chase were mild by comparison. He remained assigned to Fort Wallace until October, 1880, when his unit was sent to the arid flatlands of central Texas where it undertook patrolling details and roadbuilding exercises. Palmer was quartered at Forts Concho and Stockton until 1883. Two years later he won promotion to captain while still in Texas, and eventually he saw service in Utah and Washington state. During the Spanish-American War Palmer led troops in the campaign of Santiago de Cuba and participated in the assault on San Juan Hill. Weary and ill from the accrued effects of thirty-seven years active duty on the plains and in the tropics, Major

George H. Palmer retired from the army on February 27, 1899. He died little more than two years later.

NOTES

¹Department of the Missouri, one of four administrative subdivisions within the Military Division of the Missouri, embraced the states of Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, and Colorado, as well as New Mexico Territory, Indian Territory, and Forts Bliss and Elhijo, Texas. *Report of the Secretary of War, 1878* (Washington, 1879), p. 57.

²Fort Wallace (1865-1882) was named for Brigadier General William H. L. Wallace, killed at the Battle of Shiloh in 1862. A concise history of the post appears in Mrs. Frank Montgomery, "Fort Wallace and Its Relation to the Frontier," *Kansas State Historical Collections*, XVII (1925-1928), pp. 189-283. Only Companies F and G of the Sixteenth Infantry were sent to Fort Wallace in June, 1877, the remainder of the regiment being assigned to other locations within the Department of the Missouri. *Report of the Secretary of War, 1877*, pp. 16, 17, 40-97.

³The Northern Cheyennes were removed to the Indian Territory following the Sioux-Cheyenne War of 1876-77 on the northern plains. On August 8, 1877, nearly a thousand Indians, including many children, arrived under military guard at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency near Fort Reno, Indian Territory. *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians within the Military Division of the Missouri, from 1868 to 1882* (Washington, 1882), p. 75.

⁴Captivity in the Indian Territory in 1877 and 1878 had bred dissatisfaction among many of the Northern Cheyennes. Disease had taken a toll in lives and the seeming indifference of the government in matters of rations, medical supplies, and proper subsistence brought despair to the Indians. Determined to return to their Montana homeland, Dull Knife, Little Wolf, and other leaders took flight from their camp near Fort Reno during the night of September 9, 1878, with nearly 90 men, 120 women, and about 140 children. For discussion of the Cheyennes' motives, see James W. Covington, "Causes of the Dull Knife Raid, 1878," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, XXVI (Spring, 1948), pp. 13-22. See also, Dennis Collins, *The Indians' Last Stand, or the Dull Knife Raid* (Girard, Kansas: Press of the Appeal to Reason, 1913), pp. 231-61; Ramon Powers, "Why the Northern Cheyennes Left Indian Territory in 1878: A Cultural Analysis," *Kansas Quarterly*, III (Fall, 1971), pp. 72-81; and Ramon Powers, "The Northern Cheyenne Trek Through Western Kansas in 1878: Frontiersmen, Indians and Cultural Conflict," *The Trail Guide of the Kansas City Post, the Westerner*, XVII (September, 1972).

⁵Initial army strategy called for the deployment of troops from the Kansas forts along the Kansas Pacific Railroad to intercept the Indians should they somehow elude soldiers from the Indian Territory. Nearly 250 men, detachments of the Third, Sixteenth, and Twenty-third infantry regiments from Fort Hays, Riley, Wallace, and Leavenworth, took up station along the Kansas Pacific. Montgomery, "Fort Wallace," p. 272. For the disposition of other military forces, see *Record of Engagements*, p. 79. The pursuit from the Indian Territory to the east proceeds to be in Robert C. Carriger, *Fert Supply, Indian Territory* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), pp. 120-25.

⁶The command, under Captain William C. Wedemeyer, numbered thirty mounted infantrymen. Telegram, Lieutenant Colonel J. A. Van Voast to the Assistant Adjutant General at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, September 15, 1878. Fort Wallace, Kansas, Letters Sent, Records of the War Department, Vol. 65, National Archives (Hereafter cited as Fort Wallace, Letters Sent.)

⁷Contrary to Palmer's statement, the commanding officer at Fort Wallace wired his superiors at Fort Leavenworth: "Wagons were found as left by emigrants. It is believed that Indians made their appearance and that emigrants with horses, fled to Sheridan." Van Voast to Assistant Adjutant General, September 14, 1878. *Ibid.*

⁸Dallas had left Fort Wallace the previous day on a report that some of the Indians were encamped a few miles southeast of Copher Siding. Van Voast to Assistant Adjutant General, September 14, 1878. *Ibid.*

⁹Joseph Rendlebrock, a Prussian immigrant, served as an enlisted man with the Mounted Rifles (later the First Cavalry) from 1851 to 1862, when he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Fourth Cavalry. Promoted to first lieutenant in December, 1863, he won brevets of first lieutenant, captain, and major during the war for distinguished service at Franklin and McMinnville, Tennessee, and at Selma, Alabama, respectively. From August, 1866, to August, 1867, Rendlebrock was regimental quartermaster, and was advanced to captain during the latter month. Despite his record, in March, 1872, a general court found him guilty of poor conduct and neglectful duty in the Cheyenne campaign and recommended his dismissal from the service. Rendlebrock was

finally allowed to retire, which he did in July, 1879. He died March 13, 1889. Francis B. Heitman (comp.), *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army from 1789 to 1900*, 2 vols (Washington, 1903), I, 621.

¹⁷This engagement occurred near Turkey Springs, Indian Territory, following an unsuccessful effort to persuade the Northern Cheyennes to return to Fort Reno. Involved were Companies G and H, Fourth Cavalry, under Captain Rendelbrock. Casualties for the army numbered three dead, including an Arapaho scout, and three wounded. See Peter M. Wright, "The Pursuit of Dull Knife from Fort Reno," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, XI.VI (Summer, 1968), pp. 147-48. George Bird Grinnell stated that five Cheyennes were wounded, but that none were killed. *The Fighting Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), p. 405. At least one of the soldiers was killed the next day, September 14. George W. Webb (comp.), *Chronological List of Engagements Between the Regular Army of the United States and Various Tribes of Hostile Indians which Occurred During the Years 1790 to 1898*, Inclusive (St. Joseph: Wang Printing and Publishing Company, 1939), p. 54.

¹⁸Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe

¹⁹The cattlemen were nevertheless considered vital sources of information regarding the whereabouts of the Cheyennes. Van Voast wired Fort Leavenworth: "I have sent word to all the cattlemen whom I can reach to keep a sharp lookout for Indians, and to inform me at once if any signs of their presence are discovered." Van Voast to Assistant Adjutant General, September 12, 1878. Fort Wallace, Letters Sent.

²⁰This fight took place along the Punished Woman's Fork of the Smoky Hill River. The Indians had laid a trap for the troops which failed, with the soldiers gaining the initiative. After the shooting of Lewis, however, the army's offensive collapsed and the Cheyennes withdrew under cover of darkness, continuing their advance northward. Involved were detachments of Companies D, F, and G, Ninth Infantry, and detachments of Companies B, F, G, H, and I, Fourth Cavalry. *Record of Engagements*, p. 80. Webb, *Chronological List*, p. 84. Palmer is mistaken regarding the date of Lewis's death: "He died [on September 25,] about twenty-seven hours after the reception of the injury, having been transported to within fifteen miles of Fort Wallace, Kan., and about thirty miles from the place where he was wounded." *Report of the Secretary of War, 1879* (Washington, 1880), p. 408.

²¹Colonel Davis's "direction of affairs" entailed undoing the plan of operation already undertaken by Lieutenant Colonel Van Voast. Van Voast had prepared a train of railroad cars loaded with supplies and ready to go east or west at a moment's notice. On his arrival, Davis ordered the train unloaded, desiring to work south and east of Fort Wallace in the direction of Punished Woman's Fork, Montgomery, "Fort Wallace," p. 274. Davis wired his superiors on September 28 from Fort Wallace: "I now know where the Indians are and can begin to operate intelligently." *Dodge City* (Kansas Times), October 5, 1878.

²²Kansas Pacific Railroad

²³Davis evidently committed a tactical error in ordering the withdrawal of troops from Carlyle Station less than twenty-four hours before the Cheyennes crossed the railroad at that point. "It was not anticipated that the Indians would cross . . . as far east as Carlyle station, which is even east of Monument Station . . . and as a consequence there were no troops at that place to intercept them." *Dodge City Times*, October 5, 1878.

²⁴It is believed that the messenger was A.J. Dodge, for several years a trader and hide-buyer in the Fort Wallace area. Dodge was at one time post sutler at Fort Wallace and also served as deputy sheriff of Ellis County, Kansas. Montgomery, "Fort Wallace," pp. 251, 253; Nebraska Historian L. G. DeLay to the editors, May 12, 1972.

²⁵Mueck's unit was the only cavalry employed in the Kansas phase of the pursuit. On October 4, Brigadier General John Pope, commanding the Department of the Missouri, wrote Major General Philip H. Sheridan, Division of the Missouri commander, that "the absence of cavalry in the department is severely felt, and may make it unpracticable to intercept these Indians." *Report of the Secretary of War, 1878*, p. 40.

²⁶A good account of Cheyenne depredations against the Kansas settlers appears in "The Great Cheyenne Chase, A Truthful Account by a Dragoon Who Participated in It." Copy on file at the Oberlin Museum, Oberlin, Kansas. Dated at Fort Reno, Indian Territory, December 24, 1878, the paper was written by an anonymous trooper of either Company G or H of the Fourth Cavalry. Despite the author's contention that his was the "only truthful account ever published," it remains uncertain where the version ever reached print; the publication has not been identified. See also the report of Captain Wedemeyer, October 26, 1878, copy in folder 2, box 120, Walter S. Campbell Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Library, Norman, Oklahoma.

²⁷Big Timber was a profuse growth of cottonwood trees at a point on the Republican River thirty-five miles

below the Arickaree Fork. The trees stretched along either side of the stream for about fourteen miles, offering a sharp contrast with the otherwise barren terrain in that locale. According to one who traversed the area in the 1860s, "there were several springs coming in at this place, and on the edge and through the timbers were dense growths of grass." Eugene F. Ware, *The Indian War of 1864* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1960), p. 341.

²¹Camp Robinson was located in northwestern Nebraska close to the Dakota line. Named in memory of First Lieutenant Levi H. Robinson of the Fourteenth Infantry who was killed by Indians in Wyoming, the post was built in March, 1874, to stand guard over Sioux Indians roaming the nearby Black Hills region. The Red Cloud Indian Agency was close by. Robert W. Frazier, *Forts of the West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 90.

Actually, the Indians had split into two groups. One under Dull Knife engaged the troops in battle in the Nebraska sandhills, but was forced to surrender to confinement at Camp Robinson. In January, 1879, these Indians staged an outbreak which cost them many lives. After that these Cheyennes succumbed to military power and were permitted to reside with the Teton Sioux at Red Cloud Agency. The other band, led by Little Wolf, succeeded in reaching the Tongue River homeland in Montana where eventually the government allowed the Indians to remain. Grinnell, *Fighting Cheyennes*, pp. 409-27; Peter J. Powell, *Sweet Medicine: The Continuing Role of the Sacred Arrows, the Sun Dance, and the Sacred Buffalo Hat in Northern Cheyenne History*, 2 vols. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), I, 215-77. See also, John Stancs In Timber and Margot Liberty, *Cheyenne Memories* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 234-39.

²²This is an understatement. The Cheyennes' plan of escape required that they secure fresh remounts in order to keep moving north with the utmost speed. To that end they managed to obtain many new horses, including more than three hundred head from one ranch alone. Mason and Lovel Ranch to George T. Anthony, December 12, 1878, in George T. Anthony Papers, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

²³Palmer seemingly blamed both Captain Maulek and Lieutenant Gardner for negligence in not sending immediate word to Fort Wallace of the fight on September 27, thereby frustrating army efforts to block the movement north of the Cheyennes. Whether this opinion was widely shared is unknown, though Palmer's repeated allusions to the matter probably provide a good index to the tenor of thinking among junior officers at the time.

²⁴Lieutenant Palmer's reference to Standing Elk is erroneous, for that chief spoke in favor of removal in 1877 and accompanied the Cheyennes to the Indian Territory in that year. The group to which Palmer refers consisted of a band of 182 Northern Cheyenne under Little Chief from Fort Keogh, Montana. Enroute under military escort to Fort Reno at the time of the Dull Knife raid, they had been detained at Sidney Barracks, Nebraska, for fear they might attempt a union with Dull Knife group. These Indians reached the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency near Fort Reno on December 9, 1878. Powell, *Sweet Medicine*, I, 279.

²⁵While Palmer gives no reason for these frequent scouts in 1879, constantly circulating rumors of more Indian troubles, together with fears among settlers generated by the recent Cheyenne raid, necessitated the extreme vigilance by troops stationed at the western Kansas posts. See, for example, Bavis John Fletcher, *Up the Trail in '79*. Ed. by Wayne Gard (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), pp. 50-51, and Careiker, *Fort Supply*, pp. 131-33.

²⁶A major freight and stage route across the central plains after the Civil War, the Smoky Hill Road ran through western Kansas carrying traffic from the Missouri River towns to Denver, about 600 miles distant. Numerous stations and ranches bordered its course. Oscar O. Winter, *The Transportation Frontier, 1865-1890* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), pp. 3-4.