

"A NECESSARY EVIL. . ." THE POST
SUTLER AT FORT LARNED,
AND FORT DODGE,
KANSAS

By

STACY WEBB REAVES

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Thesis Approved:

Joseph A. Stout, Jr.

Thesis Advisor

William S. Boyers

Chyck P. Hill

Wayne B. Powell

Dean of the Graduate College

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INTRODUCTION

If a person had asked a soldier of the nineteenth century where he bought his cotton undershirt or his apple, most likely he would reply that he purchased these items from the post sutler. The sutler, later replaced by the Post Exchange system, was a civilian businessman, who operated a general supply store on post property. Historians have written very little about these entrepreneurs, and therefore their impact upon soldiers and posts is not well known. Originally, sutlers were merely camp followers who trailed along with armies selling the troops provisions, liquor, and other items that the military did not supply. Sutlers evolved from the camp-followers attached to armies since the days of Alexander the Great and Charlemagne. By the sixteenth century, armies absorbed the sutler's services into their administrative structure. In 1717, the British were the first officially to recognize the sutler as an important part of the military. Afterward, the British army regulated hours of trade, set prices, and prohibited soldiers and officers from functioning as sutlers. In 1821, the United States army gave these men legal status and permitted them to operate on military property. As sutlers became better organized, they sold supplies to the army quartermaster at each post. The men who

received a three-year appointment at a specific post to operate as a sutler made considerable profit, but also provided a beneficial service to the army, to the posts, and to nearby towns.¹

Until the Civil War began in 1861, sutlers enjoyed good reputations among the soldiers and the commanding officers. During the war, unscrupulous sutlers became attached to regular and volunteer army troops. Often these civilians seized the opportunity to make a profit by taking advantage of the army's difficulty in supplying large numbers of men. In the opinion of the troops, sutlers frequently overcharged them and provided poor quality merchandise. In 1866, due to the large number of complaints during the war, the army abolished the position of post sutler. After the Civil War, Indian depredations continued in the West and the military renewed its constabulary role on the frontier. With as many as 40,000 troops now stationed at isolated frontier posts, and the increases in overland traffic, the army received requests from post commanders and emigrants to reinstate the post sutler. In 1867, under strict guidelines and restrictions, the army again allowed the post sutlers to operate on military property.²

Historians have disagreed about the importance of the post sutler. James McCraffrey in his Civil War Times Illustrated article, "A Short History of the Civil War

Sutler: the Rough and Readies of the Retail Trade," argued that the sutler filled a need, but that most were corrupt and only out to make a profit.³ McCraffrey, although he acknowledged the importance of the sutler, limited his study only to sutlers assigned to eastern combat troops during the Civil War. Donald Spear presented a similar argument in his Civil War History article "The Sutler in the Union Army." Spear believed that these men provided essential services and often performed generous and heroic acts, but he stated that they were selfish and interested in making money.⁴ Again, Spear examined only sutlers assigned to eastern regular and volunteer troops during the Civil War. Another historian who examined the role of the sutler was Francis A. Lord in his Civil War Sutlers and their Wares. He argued that sutlers, while taking risks themselves, provided important services to the troops. Lord admitted, however, that occasionally the lure of money led some sutlers to charge high prices and to sell poor quality merchandise.⁵

Historian David Delo had a more positive view of sutlers and disagreed with McCraffrey, Lord, and Spear. In Peddlers and Post Traders: The Army Sutler on the Frontier, Delo argued that post sutlers provided a useful service to the army, and that post Civil War sutlers secured greater profits and were better established than those who operated before or during the war. He also argued that problems with

sutlers during the war, and minor problems afterwards, created a stereo-typed image that was inaccurate and too critical.⁶ Darlis A. Miller in her 1992 Journal of the West article "The Perils of a Post Sutler: William H. Moore at Fort Union, New Mexico, 1859-1870," and Merrill Mattes's article "The Sutler Store at Fort Laramie," in the Annals of Wyoming, both argued that sutlers took great risks for profit and often contributed to the region's economy and development.⁷

In his book Entrepreneurs of the Old West, which did not deal with post sutlers specifically, David Dary argued that businessmen went West seeking profit and better opportunities. By doing this they linked East and West. He also argued that their success created a way of thinking that stressed success through individual initiative and enterprise.⁸ This study will illustrate that the initiative and enterprise of the sutlers at Fort Larned and Fort Dodge created successful businesses on the military posts, and helped developed thriving communities on the plains of Western Kansas.

The activities of post sutlers at the western Kansas posts of Fort Dodge and Fort Larned between 1859 and 1882 demonstrate how the sutlers operated, at least in these regions, how they affected the lives of the troops and officers, and how they contributed to the development of the

general frontier regions where they conducted business. Examining the activities of the post sutler at Fort Larned, established in 1859, and Fort Dodge, established after the Civil War in 1865, offers an opportunity to determine how post sutlers operated specifically on the Kansas frontier. Fort Dodge was in operation longer than Fort Larned, and thus examining that post shows the long-term importance of the sutler to these frontier posts.

This study will attempt to ascertain how the sutlers at Fort Larned and Fort Dodge got their positions, how they operated, and their impact at and near these two posts between 1859 and 1882. It will show that post sutlers operating at western military posts were honest and fair. Officers and enlisted men serving in the East during the Civil War had complained vehemently about the poor quality merchandise the sutler sold. One soldier described the cigars these men sold as "bunch-grass filled, wrapped in genuine Havana onion leaves." Soldiers in the East complained that the food was old and spoiled. Many also complained that the food caused illness. These types of complaints were not found among the letters written of soldiers stationed at Fort Dodge and Fort Larned. Additionally, the post surgeon at these posts did not report any illness due to poor food purchased from the sutler.⁹

The quality of food was not the only measure of honesty. The price charged for goods also demonstrated the honesty of the sutlers in the West during and after the Civil War. Although the sutlers in the East also were regulated, especially during the war, the officers failed to regulate sutler profits. As a result, many of the sutlers in the East during the war and afterwards charged exorbitant prices for goods and made considerable profit at the expense of the troops. Soldiers complained that sutlers made two to three hundred percent profit selling poor quality merchandise. Unlike their counterparts in the East, post commanders at western posts more closely regulated sutlers. The Council of Administration, with the post commander's help, carefully regulated sutler merchandise and profit. The sutler at Fort Larned could expect to earn between thirty and 150 percent profit. Although these profits seemed high, the prices had to enable the sutler to cover his operating expenses. These expenses included purchasing goods, freighting them to the post, and paying store clerks who earned between forty and sixty dollars per month. A list of merchandise the sutler provided,, showing cost to the sutler and the prices the Council of Administration set, illustrated that these men were not guilty of price gouging (see appendix p. 107). In the letters of enlisted men, few complained of the sutler's prices or quality of goods. They

apparently did not find the sutler's prices to be unreasonable.¹⁰

Contemporaries charged sutlers with creating disorderly conduct through the unrestricted sale of alcohol. This research has shown that the restrictions on alcohol varied from commander to commander, and the compliance of the sutler to post regulations depended on the sutler. The sale of liquor was the most common source of conflict between post commanders and sutlers. Although the army regulated sutler activities and believed that sutlers provided a necessary service, the army often believed that alcohol sales created problems. Some sutlers closely followed the orders, others ignored it and faced the possibility of losing permission to sell alcohol.

It is clear from this study of sutlers, specifically on the Kansas frontier, that sutlers had a positive influence on army fort operations. These men were not selfish entrepreneurs, but were like many other shrewd businessmen who traveled West in search of better business opportunities, and in the process made life more pleasant for frontier soldiers, and helped build towns near the posts.

NOTES

¹ David Micheal Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders: The Army Sutler on the Frontier (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1992), 2, 63.

² Joseph G. Dawson III, The Late 19th Century U.S. Army, 1865-1898 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1990), 224.

³ James McCraffrey, "A Short History of the Civil War Sutler: the Rough and Readies of the Retail Trade," Civil War Times Illustrated 26(June 1985): 36-39.

⁴ Donald Spear, "The Sutler in the Union Army," Civil War History 16 (June 1970): 121-138.

⁵ Francis A. Lord, Civil War Sutlers and their Wares (New York: Thomas Yoself, 1969):17-18.

⁶ Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders, 207-210.

⁷ Darlis A. Miller, "The Perils of a Post Trader: William H. Moore at Fort Union, New Mexico, 1859-1870," Journal of the West 32 (April 1993): 138; Merrill Mattes, "The Sutler Store at Fort Laramie," Annals of Wyoming 18 (July 1946): 92-133.

⁸ David Dary, Entrepreneurs of the Old West (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 323-325; Robert V. Hines, Community on the American Frontier: Separate but Not Alone (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 255; Hines argues that in frontier communities individualism stood above the community, but the weak economic conditions of the frontier weakened the effects of competition. See also Paula M. Nelson, After the West Was Won: Homesteaders and Town-builders in West South Dakota, 1900-1917 (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1986), xiv; Paula Nelson in her study agrees somewhat with David Dary. Those who went westward hoped to create flourishing towns through hard work and to gain success. She argues that the harsh conditions of the West made the people re-evaluate their idea of success. Success meant material and spiritual wealth.

⁹ Spear, "The Sutler in the Union Army," 125-126.

¹⁰ Spear, "The Sutler in the Union Army," 129-130; Post Council of Administration, List of Post Sutler Prices, 24 October 1863. Fort Larned Miscellaneous Records, Fort

Larned National Historic Site, Larned, Kansas (Hereafter cited as FOLMR); Glenn H. Cederberg, letter to B. William Henry Jr., 18 December 1978. Nels Cederberg File, Fort Larned National Historic Site, Larned, Kansas (Hereafter cited as NCF); James William Ladd, diary, 1 January to 31 December 1865. J.W. Ladd File, Fort Larned National Historic Site, Larned, Kansas (Hereafter cited as JWF).

CHAPTER ONE

THE SUTLER IN THE ARMY

Stories of conflict over land fill American history books. The best known is the struggle between Native Americans and whites. As European civilization arrived on the shores of the New World and expanded westward, Native Americans had to retreat or to fight for their homeland. Early in the history of the United States, government policy toward Native Americans was to remove them from the path of settlement or exterminate them, if necessary. In 1830, this policy acquired the force of the law when the United States Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. It gave the president the power to sign removal treaties with the Native Americans and specifically to have the eastern tribes moved from the East to land west of the thirty-ninth parallel, an unsettled area considered by most newcomers unfit for agricultural purposes.¹

By 1850, the United States had acquired through treaties with many plains tribes, large parcels of land west of the ninety-fifth parallel. Most United States citizens believed that it was part of their destiny to inhabit the land from coast to coast, and thus they eagerly settled in the new lands. The Homestead Act of 1862, and the construction of railroads after the Civil War, further

encouraged emigrants to move west and to take up new land. Historian Robert Utley has estimated that between 1860 and 1870 the white population in the trans-Mississippi West increased by one million, and by 1880 it had increased another two and a half million. Because of settlement in the trans-Mississippi West, Congress passed an act in 1851 that restricted Native American tribes to designated areas.² The tribes already viewed the increase in white population as a threat to their families and homes. To defend this and their honor, the Native Americans frequently attacked settlers and their communities. As this fighting became more widespread, the government called upon the United States army to protect the frontier, act as mediators between the Native Americans and the whites, and enforce treaty agreements.³ Especially, after the Civil War, more people moved into Indian country, causing the Natives to resist more vigorously. Most of the soldiers in the post-Civil War army, except for those on duty in Southern states during Reconstruction, were assigned the task of fighting the Native Americans.

Volunteers made up the regular army serving in the West after the Civil War. These army recruits came from several backgrounds and enlisted for various reasons. Many had been too young to serve in the Civil War, although veterans abounded in all units. The age for first enlistment was

twenty-one, and the lure of fighting Indians enticed many young men looking for adventure, excitement, and the opportunity to serve their country. Others enlisted to escape the monotony of farming or unhappy home conditions.⁴ Recruiting depots, usually located in large cities, often relied upon the urban poor and immigrants to fulfill enlistment quotas. Between 1865 and 1875 approximately one-half of all recruits were foreign-born. The army not only attracted the urban poor, the adventurous, and young farm boys, but it also provided employment for many petty criminals and shady characters.⁵

Frequently, recruits found army life disappointing and not at all what they had expected. The Adjutant General of the army calculated in 1891 that this disenchantment led to approximately one-third of the Indian-fighting army deserting between 1867 and 1891.⁶ Part of the desertion probably came because of living conditions. In 1874, General William T. Sherman wrote that most posts were collections of log or adobe huts.⁷ Isadore Douglas, the wife of commanding officer Henry Douglas at Fort Dodge, Kansas, described her quarters as being "three feet below the ground and four above. The floor is mud, or rather we have no floors at all."⁸ Recruits from the East no doubt found the sight of their new home a shock and a disappointment.

Army living conditions were not the only difficulty soldiers faced. Upon arriving at their assigned post, they found their personal space limited to a shared bunk with a hay-filled mattress, and a small wooden foot locker.⁹ Although the government issued the soldiers their uniforms, most found these to be impractical. They were poor quality surplus equipment. For example, soldiers received a blue wool sack coat, two pairs of blue wool trousers, two pairs of gray or dark blue flannel shirts, a couple of suits of long underwear, a wool overcoat, boots or brogans, and a hat. This clothing was frequently too warm for the western plains environment.¹⁰

The romantic image of the Indian fighting army soon proved to be a myth. Most enlisted men did mundane manual jobs, instead of fighting. Work included policing the stables, kitchen detail, room orderly, and hauling water, fuel or hay. The men also had to build roads, erect buildings, shingle roofs, and do other maintenance work. Whatever the task, most men believed that the military exploited them as cheap labor.¹¹

Army food also contributed to discontent. A soldier's diet was as monotonous as his daily routine. The menu consisted of salt pork, fried mush, or a thin stew and coffee for breakfast, and dry bread, and coffee occasionally with a treat of three dried prunes for dinner. The

company's rations did not include vegetables and the army encouraged the men to maintain post gardens. Due to the harsh weather conditions of the frontier, these gardens generally failed. All post officers and men could add to their diets through purchases made at the sutler's store (a private business operating on the post) or the commissary. The post commissary usually had nothing more than what the post cooks provided. The post sutler, however, stocked a wide variety of goods. With disease being the main cause of death in the frontier army, the army struggled to provide the troops with fresh fruits and vegetables containing needed vitamins. Although expensive, the sutler provided foods that added balance, variety, and needed nutrients to the men's diets. Often the sutler store served as the only source for these foods.¹²

Privates received thirteen dollars a month and non-commissioned officers between fifty and seventy-five dollars a month. Every soldier gave one dollar from his pay towards retirement, and another fifty cents to the laundress. Before the soldier received his pay, the paymaster also deducted what the soldier owed the quartermaster and the post sutler. Men usually owed the sutler for the purchases of better food and usable clothing. Often after paying debts, many soldiers had little spending money.¹³

Although soldiers believed that sutlers charged exorbitant prices, they considered them a necessity. Sutlers provided the men with little everyday necessities such as towels, soap, and extra buttons that the army otherwise did not provide. Because of the necessary service they provided, the status of the sutler in the American armies changed during the nineteenth century. In the United States, between 1763 and 1820, the sutler resembled his sixteenth-century European counterpart. In 1821, the United States army officially recognized the post sutler, and integrated him into the military system. Until 1830, the army attached the sutler to a regiment, but because of the inconvenience of moving his wares, the army began assigning sutlers to specific posts.¹⁴ By 1857, army regulations stipulated that nominations for post sutler must come from the post council, and then the Secretary of War had to accept or reject the nomination. This method of appointment continued through the Civil War, but the war created problems and brought changes with the sutler system. The large numbers of troops in the field attracted many unscrupulous sutlers who took advantage of the troops and the military. The conduct of these men caused Congress to abolish the position of post sutler, leaving the task of supplying the troops to the Subsistence Department. With the post sutlers gone, commanding officers at many posts,

civilian travelers, and freighter wagon operators requested the type of merchandise the sutler had usually sold.¹⁵

In July 1867, as a consequence of the need for merchandise of the kind the post sutler traditionally had sold, Kansas Senator Samuel Pomeroy introduced a bill into the Senate that authorized the Commanding General of the army to permit trade establishments at military posts located between the one hundredth meridian and the eastern border of California. On May 30, 1867, after congressional approval, General Ulysses S. Grant issued an order allowing the establishment of stores, selling items sutlers had originally provided, to operate on military posts. Abandoning the name post sutler, the army renamed these businessmen post traders. Post traders until 1889. That year, as a result of problems with the system, the army terminated this system and inaugurated the canteen system.¹⁶

Post sutlers or traders operated throughout the western frontier during the mid-nineteenth century. Two of the posts hosting sutlers during this period were Fort Larned and Fort Dodge, both on the Kansas frontier. The army established Fort Larned during 1859-1860. Continued Indian attacks upon wagon trains on the Santa Fe Trail had prompted William Bent, an agent for the upper Arkansas Indians, to appeal to the government to establish military posts for the protection of travelers.¹⁷ In September 1859, the army sent

Lieutenant David Bell and a detachment of the First Cavalry from Fort Riley, Kansas to establish a post on the banks of the Pawnee Creek Fork in a position to defend the Santa Fe Trail. There, Bell and his men constructed crude shelters, approximately two hundred and eighty miles southwest of Fort Leavenworth.¹⁸ One month later, Captain George N. Steuart and members of company K of the First Cavalry relieved Bell and his men. Bell returned to Fort Riley. Steuart called the new post "Camp on the Pawnee Fork,"¹⁹ and he and his troopers patrolled the section of the Santa Fe Trail in his region. Seven months after the establishment of Steuart's camp, Major Henry Wessells, with companies K and G of the Second Infantry, arrived with orders to construct a permanent post. For security reasons, Wessells moved the post a few hundred yards into the bend of Pawnee Creek. Wessell's men completed the new fort in May 1860, and he requested that the army name the post Fort Larned, in honor of Colonel Benjamin F. Larned, then army paymaster general.²⁰ Before long, the new fort consisted of two sets of company quarters, a hospital, guardhouse, laundress quarters and a three room picket building with blacksmith, carpenter, and saddler shops.²¹

Until the outbreak of the Civil War, the troops at Fort Larned escorted mail wagons and stagecoaches along the Santa Fe Trail. Once the Civil War began, the army sent regular

troops to fight the war in the East, and replaced them at western posts with state volunteer units. During this period the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, and Plains Apache tribes renewed their attacks on Santa Fe Trail traffic.²²

Fort Larned remained during the Civil War, although understaffed, and the office of Indian Affairs also named the fort a distribution center for annuities to the Cheyenne and Arapaho. In 1863, it became the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache agency.²³ Still, peace between the settlers and the plains Indians did not last long. By 1864, large numbers of people had begun moving onto the plains and traveling on the trails through Indian lands, creating increased hostilities between whites and Native Americans. During the summer of 1864, the government considered the Indian attacks so serious that it dispatched Major General Samuel L. Curtis, Department Commander at Fort Leavenworth, and a battalion of volunteers, to Fort Larned to stop these attacks.²⁴ Curtis forced the Native Americans away from the Santa Fe Trail, and then approximately thirty miles east of Fort Larned established Fort Zarah, a post that remained in operation only a few years. Once Curtis left the area, the Native Americans again attacked travelers in the region. The government then ordered the Native Americans to report to military posts near their camps. Those Indians who did not obey, the military considered as hostile. As a result, in

the fall of 1864, the army went on the offensive against the tribes.²⁵

These campaigns led to treaties signed with the Native American raiders, but unfortunately these did not end the difficulties between settlers and Native Americans. In 1866, General Grant remarked in a letter to the Secretary of War that army posts on the plains were inadequate to protect settlers and travelers. Grant suggested that Fort Larned be rebuilt and garrisoned with more troops.²⁶ Thus, between 1866 and 1868, soldiers and civilians constructed new post buildings. Using sandstone from a local quarry three miles east of the post, workers built a new barracks, officer's quarters, quartermaster building, commissary department, and a shop building.²⁷ The army attempted to keep the post properly garrisoned for the next few years. By 1872 the newly reconstructed fort had helped end Native American depredations in the immediate area. As it was no longer needed, the army after 1878 gradually deactivated the post. By 1884, the government had closed the fort and sold the buildings and land.²⁸

White settlement slowly pushed tribes westward, and decreased the need for Fort Larned. Consequently, it became necessary for the army to consider establishing a new post along the Santa Fe Trail, but further west. Accordingly, in 1865 the army established a camp that became Fort Dodge.²⁹

As in the instance of Fort Larned, Fort Dodge's responsibility was to help end Native American depredations, but further west. Local tribes traveled and camped near the fort. Although no battles or major peace negotiations took place at the post, it played an important role in some army campaigns against the Native Americans.

By 1871, buffalo hunting on the plains of Kansas became increasingly profitable with large numbers of hunters entering the area. Three years later, the hunters had depleted the supply of buffalo in Kansas, and began heading south into Indian Territory. The depletion of buffalo herds in Kansas, and the presence of large numbers of hunters, created more hostilities during the summer of 1874. Again, the army prepared for a campaign against the Native Americans. Fort Dodge served as the assembly point for five divisions, totaling approximately three thousand men.³⁰

After 1874, hostilities in Kansas between whites and Indians slowly ended. The primary duty of soldiers at Fort Dodge became scouting and patrolling along the Arkansas River, and resolving disputes between civilians. By 1878, cattlemen drove approximately one hundred thousand head of cattle to Dodge annually. Often, open warfare erupted between area ranchers, ranch hands, and drovers. The men at Fort Dodge occasionally had to deal with these problems until law enforcement in early Dodge City became

established.³¹ By 1882 with no longer any problems with Native Americans, and the arrival of Dodge City law enforcement, the army decided to close Fort Dodge. The army formally abandoned the post in 1882.³²

Both Fort Larned and Fort Dodge helped end the struggle for land between Native Americans and settlers in western Kansas. Although neither fort became involved in a large scale battle or campaign, they contributed to the army's efforts to control Native American hostilities on the great plains. The soldiers who lived at each post endured the primitive conditions and lifestyles offered by the United States frontier army. The post sutler tried to make the lives of these troopers and their families more comfortable by providing needed fruits, vegetables, and other goods. The services of the post sutler proved to be invaluable to those living on the isolated frontier.

NOTES

¹ John M. Carroll and Colin F. Baxter, ed., The American Military Tradition From Colonial Times to the Present (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc, 1993) 97-98.

² Carroll, American Military Tradition 96, 98; Robert M. Utley, Frontier Regulars: the United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891 (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, 1973) 2.

³ Utley, Frontier Regulars 6-7; Carroll, American Military Tradition, 96.

⁴ Don Rickey, Jr. Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963) 17, 20-23; S. E. Whitman, The Troopers: An informal History of the Plains Cavalry, 1865-1890 (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1962) 83.

⁵ Utley, Frontier Regulars 22-23; Rickey, Forty Miles a Day 18, 20.

⁶ Utley, Frontier Regulars 23.

⁷ Utley, Frontier Regulars 82.

⁸ Isadore Douglas, letter to her mother, 25 December 1866. Lola Crum Collection, Kansas Cultural Heritage and Arts Center, Dodge City, KS (Hereafter cited as LCC).

⁹ Utley, Frontier Regulars 80; Rickey, Forty Miles a Day 40.

¹⁰ Douglas C. McChristian, The U.S. Army in the West, 1870-188: Uniforms, Weapons and Equipment (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1995) 3-4; Rickey, Forty Miles a Day 34-35.

¹¹ Rickey, Forty Miles a Day 90-94; Utley, Frontier Regulars 83; Whitman, The Troopers 79.

¹² Rickey, Forty Miles a Day 39-40, 97; Utley, Frontier Regulars 86; Whitman, The Troopers 147.

¹³ Utley, Frontier Regulars 22-24; Whitman, The Troopers 80; Rickey, Forty Miles a Day 126.

- ¹⁴ Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders 2, 63.
- ¹⁵ Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders 8; Darlis A. Miller, "The Perils of a Post Sutler," 8.
- ¹⁶ Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders 147-148; Miller, "Perils of a Post Sutler," 17.
- ¹⁷ William Errol Unrau, "The History of Fort Larned, Kansas: Its Relation to the Santa Fe Trail and the Plains Indians" (M. A. Thesis, University of Wyoming, 1956) 12-13.
- ¹⁸ Timothy Ashley Zwink, "Fort Larned: Garrison on the Central Great Plains" (Ph.D. Diss, Oklahoma State University, 1980) 34, 79; Marvin H. Garfield, "The Military Post as a Factor in the Frontier Defense of Kansas, 1856 - 1869," Kansas Historical Quarterly 1 (November 1931): 50-62.
- ¹⁹ Zwink, "Fort Larned: Garrison on the Central Great Plains," 35.
- ²⁰ Unrau, "A History of Fort Larned," 16; Zwink, "Fort Larned: Garrison," 37.
- ²¹ Leo E. Oliva, Fort Larned on the Santa Fe Trail (Topeka, KS: Kansas State Historical Society, 1982) 11-12, 14; Zwink, "Fort Larned: Garrison," 36; Unrau, "A History of Fort Larned," 15.
- ²² Oliva, Fort Larned 13.
- ²³ Zwink, "Fort Larned: Garrison," 81; Oliva, Fort Larned 34.
- ²⁴ Zwink, "Fort Larned: Garrison," 84, 87; Oliva, Fort Larned 15.
- ²⁵ Zwink, "Fort Larned: Garrison," 87; Oliva, Fort Larned 17.
In 1864, Samuel Curtis established Fort Zarah east of Walnut creek near present-day Great Bend, Kansas. The post remained in operation until 1869.
- ²⁶ Unrau, "A History of Fort Larned," 38, 43.
- ²⁷ Unrau, "A History of Fort Larned," 43.

²⁸ Unrau, " A History of Fort Larned," 64, 89-90; Zwink, "Fort Larned: Garrison," 195-196.

²⁹ Strate, Sentinel on the Cimarron: The Frontier Experience of Fort Dodge, Kansas (Dodge City, KS: Kansas Cultural Heritage and Arts Center, 1970) 12; Garfield, "The Frontier Post as Defense," 54.

³⁰ Strate, Sentinel on the Cimarron 178-179, 185-186, 191-192.

³¹ Strate, Sentinel on the Cimarron 203 - 204.

³² Strate, Sentinel on the Cimarron 203 - 204, 232, 234.

CHAPTER TWO

SUTLERS AT FORT LARNED, KANSAS

In the period 1859-1882, when both Fort Larned and Fort Dodge operated along the Santa Fe Trail, the soldiers and officers at both posts supplemented their army food and other necessities by purchasing items from the post sutlers. The position of post sutler was a means to make considerable profit, and even to influence the life of citizens who lived in the nearby towns. Thus, the competition for the appointment of post sutler was always vigorous. Army regulations granted each military post one sutler who received his position as the result of a special appointment. Essentially, the sutler received a lease from the Secretary of War to operate on a given post for three years. The Secretary of War or the commanding officer of the post could suspend the sutler's privileges.¹

Sutlers did not enjoy total freedom from army regulations. The government supervised and regulated their activities. The post Council of Administration, composed of the high ranking officers at the post, specified the type and amount of merchandise the sutler stocked and set the price for each item. Army regulations stipulated that the prices be posted in a conspicuous place in the sutler's store and that the council examine for accuracy of his

weights and measures once every two months. The sutler also could not sell items to soldiers on credit that exceeded one-third of the soldier's monthly pay, without written permission from the commanding officer of the post. Army regulations did not allow sutlers to sublet or farm out their business and privileges.²

Until 1870, part of army regulations included a tax upon post sutlers. Most sutlers paid ten to fifteen cents per month for every officer and enlisted person at the post or in the regiment. At the post's council of administration's bi-monthly meeting, the council determined the average number of persons at the post and the amount the sutler owed. The money paid went to the post fund for the soldier's education, the post library, and for entertainment.³

Although the army required sutlers to pay these fees and regulated their business, it provided these appointed merchants with certain privileges. One such privilege was the right to build a store upon the military reservation or to use buildings and property on the post. Sutlers were allowed to sit at the pay table and present their bills to the soldiers, whereupon the soldier and the sutlers agreed on the total. Then the sutler received this amount from the soldier's pay. Another privilege was the exclusive right to sell to the soldiers without civilian competition.

Regulations stipulated that every post could have one sutler, and that the commanding officer of the post was to protect the sutler's interests. In 1867, to encourage civilian settlement near military reservations, General Ulysses S. Grant modified the regulations to permit an unlimited number of sutlers at posts. It was the responsibility of the post commanding officer to determine the appropriate number of sutlers and to enforce regulations. With these modifications, General Grant also transferred the power to appoint sutlers to the commanding general of the army.⁴

Between 1861 and 1867, the government many times changed the rules governing post sutlers. In 1866, Congress abolished altogether the position of sutler. In the summer of 1867, Congress relented before the demands of civilians and commanding officers of frontier posts and reinstated the position. After re-establishment, the army again made changes in the regulations governing appointments and other functions. In 1867, it changed these merchants' titles from post sutler to post trader.* The number of appointed sutlers at a post was determined at the discretion of the post commanding officer. The new regulations no longer allowed post sutlers the privilege of holding a lien against a

* After Congress reinstated the trade system in 1867, they changed the name of post sutler to post trader. Some posts after 1867 had both a sutler and a post trader. Because this study covers the time

soldier's pay to collect money owed. He also could not sit at the pay table to collect debts. The army also eliminated the head tax for each soldier that the sutler had been required to pay, but continued to require the council of administration to regulate his prices and merchandise.⁵

In 1870, the government continued its changes of the post trading system. Secretary of War William W. Belknap believed that the current system of appointing post traders encouraged favoritism. On July 15, 1870, a new congressional law authorized the Secretary of War to appoint post sutlers. Upon their appointment, the Secretary of War provided each sutler a letter of appointment that identified him as a post sutler, and assigned him to a particular post. Sutlers still could not collect accounts forcibly. This same year, the Secretary of War stipulated that sutlers were under military control and protection, and therefore they had the exclusive privilege of conducting business on a military reservation. The actual protection of authorized sutlers depended upon the commanding officer of the post.⁶

The authority of the Secretary of War to make sutler appointments ended in 1876, as a consequence of the Belknap scandal. After the attempt to abolish permanently the sutler system, and its re-establishment in 1868, several entrepreneurs petitioned the Secretary of War's office for

period before and after the name change, post traders will be referred to as post sutlers, although this was not their official title.

appointments. Friends of Secretary Belknap took advantage of the situation and acted as middle men for the appointment seekers. In the process they took large sums of money for securing appointments. After the public learned of the scandal, and upon the resignation of William Belknap, the military returned the authority of appointing traders to the local post council of administrations.⁷

Competition for sutler appointments remained fierce. The post sutlers at Fort Larned obtained their appointments through connections with either military officers or other sutlers. Jesse Crane received the first sutler appointment at Fort Larned in 1859. Crane, a native of Pennsylvania, moved to Ogden, Kansas, with his parents in the spring of 1855. The young Crane found employment as a clerk at the first sutler store at Fort Riley. Through his contact and friendship with Fort Riley sutler Bob Wilson, Crane later secured an appointment as a sutler and formed a partnership with an Ogden local citizen named Theodore Weichselbaum. Four years later, Crane also formed a partnership with his clerk, James William Ladd, and opened the first sutler store at Fort Dodge.⁸

Crane's partner Theodore Weichselbaum also had a background in retail. Weichselbaum, the son of a doctor, was born in Furth, Bavaria, in 1834. His interest in business developed at an early age. At thirteen, he worked

as an apprentice to a merchant for four years and then as a traveling salesman for a general merchandise store in Amsterdam. In 1856, Weichselbaum moved to New York and took a job as a sales clerk in a wholesale jewelry store. Because the employees of the store were German speaking and Weichselbaum wished to learn English, ten months later he took a job working as a salesman for Springer and Fries, a wholesale clothing manufacturer in Connecticut. As part of Weichselbaum's job, Springer and Fries gave him merchandise and paid his travel expenses to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. After arriving at Ft. Leavenworth, Weichselbaum went to Kansas City and opened a mercantile store on main street. Ten months later he decided that business in Kansas City did not suit him, and thus he loaded three wagons and headed down the Santa Fe Trail. In December 1857, after three days of traveling, Weichselbaum arrived in Ogden, Kansas. There he put his merchandise in a log cabin and opened up a store. In 1859, he constructed a stone building for his mercantile and expanded his business interests to include the freighting of goods to military posts in Kansas, and later to forming partnerships with post sutlers at Fort Dodge, Fort Harker, Fort Wallace, and Camp Supply. Weichselbaum supplemented his income through government contract supplies.⁹

In the fall of 1860, Captain Nathaniel Lyon of Fort Riley hired Weichselbaum and a crew of ten men to cut hay for Fort Larned. The military paid Weichselbaum and his crew sixty-five dollars a day. In 1869, he sold his interests in all the stores. Later in 1871, he opened a brewery in Ogden and shipped beer to various posts.¹⁰

After Crane's appointment at Fort Larned in 1859, the two men began business under the name of Crane and Weichselbaum. Theodore Weichselbaum recalled that they "were there [at Fort Larned] six or eight months before the completion of the fort." Crane and Weichselbaum built the first store at the post in 1863. The two men spared no expense in constructing their store. Although the soldiers of the fort were living in crude dugouts and adobe buildings, Crane and Weichselbaum constructed southwest of the officer's quarters a large stone building measuring sixty by forty feet. The store had a room in the rear for living quarters and the front room, used for store display, had papered walls, pine counters, and painted display shelves. Crane took advantage of his construction opportunity to build additional buildings on the post. His enlarged business included the store, a frame mess house, and a personal residence he constructed of native stone. At his residence he built two stables, an ice house, carriage house, chicken house, and a smoke house. By the time the

cluster of buildings was completed, the value of Crane and Weichselbaum's complex totaled six thousand dollars.¹¹

The two men agreed upon a division of labor. Weichselbaum supplied the store with goods, and Crane remained on site and managed daily operations. The company supplied the post with a wide variety of wares. Weichselbaum traveled to St. Louis, Chicago, and New York to buy merchandise. He shipped it by boat to Ft. Leavenworth, and then carried the merchandise by wagon to the stores. Soldiers stationed at Fort Larned could purchase merchandise ranging from seven different varieties of tobacco to canned lobsters and oysters. One enlisted man at Fort Larned frequently purchased cheese and crackers to supplement his rations. The sutler also offered items for leisurely use. Soldiers frequently purchased cigars and tobacco. Some supplemented their wardrobe by buying shirts and drawers. The most popular items sold were alcoholic beverages. The store offered lager beer, whiskey, and ale. Wives of officers also visited the store to purchase such items as butter, eggs, and canned oysters.¹²

The company also served the post in other capacities. By 1865, the sutler store was serving as a post office, a meeting place, and a lounging area for soldiers. In June 1862, the commanding officer issued orders prohibiting soldiers from lounging around the sutler store. He also

ordered the store to close between eleven thirty in the morning and one thirty in the afternoon and from reveille until six o'clock in the morning. The commanding officer directed Crane and Weichselbaum to "report any man disorderly in or about [the] store." Soldiers found lounging about the store were subject to arrest. The store also had a mess hall to serve travelers or off-duty soldiers.¹³

The sutler store not only supplied the men of the post with clothing and other merchandise, but also with various types of alcoholic beverages. Problems with disorderly conduct due to the consumption of alcohol led to a ban on its sale. In 1863, the post commanding officer ordered Crane and Weichselbaum to stop providing whiskey to the Native Americans and the enlisted men of the post. Prohibition of alcohol largely depended on the commanding officer of the post. For example, one evening in October 1865, the commanding officer of the post allowed the other officers of the post to consume large quantities of whiskey. One observer stated that they spent the evening "singing and hurahing[sic]." At midnight, the commander sent the officers to their quarters and advised them to be patient with the enlisted men because he intended to treat the rest of the post to drinks the following evening.¹⁴

Crane and Weichselbaum not only sold goods to soldiers, and travelers on the Santa Fe Trail, but also to the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa Indians. When Weichselbaum stayed at the Fort Larned store, he often slept in the back room and "sometimes six or eight big Indians slept on the floor at the same time." Crane and Weichselbaum also employed a Cheyenne in the store to do simple chores. Sometime in 1864, a band of Cheyennes asked Crane and Weichselbaum to trade with them in their camp twenty miles southwest of Fort Larned. The Indians escorted them to the camp. Because the Arkansas River was frozen, the men stayed at the camp for four weeks and the Cheyenne furnished them with a lodge and food. Crane and Weichselbaum traded dry goods for buffalo and antelope skins. Weichselbaum often traded with the Native Americans for buffalo robes and skins, and for buckskin and antelope pelts. He transported them to Leavenworth, Kansas and sold them to W. C. Lowenstein for five and six dollars each.¹⁵

In 1866, seeing an opportunity to make extra money, Crane offered to sell his store buildings to the government. That year, the military began constructing permanent stone structures and the post lacked adequate storehouses and officers' quarters. Crane offered to sell his buildings for two-thirds of his construction costs. The commanding officer, Major Curvier Grover, hoped to use the store as a

storehouse for the quartermaster and the residence and mess house for officer's quarters. General William T. Sherman, now commanding the army, rejected the proposal.¹⁶

Probably still searching for greater profits during 1866, Crane sold his interests in the sutler's stores at Fort Larned and at Fort Dodge, and moved to Topeka, Kansas, where he became involved in the coal mining business. In the fall of 1883, he moved to New Mexico where he supplied gold miners with goods. Crane died in 1908. His partner, Weichselbaum, retained his interest in the stores at Fort Larned, Fort Dodge, and other posts. Upon Crane's departure Weichselbaum formed a new partnership with John E. Tappan.¹⁷

Tappan purchased Crane's share of the stores for five thousand dollars. The stores at Fort Larned and Fort Dodge became the Tappan and Weichselbaum Company. Tappan was the son of a rubber goods manufacturer in Boston, Massachusetts. During the Civil War, he had served as a First Lieutenant of company G of the Second Colorado Volunteer cavalry. While the company was at Fort Larned in April 1865, it is likely that Tappan met Crane and made the connections to purchase Crane's share of the business.¹⁸

Tappan and Weichselbaum made few changes to the operation of the store. The most notable was the addition of a billiard room in 1868. The room was large enough for two tables and was available for the use by officers and

enlisted men. The new partnership offered the same variety of goods and services. One exception was the rental of their buildings. From December 1866 to July 1867, Tappan and Weichselbaum rented two rooms to Indian agent Edward Wynkoop for one hundred dollars a month. Wynkoop used them for the storage of annuities and for living quarters.¹⁹

Although Tappan and Weichselbaum held a monopoly as post sutler at Fort Larned between 1866 and 1868, they experienced both problems and success. The post population increased as civilian construction laborers came to work, and there were always troops passing through on campaign. Despite the large volume of business and the need for a mercantile store, the orders of Congress in 1867 to remove all post sutlers affected Tappan and Weichselbaum. A year after Congress decided to abolish the post sutler positions, Tappan and Weichselbaum were advised to vacate the post in five days. Tappan requested thirty days to remove his goods. At the end of March, the company received another letter from the Department of Missouri notifying them that they could continue operating their store until further notice.²⁰

Tappan and Weichselbaum also supplied the post with alcohol, as Theodore Weichselbaum often brought beer to the fort along with other goods. On July 4, 1867, Tappan and his assistant opened the store in the morning and closed at

noon. During their short time of operation the soldiers consumed large quantities of beer. The next morning many men were sick, but the drinking continued the entire day. Occasionally after drinking so much, the men became disorderly. One afternoon, a party of drunk soldiers entered the store and one man hit the clerk, Nels Cederberg, in the eye. In 1869, probably owing to the problems alcohol created, the post commanding officer banned the sutlers from keeping or selling wine or "liquor of any description."²¹

Tappan and Weichselbaum, like their predecessor Crane and Weichselbaum, also sold merchandise to local Native Americans. It was not uncommon to see Native Americans lounging around the store. In the month of April, Native Americans visited the store on five different occasions and stayed for several hours. The merchants could only sell the Native Americans dry goods because they were under strict orders from the army not to sell the Native Americans any whiskey.²²

In 1869, Tappan and Weichselbaum faced problems with competition at Fort Larned from another sutler and the legitimacy of their appointment came under scrutiny. In late 1867, Edward S. Drought built a large wooden sutler store on the post and in February 1868 the Commanding officer received orders directing him to permit a Mr. Becker trade privileges. Because of the new appointment, the

commanding officer, Major Meredith Kidd examined the documents on file for John Tappan. Upon inspection, he could not find orders granting Tappan permission to operate as post sutler. According to Kidd, the last sutler appointment belonged to a Mr. Stewart who had abandoned his business two years earlier. Kidd further stated that Becker's appointment was good only until someone was properly authorized. A few weeks later, after a new commanding officer arrived, this individual discovered that Stewart had not abandon his business and John Tappan was acting as an agent for Stewart. The Major requested that Tappan retain his position as sutler and Becker be dismissed. A year later, another new officer commanded Fort Larned. The new commander, Captain Dangerfield Parker, examined the operation of Tappan and Weichselbaum and in April of 1869, wrote to the Department of Missouri headquarters stating that no document was on file authorizing John Tappan to trade upon the post. Parker requested Tappan be removed from military property. According to the commander, there was not enough business at the post for two sutlers and that competition was not advisable.²³

With Parker's request for their removal, Theodore Weichselbaum and John E. Tappan sold their business to Charles F. Tracy from St. Louis, Missouri, which proved to

be good timing. As hostilities with Native Americans decreased, the number of troops at Fort Larned also declined. The post population realistically could only support only one store. Weichselbaum then focused his attention on a mercantile store and a brewery in Ogden, Kansas, and John Tappan opened a sutler store at Camp Supply, Indian Territory.²⁴

Edward S. Drought, like Tappan, probably received his appointment through his military connection. Drought, a Canadian, moved to Racine, Wisconsin, at the age of four. In 1858, he moved to Leavenworth, Kansas, and until the outbreak of the Civil War worked as a freighter. During the war, he enlisted in the Third Kansas Cavalry and later transferred to the Fifth cavalry. In 1865, he re-enlisted in Hancock's veteran volunteers. When he mustered out in 1866, he held the rank of Captain. In 1867, Drought received a postmaster appointment at Fort Larned.²⁵

Drought's sutler store stood one hundred yards south of the post and was fifty feet wide and forty feet long. In his building, Drought included a billiards room with one table and a seventy foot bowling alley. The post surgeon commented that it "was a very nice building."²⁶

In 1869, after Tappan and Weichselbaum left the post, Charles Tracey and Edward S. Drought operated the stores. That year, the two sutlers received orders to close their

saloons until further notice to everyone except commissioned officers. Edward Drought left Fort Larned in November 1869, and returned to Leavenworth and Wyandotte County. He actually left the same year as John Tappan and Theodore Weichselbaum.²⁷ Charles Tracy worked as a merchant in St. Louis, Missouri prior to purchasing Weichselbaum's interests in Fort Larned, and Fort Dodge. Sometime in the early 1870's he left Fort Larned.²⁸

In June of 1869, Henry Booth moved to the post and opened business in an existing sutler store building. Although he arrived at the post late in the year, he did not receive an official appointment until December 10, 1870. Booth had many political and military connections prior to his appointment. Born in Leeds, Yorkshire, in England in 1838, he moved to the United States with his family in 1841. Booth lived with his family in Rhode Island until 1856, when he and his brother moved to Kansas. The two men took up farming near Manhattan, Kansas. Three years later, they moved to a parcel of land in Pottawattomie County and continued farming until the outbreak of the Civil War. In September 1862, Henry Booth enlisted in company G of the First Kansas Infantry. The army promoted him to First Sergeant after it reorganized the company into a cavalry unit. During the war, the army assigned Booth to work as a recruiter and promoted him to the rank of Captain. After

Booth mustered out in 1865, he returned to Manhattan and opened a mercantile store. While living in Manhattan, he served as an inspector for Fort Larned's military district, and in 1867 he was unanimously elected to represent Riley County in the Kansas House of Representatives. In 1869, with his political and military connections, Booth secured an appointment as the postmaster at Fort Larned. One year later, he received a sutler's appointment.²⁹

Booth made no changes to the building he purchased or to the business's operations. The commanding officer of the post was not pleased with Booth's operation. In April 1871, the commander received complaints from soldiers that Booth was charging \$1.00 for towels and thirty-five cents for toothbrushes. The commanding officer sent Booth a letter ordering him to lower his prices and to comply with the recommendations of the post council of administration. In May 1872, Booth received a letter from the commanding officer requesting him to stop throwing his trash into the creek above the post. The commander also ordered him to police his area, clean his pig pens, and to stop throwing manure into the creek and onto the banks. Finally, the commander directed Booth to disinfect his privies and hog pens. He also suggested that the sutler build a privy out of brush for his employees and that, "no more excrement be

deposited on the bank of the creek to be washed into the stream with every rain. . . ."30

In that same year, Booth received a notice from the post commander informing him that his cattle had destroyed the company gardens. According to the commanding officer, Booth's cattle had damaged one hundred and sixty-five dozen ears of sweet corn, eighteen bushels of peas, sixteen bushels of string beans, five hundred melons, and several bushels of other vegetables. The officers of the post estimated the cost of damage at two hundred dollars and demanded Booth pay the amount or have his appointment revoked.³¹

Like his predecessor, Booth also received orders from the commanding officer to stop selling alcohol at his store. A few months after arriving at Fort Larned, the post commanding officer, trying to control alcoholism among the soldiers, closed all saloons on the post. Despite these steps, evidently Booth continued to sell alcohol to the men. It appeared that the non-drinking rule was not strictly enforced. Later in May 1871, a new commanding officer told Booth to form a liquor board for each company, and to sell each man no more than three drinks per day.³²

On February 24, 1873, the post board named Paul T. Curlett post sutler. The officers of the post had claimed that Booth "kept no variety or supply of goods" and

recommended that Curlett replace him. Curlett, a native of Canada, moved to the United States at the age of eighteen. Before his appointment at Fort Larned, he worked as a clerk in the quartermaster's department at Fort Harker. Upon accepting the appointment of sutler, he also became the fort post master.³³

During the middle of Curlett's term as sutler, the press released information about the Belknap scandal. The New York Herald printed the names of all sutlers who paid for their appointment, and Paul T. Curlett's name appeared on the list. There is no evidence that indicates whether or not he paid for his appointment, but the news did not affect his position at Fort Larned.³⁴

In February 1876, the county sold at sheriff's sale the Fort Larned sutler buildings that Jesse Crane had constructed. Shortly afterwards, Weichselbaum sued Curlett for the value of the buildings. Weichselbaum claimed that Curlett had been renting the buildings from him and had failed to pay rent. He also claimed that Curlett destroyed the ceiling of the sutler store and dismantled one of the frame buildings. Weichselbaum demanded that Curlett pay him two hundred dollars for the buildings and eighty-seven dollars and fifty cents for past rent. Curlett argued that Weichselbaum failed to pay taxes on the buildings, and thus they were auctioned. Curlett purchased the buildings in the

sale and, therefore, had the right to dismantle them. The Pawnee County courts ruled in favor of Theodore Weichselbaum.³⁵

Although during the 1870's there were few troops stationed at the post, Curlett also had the advantage of serving as a merchant to the new settlers in Larned. He advertised his business in the Larned papers and encouraged the townspeople to visit his store for general merchandise. Local citizens also visited Curlett's store to buy alcohol. During his term as sutler, as other post sutlers, Curlett received warnings from the post commander concerning the improper sale of alcohol to soldiers and civilians. Problems with the sale of alcohol prompted the post chaplain, David White, to write the Secretary of War and request a ban on its sale. White stated that nine-tenths of the military crimes soldiers committed were directly attributed to alcoholic drinks. A few weeks later, the Temperance Christian Union Society of Larned, a group of people promoting limiting the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages, petitioned the Secretary of War to ban Curlett from selling liquor. The Temperance Society believed that the sutler system, which allowed the sale of alcohol, was a "disgrace to the department that promulgates it and to the government that tolerates it." The following month, the commanding officer of the post ordered Curlett to

stop the sale of liquor until further notice. In his defense, Curlett wrote the Secretary of War protesting the ban placed on his business. Curlett concluded that "it would seem injustice to me to prohibit me from enjoying the privileges enjoyed by every post trader in the army. . . ." The Secretary of War did not lift the ban.³⁶

Curlett remained the post sutler until 1878, when the army closed the fort. At this time Curlett, sold the store and moved into Larned. Thereafter, to earn a living, Curlett obtained government contracts. For example, in June and August 1879, he cut hay for Fort Dodge. After moving to Larned, Curlett became involved in various civic organizations and the local government.³⁷

Arriving early on the scene, the post sutlers at Fort Larned provided the post with small comforts and recreation throughout the existence of the fort. The sutlers offered the men goods to supplement their diets and other "luxury" items that offered added comfort and enjoyment. Although their services were invaluable, sutlers often found themselves in trouble. Alcohol sales were the main source of conflict between the post commander and the sutlers. The degree of tension between the two depended upon the commander. The establishment of the city of Larned, and the strong temperance support in the town, created most of the complaints and problems for the sutler.

Alcohol sales were not the only source of trouble for the sutlers at Fort Larned. Confusion over army regulations, and the high turn-over of post commanders, created problems for the post sutlers at Fort Larned. Some found themselves in competition with other sutlers and the commanding officers sometimes ordered others to leave the military reservation. The problems between the sutlers and authorities at Fort Larned were not uncommon. Sutlers at other posts faced similar difficulties.

NOTES

¹ Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders, 50; Francis A. Lord, Civil War Sutlers and their Wares (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1969), 23; Miller, "The Perils of a Post Sutler," 7; William N. Davis, Jr., "Post Trading in the West," Explorations in Entrepreneurial History 6 (Oct. 1953): 30-31; Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1863), 37.

² Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861, 37; Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders, 51,53.

³ Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861, 34-35, 37; Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders, 53; Lord, Civil War Sutlers, 19.

⁴ Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861 37; Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders, 148; Davis, "Post Trading in the West," 31; Miller, "Perils of a Post Trader," 9.

⁵ Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders, 142, 148; Miller, "Perils of a Post Trader," 8-9; Davis, "Post Trading in the West," 31.

⁶ Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders, 152; Davis, "Post Trading in the West," 9; William Belknap, circular, 7 June 1871, Fort Dodge Headquarters Records Orders and Circulars 1868-1871, Fort Larned National Historic Site, Larned, KS., Roll 22 M989 (Hereafter cited as FDHROC).

⁷ Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders, 154-164; Davis, "Post Trading in the West," 34-35.

⁸ "Jesse Crane," Topeka Capitol, 6 July 1908; W. F. Pride, The History of Fort Riley (1926, reprint, N.P.: Fort Riley Historical and Archeological Society, 1987), 89 ; Theodore Weichselbaum, "Statement of Theodore Weichselbaum of Ogden, Riley County, July 17, 1908," Vol. 11 of Collection of Kansas State Historical Society 1909-1910 (Topeka: State Printing Office, 1910), 562; James W. Ladd, diary, 1 January 1865-31 December 1865, JWF; Zwink, "Fort Larned: Garrison," 167; "Fifty Years of Kansas: Theodore Weichselbaum of Ogden a Historic Figure," Junction City Union 3 January 1908.

⁹ Portrait and Biographical Album of Washington, Clay, and Riley, County Kansas (Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1890),

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¹⁰ John Albright and Douglas D. Scott, Historical Furnishing Study and Archeological Data Fort Larned National Historic Site Kansas (Denver, CO.: Denver Service Center National Park Service, 1974), 22; "Fifty Years of Kansas," Junction City Union 3 January 1908; Weichselbaum, "Statement of Theodore Weichselbaum," 566.

¹¹ Weichselbaum, "Statement of Theodore Weichselbaum," 562; Mary Jo Cunningham, letter to David Clapsaddle, 25 February 1987, TWF; E. D. Townsend, letter to Secretary of War Edward M. Stanton, 12 January 1867, Records of the Quartermaster General's Office: Letters Received Consolidated File, Fort Larned National Historic Site, Larned, KS. (Hereafter cited as RQGO); E. D. Townsend, circular, 7 June 1871, FDHROC; Everett Brown, Fort Larned: Camp on the Pawnee (N.P.: n.p., 1964), 93a; Zwick, "Fort Larned: Garrison," 37, 44; W. H. Forwood, History of Fort, Fort Larned Medical History, Fort Larned National Historic Site, Larned, KS. (Hereafter cited as FOLMH); Henry Booth, "History of Pawnee County," Larned Eagle Optic 3 November 1899; Jesse Crane, letter to A. W. Crane, 28 February 1865, Jesse Crane File, Fort Larned National Historic Site, Larned, KS. (Hereafter cited as JCF); James W. Ladd, diary, 1 January 1865 - 31 December 1865, JWF; George Elmore, interview by author, 5 June 1997.

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¹⁴ Zwink, "Fort Larned: Garrison," 173; John Morrill, letter to wife, 2 October 1865, John Morrill 48th Wisconsin File, Fort Larned National Historic Site, Larned, KS.

¹⁵ Weichselbaum, "Statement of Theodore Weichselbaum," 567,569; Zwink, "Fort Larned: Garrison," 170-171, 175; "Fifty Years of Kansas," Junction City Union 3 January 1908.

¹⁶ Jesse Crane, letter to Major Curvier Grover, 11 September 1866, RQGO; Curvier Grover, letter to Quartermaster General, 12 September 1866, RQGO; E. D. Townsend, letter to Edward M. Stanton, 12 January 1867, RQGO.

¹⁷ "Jesse Crane," Topeka Capitol, 6 July, 1908; Weichselbaum, "Statement of Theodore Weichselbaum," 562; Financial Opportunities on the Kansas Frontier (N.P.: N.P., N.D.), 9.

¹⁸ Weichselbaum, "Statement of Theodore Weichselbaum," 564-565; Zwink, "Fort Larned: Garrison," 169; Mary Jo Cunningham, letter to David Clappsaddle, 25 February 1987, TWF.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE POST SUTLERS AND THE CITY OF LARNED

Post sutlers usually did not limit their business and activities to the military post. These men also became active in the development of towns outside the military reservation, and frequently became prominent members of these communities. The post sutlers at Fort Larned were no exception. The last two sutlers who operated at Fort Larned took an active role in the development of the nearby town of Larned, and they contributed to the settling of Western Kansas.

In 1871 the state of Kansas and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad made a preliminary survey of the area near Fort Larned. Henry Booth, then post sutler at Fort Larned and a shrewd businessman, realized that the railroad would bring settlers and money into the area. That year Booth formed the Larned Township Company. Members of the company included ex-Kansas governor Samuel J. Crawford, who acted as president of the company, and Edward Wilder. In January of 1872, Booth and the other members of the company met at his store to vote on a town site. By a majority vote, the men selected a site approximately eight miles east of Fort Larned. More than likely the men chose this site because of its proximity to the military post and the

railroad. Both of these factors, they rightly assumed, would bring people and money into the fledging town. The town company completed a survey of the town site shortly after the men decided its location. In February 1872, Henry Booth and his storekeeper, Timothy McCarthy, filed the first claims for property. Two months later, Booth moved a building from his sutler complex to the new town of Larned by floating it down the Pawnee River and then placing it on wheels. This became the first structure in the town.¹

By July 1872, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad finished construction of the rail line into Larned. To mark the occasion, the troops at Fort Larned fired a salute. Four months later, Booth sent a petition to the governor requesting a census of the county be taken to determine if the population were large enough to form a county. The census taker found 674 men, women, and children living in Pawnee County. On November 4, 1872, Kansas Governor James Harvey declared Pawnee County organized and named Larned the temporary county seat.² The County held elections the following day and the people elected Henry Booth, superintendent of public instruction. By the end of 1872, the new city of Larned boasted nine buildings, that included the first grocery store outside Fort Larned.³

In an attempt to make Western Kansas more appealing to future settlers, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad

planted experimental tree gardens. Many believed that the growing of trees proved the adaptability of the plains. In 1873, the railroad hired Henry Booth to act as its agent and to operate an experimental garden and tree plot. The railroad also established plots at Hutchinson, Ellinwood, Garfield, and Spearville. Due to its proximity to Larned, it is likely that Booth operated the Garfield site located ten miles southwest of Larned. Booth lost his army post sutler appointment in April 1873, and that month he moved his family into Larned. Six months later he opened up a hotel called the Larned House. Booth charged boarders four dollars and fifty cents for one week of lodging.⁴

The county held its first mass convention to nominate county officers in October 1873. Booth and store clerk Timothy McCarthy ran for the offices. Although he was currently running the sutler store at the post, Paul T. Curlett took an interest in the local government and ran for office. Perhaps, feeling that he could best help the county and the town, Booth ran on an independent ticket for representative, and he won the election. Timothy McCarthy accepted the position of county clerk, and Paul Curlett became county commissioner. That October the county held a special election to determine the permanent county seat. Booth's influence in the legislature benefited the town of Larned. To make the city more the center of county

activities and strengthen its chances of becoming the permanent county seat, Booth had the county boundaries changed. He had twelve miles to the south removed and six miles to the north and east added, making Larned the center of the new county. By a majority vote, Larned became the permanent county seat of Pawnee County, Kansas.⁵

The following year brought more business and development for Pawnee County and Larned. That year the citizens of Pawnee County assisted families left destitute as a result of a drought and grasshopper plague. Booth remained active in the town, for he worked as the secretary of the relief committee. Relief to these settlers would hopefully prevent people from leaving western Kansas, and even encourage additional settlement. Although many families in Pawnee County suffered because of the drought and grasshoppers, Larned continued to grow. Booth, while serving his second term in the state legislature, then formed a partnership with judge D. A. Bright in a variety of town business ventures. The two men's businesses included law, insurance, and coal. Interested in seeing the growth of Pawnee County, Bright and Booth also opened a real estate office and sold town lots, thereby encouraging immigration.⁶

During the following two years, the men presently and formerly associated with the sutler store at Fort Larned continued to work as public servants building Pawnee County

and the city of Larned. Paul Curlett accepted the position of chairman of the board of county commissioners and Timothy McCarthy served another term as county clerk. Booth, although not directly involved in local politics, continued to represent the people of his district in the state legislature as chief clerk of the house for two terms.⁷

In 1877, Booth and judge Bright built the first large, permanent business building in Larned. By 1877, newly arrived settlers in the county had claimed 145,878 acres. In 1878, Booth became the land receiver at the United States Land office located in Larned. Land offices functioned for a region and operated in only a few towns such as Larned, Wakeeney, Oberlin, Kirwin, and Garden City. This position gave Booth greater opportunity to encourage settlement in Pawnee County and western Kansas. Those emigrants wishing to settle in western Kansas filed claims at the land office. As land agent Booth had the opportunity to advertise and to encourage homesteading in Pawnee County, contributing to homesteaders filing claims on 246,377 acres of land in Pawnee county during 1878. The same year that Booth accepted appointment as receiver at the land office, he started a newspaper with D.A. Bright, Nelson Adams, and Thomas Edwards. The men named the paper The Enterprise. The paper would become the town's third newspaper since its organization. Three months later, Colonel Henry Inman,

from Ellsworth, took over the position of editor, and changed the name to The Larned Chronoscope.⁸

In 1879, Larned hosted the Pawnee County fair and in an attempt to promote the town and further encourage settlement and economic development. Fair promoters invited Kansas Governor John P. St. John, General William T. Sherman, and president Rutherford B. Hayes to view the Pawnee County fair. When the special guests arrived, Booth, still a local representative in the state legislature and promoter of Pawnee County and Larned, delivered the welcome address. Three years later, he became director of the newly established First National Bank. Continuously busy and working in the interest of the county and town, in 1883 Booth took over the editor position at The Larned Chronoscope. A year later, he sold the paper to Senator J.W. Rush and Howard Russell.⁹

Although still working as receiver for the district land office in Larned, Booth continued his political career. In 1888, he became the chairman of the Republican State Convention and the Kansas Republican Central Committee. In 1889, while continuing his political career, he took the position of director of the Kansas Soldier's home located at the deactivated Fort Dodge. By 1890, Larned had a population of 1,066 people, and was an active prairie community. Booth continued to work as director of the

soldiers' home until 1893. In 1896, after serving three terms in the state legislature, he retired from politics and returned to Larned, where he died two years later. Clearly, Booth and others who originally went to western Kansas to become sutlers for the army, made a considerable contribution to the development of Larned and other towns in the region.¹⁰

As post sutlers, Henry Booth, Paul Curlett, and store clerk Timothy McCarthy sought business ventures beyond the military. These businessmen, while seeking profit and new opportunities, also helped develop the town of Larned. Their efforts in the town encouraged the settlement and development of western Kansas. After establishing Larned, Henry Booth's interest in the area did not end. Numerous small towns appeared on the plains of Kansas and unfortunately many of them died quickly. Booth continued to work in the state legislature and through the Federal land office to ensure further development of western Kansas and to secure the future of Larned.

NOTES

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⁵ Booth, "History of Pawnee County," 10, 12; Clapsaddle, Henry Booth, 20; Zygmund, Progress 200, 15, Zygmund, Panorama Of Progress, n.p.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SUTLERS AT FORT DODGE

The operation of the sutler stores at Fort Dodge was similar to those of Fort Larned, and at times the two posts shared the same sutler. Like Fort Larned, Dodge had problems with alcoholism and disorderly conduct. Although the post was small, several large expeditions began at the fort, and Santa Fe Trail traffic brought increased business. The sutler at Fort Dodge had the usual problems, but the position was profitable. These entrepreneurs also provided the post with a beneficial service.

Upon the establishment of the post, Fort Dodge received its first sutler, James William Ladd on March 20, 1865. Ladd obtained his position through his friendship with Fort Larned sutler Jesse Crane. Ladd moved to Kansas in 1863 from Appleton, Wisconsin, and in October of that year he received a job as a bookkeeper and head clerk for Crane and Weichselbaum at Fort Larned.¹

The military began constructing Fort Dodge in March 1865. On April 17, Ladd received his official appointment from the Secretary of War as the post sutler at Fort Dodge. Jesse Crane, Ladd's employer, formed a partnership with Ladd on equal terms under the company name of Crane and Ladd. On May 1, he began packing his goods in a wagon, and three days

later Ladd, and two clerks, John Phennister and Albert Weichselbaum left Fort Larned for Fort Dodge. They arrived at the post on the fourth and sold goods to the soldiers from the supplies on their wagons. The following day, Ladd erected a sibley tent, placed his goods inside, and opened for business. Two weeks later, he put up a wall tent as an addition to his store. Lacking avialable building materials such as wood and stone, Ladd began construction on a modest sod building for his store. Too busy with running the business, he hired men to cut the sod at one dollar per hundred sod blocks.²

Indian attacks were common during the early years of Fort Dodge. Ladd found himself a victim of Indian depredations instead of trading with them like his counterparts at Fort Larned. On June 8, 1865, Native Americans attacked the post and drove off the military livestock and Ladd's pony. Fortunately, the army recovered the stock and the following day erected a stockade for the animals. Four days later, the Indians attacked again. This time they took the post livestock, four of Ladd's mules, and his pony. That same night, Ladd's two clerks, John Phennister and Albert Weichselbaum, also disappeared. The soldiers at the post believed the two men dead and sent a search party out the following day. Several days later they found the body of Albert Weichselbaum in the Arkansas River.

The wolves had eaten his hands, but there were no other visible signs of violence on the body. Ladd believed the Indians chased Weichselbaum into the river where he drowned. The body of John Phennister was not found. Theodore Weichselbaum, Albert Weichselbaum's brother, remained unconvinced about the death of his brother and believed that Phennister had killed Albert.³

Ladd's brother Christopher and his friend Lyman Fargo replaced Weichselbaum and Phennister as clerks in the store. As a result of the continued Indian attacks, construction halted on Ladd's sod building. On July 4, 1865, as a temporary solution Ladd bought a sergeant's house and moved his store from the tent to the new building. In August, he finally completed construction of a sod building and moved his goods to the quarters.⁴

Despite the problems, the position of post sutler at Fort Dodge proved to be a lucrative business. William Ladd and his partner Jesse Crane held a monopoly at Fort Dodge, like their counterparts Crane and Weichselbaum at Fort Larned. The store in its first year of operation earned a considerable profit. In one week, Ladd recorded selling \$1,500.00 worth of goods. A few days later he recorded that in two days of business the store took in \$2,000.00 cash. The quantity and type of goods that Ladd stocked is unknown. Apparently he kept a large supply of merchandise. In

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November 1865, Weichselbaum delivered \$12,000.00 worth of stock to the store.⁵

Both Fort Dodge and Fort Larned sutler stores served as the fort post office. Previously, Ladd had worked as a clerk in the Fort Larned post office. In November 1865, he received the appointment of post master of Fort Dodge. Ladd moved the post office to his store and "put a letter box on the door."⁶ The sutler store at Fort Dodge also provided entertainment for post visitors, enlisted men, and officers. In November 1865, Colonel Kit Carson visited the store while staying at the post. Ladd treated Colonel Carson to supper and visited with him at the store. On Christmas Day 1865, Ladd hosted a party for the officers of the post. According to the sutler, he served fruit and everyone had "a good time."⁷

The commanding officers at Fort Dodge also regulated the sale of alcohol similarly to post commanders at Fort Larned. Ladd received no letters of reprimand in 1865. During his second year of business, however, he received several notices about selling alcohol to enlisted men. In January 1866, the commanding officer of the post ordered Crane and Ladd not to sell alcohol any longer to enlisted men or citizens in the employ of the quartermaster's department or the commissary department. The sutler would be held responsible for any violations of the order by

himself or his clerks. The order apparently was not closely observed. Two months later, Ladd received another notice directing him to not sell "spirituous liquor . . . to enlisted men or citizens at this post without permission of the commanding officer."⁸

In April 1866, in an attempt to maintain order on the post, the commanding officer of the post put further restrictions on Ladd's business. On the twenty-second, the commanding officer directed the sutler to close his store to enlisted men on Sundays. One month later, further restrictions on Ladd's hours of operation were added. Not only was Ladd to close on Sundays, but he also was to close the store to all enlisted men after they were summoned to their quarters. Although Douglas restricted the store's hours of operation, in June he lifted the prohibition on alcohol and allowed Ladd to sell soldiers up to three drinks per day. To prevent abuse of the new policy, the commander stipulated that enlisted men were not allowed to give or sell the drink to a civilian or a fellow soldier. Anyone found violating this order would have his name removed from the garrison drink list for at least six months.⁹

During the summer of 1866, the enlisted men of the post accused Ladd of charging excessive prices for his merchandise. The commanding officer, Captain Andrew Sheridan, ordered Ladd to lower his prices so that they

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complied with the recommendations of the Council of Administration. Adding to the problems, that summer the commanding officer charged Ladd with illegally purchasing corn from soldiers and closed the store until the matter could be investigated. Fortunately, the following day the board of survey found Ladd innocent, dismissed the charges, and reopened the store.¹⁰

Alcoholism continued to be a problem at the post. In the fall of 1866, the commanding officer placed more restrictions on the sale of alcohol at the store. He notified Ladd that he could only sell "spirituous liquor or malt liquors" to citizens and enlisted men with written permission that specified the amount.¹¹

William Ladd and his partner Jesse Crane, sold the sutler store at Fort Dodge in December 1866 to John E. Tappan and Theodore Weichselbaum. Tappan not only purchased part of the Fort Dodge store, but he also bought Jesse Crane's share of the sutler store at Fort Larned. Weichselbaum, who had supplied Ladd and Crane with merchandise, also became a part owner of the store at Fort Dodge. In January 1867, the Council of Administration at Fort Dodge nominated John Tappan permanent post sutler. With the appointment, the store opened under the company name of Tappan and Weichselbaum. Like Fort Larned, Weichselbaum stocked the store while Tappan managed the

daily operations. Tappan lived at Fort Dodge and made frequent visits to his Fort Larned store.¹²

The extent of contact Tappan had with Native Americans at his Fort Dodge store is unclear. In 1866, the post commander prohibited any member of the garrison from trading with Native Americans around or within the limits of the post without permission. Because Weichselbaum had traded with the Indians in the past for hides while supplying the Fort Larned store, most likely he and Tappan continued this practice. In February 1867, Tappan and four soldiers from the post went to an Indian camp twenty miles from the post and stayed ten days. Tappan accompanied the men for the purpose of trading with the Native Americans. This was not a violation of post orders because the exchange was not on military property.¹³

Tappan experienced problems with the sale of alcohol not only at Fort Larned, but at Fort Dodge as well. Nine months after being appointed in 1867, he received a letter of reprimand. According to the commanding officer, Tappan's clerk violated the post orders by furnishing liquor to the men of the post. Major Henry Douglas, the post commander, ordered Tappan to dismiss the clerk immediately. He also reminded the sutler that no alcohol was to be sold to any member of the garrison.¹⁴

The abolition of the post sutler position in 1866, and the restoration of the system in 1867, created confusion and competition at Fort Dodge. Tappan, accustomed to holding a monopoly at both Fort Dodge and Fort Larned, faced competition, and the legitimacy of his appointment became questionable. In October 1867, the Assistant Adjutant General notified Fort Dodge commanding officer, Major Henry Douglas, that the department granted permission to Robert M. Johnson to open a trading establishment at the post. A year later, Johnson attempted to have Tappan removed.¹⁵

The protection of post sutlers depended upon the commanding officer of the post. In 1868, Post commander Henry Douglas worked to protect the interests of the fort's authorized sutler. In January 1868, Douglas received notice that a man named E. P. Wheeler had built a hut near the post and had opened a trading establishment. Douglas ordered the man off military property. The post chaplain, Alvin G. White, requested Wheeler's merchandise be taken to his house because he had invested \$1,500.00 in Wheeler's operation. This was only the beginning of problems with unauthorized merchants on military property. In February 1868, the post commander approved Robert Johnson's application for post sutler. Upon confirmation, Douglas learned that the Department of Missouri believed that the post needed only one sutler and Johnson was to replace Tappan. Douglas

notified the Adjutant General that he was under the impression that the regulations of 1867 did not limit the number of post sutlers at a fort. Douglas also argued that he did not want to interfere with Tappan's business and that he suspected Johnson wanted to be appointed at the exclusion of Tappan. Because Douglas was not aware of Johnson's intentions, he appealed to the Department of Missouri to resolve the situation. Two weeks later, the department commander approved Johnson's appointment and dismissed Tappan as post sutler. The following day, Douglas ordered all sutlers without appointments to vacate the post.¹⁶

While Douglas asked for assistance in deciding the post sutler, Johnson, unable to supersede Tappan, sublet his business to John H. Coryele and William H. Vandewater of Hays. The two men operated under the name of Johnson and Company. Douglas, unaware of the agreement between Johnson and the two men, questioned the legitimacy of Coryele and Vandewater's operation. After discovering Johnson did own the business, Douglas allowed Johnson and Company to operate on the post. Upon learning that Johnson had intended to displace Tappan on the assumption that he did not hold an appointment, Douglas appealed to the Department of Missouri to allow John Tappan to remain post sutler. He argued that Tappan was unanimously recommended by the post council of administration. Douglas pointed out that he had temporarily

appointed Tappan and submitted his application to the Secretary of War. Because the secretary had taken no action, the commander assumed that Tappan was granted a temporary sutler appointment. Major Douglas appealed to department headquarters to allow Tappan to remain until the Secretary of War took action. In May 1868, Douglas received notice that Robert Johnson was no longer the sutler at Fort Dodge. John Tappan, although almost forced out of business by Johnson, remained in operation.¹⁷

While Major Douglas tried to settle the dispute between Johnson and Tappan, the problem with unauthorized merchants operating on the post continued. After the Major evicted Wheeler from the military reservation, his stock was given to post chaplain Alvin White to cover Wheeler's debt to White. By March it became common knowledge among post residents that chaplain White was selling Wheeler's goods from his home. Major Douglas sent the chaplain an order to stop the operation and reminded him that only post sutlers authorized by the Secretary of War could operate on the post. Douglas also criticized White stating,

" . . . It is a matter of surprise to the commanding officer that an officer of the Army should engage in a pursuit so foreign to the legitimate duties of his profession particularly when he can not ignore that such a pursuit is, under the existing rules and regulations of this post, and in violation of the same."¹⁸

Several days later, Major Douglas received notice that a hospital steward went to the chaplain's house to purchase muslin for curtains. White told the man that he could not sell it in his home and would have to sell it to him at Wheeler's ranch. Two days later, the chaplain informed the steward that he had a package for him to pick up at his house. Angry with White's open violation of post regulations, Douglas sent the chaplain another letter informing him that he had violated post regulations and had no right to negotiate for the sale of goods on the post. As a result of White's violation, Major Douglas placed the chaplain under arrest on April 1, 1868, for insubordination and conduct unbecoming of an officer. The commanding officer also arrested White's partner E. P. Wheeler for introducing liquor into Indian country.¹⁹

In retaliation, White sent a letter to the Adjutant General accusing Major Douglas of doing little to improve the morals of the garrison, and not providing White with a suitable place for public worship or school. The post commander denied the charges and claimed that the chaplain showed very little interest in improving the morals of the troops and that he did not try to obtain a building for school or religious services. Douglas agreed to dismiss the charges against White if he would resign his commission. White rejected the offer. In May 1868, the army held a

court martial for the chaplain. The post records do not record the results. Because White left the post, it is likely that the court found him guilty and dismissed him from service.²⁰

Although White was gone, it was not the last Douglas heard from him. In July 1868, White and his associates had Major Douglas and two other officers arrested by civil authorities for selling liquor to Indians and "outrageous violations of the law." In the arrest affidavit, White accused Douglas of drinking with Kiowa leader Satanta in the billiards room of the sutler store and of having carnal relations with an Indian woman under the table. White further stated that after Douglas's relation with the woman he then stood on the table and "had a general dance all around." The courts released Douglas and the other officers shortly after their arrest.²¹

The sutler store offered entertainment for the men of the post. Although his future at Fort Dodge looked uncertain, in 1868, John Tappan moved his goods to a vacated building on the post. In his new accommodations, the sutler added cue racks, cues, and one billiard table. Commanding officer, Major Henry Douglas reassured the Adjutant General that the place was not open as a "gambling house," and that it was open to citizens and soldiers at certain hours. He also informed his superiors that the new business was

operated under the rules and restrictions prescribed by the post council of administration. In his store Tappan set aside a room for use by post officers. In July 1868, the commanding officer sent the sutler a reminder that only officers or store clerks should have access to the room.²²

Disorderly conduct continued to be a problem at Fort Dodge. The commanding Officer, Henry Douglas struggled to control the situation. In September 1868, the commander once again prohibited the sale of "beer, liquor, wine, or anything containing alcohol to citizens and soldiers." The following month, in order to prevent disorderly conduct, Douglas prohibited gambling at the sutler store by officers, enlisted men, and citizens. This included gambling in the officer's room as well.²³

Problems continued to plague John Tappan. In the fall of 1868, Robert M. Wright received an appointment as post sutler at Fort Dodge, and thereby created competition for Tappan who had held a monopoly since May. Although faced with competition, Tappan and his competitor received good news. In November the post commander amended his orders prohibiting the sale of alcohol. Tappan and the other post sutler, Robert M. Wright, could serve three drinks per day to enlisted men belonging to the post with the written permission of the company commander. The new regulations did not extend to civilians. Unfortunately, disorderly

conduct caused by alcohol continued. On December 19, the post commander notified Tappan and Wright that because of the large number of intoxicated men on post the previous day, they were forbidden to sell alcohol at their stores for one day. Thereafter, the commander required the policy of three drinks per man to be strictly enforced or have all alcohol privileges revoked.²⁴

Robert M. Wright, although new to the sutler profession, was not unknown to the people in western Kansas or the military. Wright, a native of Bladensburg, Maryland, moved to St. Louis with his family at the age of sixteen. In 1859, he drove an ox team across the prairie to Colorado where he engaged in mining activities. During the Civil War, he moved back to Missouri and joined the Missouri militia. During the middle of the war, he returned to western Kansas as a freighter for the Russell, Waddell, and Majors company. Shortly afterwards, he changed employers and worked for Sanderson and Company. In 1866, he began taking government contracts for supplying wood, hay, lime, and grain to the army.²⁵

In May 1869, with competition from Robert Wright and a new commanding officer, the legitimacy of Tappan's appointment came under scrutiny once again. The new commander argued that Tappan received his appointment from the council of administration and not the Secretary of War.

According to the commander, Robert Wright was the only person with proper authorization. The next month, the commander of the Department of Missouri ordered all unauthorized traders and sutlers at Fort Dodge to vacate the property. On June 16, 1869, Tappan closed the store, and his partner Weichselbaum sold his share of the business to Charles F. Tracy from St. Louis. In July 1869, Tracy received an appointment at Fort Dodge and Camp Supply. Tracy reopened the store under the name Tappan and Tracy. In October 1869, he received notice that he was no longer authorized to conduct business at Fort Dodge. Although ordered to close the store, Tracy remained in business at Fort Dodge until the early 1870's.²⁶

Disorderly conduct continued to be a problem at Fort Dodge, and thus restrictions on the sale of alcohol continued. In November 1869, the post commander changed the three drinks policy to one drink for enlisted men, citizens, employees, and camp followers, and prohibited Wright and Tracy from selling alcohol to travelers passing through the post. A year later, the alcohol problems had not improved. In November 1871, the post surgeon complained that liquor was being sold to hospital patients and attendants, thus interfering with his treatments and discipline. The commanding officer ordered Wright and Tracy to stop the sale of liquor to hospital staff and patients.²⁷

In 1871, Wright faced not only restrictions on alcohol sales, but also he was expected to give officers special treatment. In January 1871, the post commander asked Wright to set apart a room exclusively for officers and requested him to forbid its use by enlisted men and civilians.²⁸ Although Wright offered the officers their own private room, this change did not influence the restrictions placed on alcohol. Later in July, because of the extreme heat, the post surgeon recommended that the store be closed. Continuing problems with alcoholism and disorderly conduct prompted the post commander in the fall of 1871 to place further restrictions on Wright's business. This time he limited the sale of alcohol to no quantities larger than a glass. He also ordered Wright to close his store at retreat each day, and all day on Sunday. Apparently, the orders were not carefully followed by Wright's clerks. On May 28, 1872, the post commander reprimanded Wright for selling liquor by the bottle to a private.²⁹

In an attempt to control alcoholism on the post after reprimanding Wright for disobeying post orders, the new commanding officer of the post, Colonel Richard Dodge, prohibited the sale of intoxicating liquor to "any person within the limits of [the military] reservation." The following month, with reluctance, Colonel Dodge authorized Wright to sell liquor. The post commander, however,

informed the merchant that he believed "the post is better off without whiskey." Dodge also informed Wright that he would withdraw the privilege if he were unable to regulate the sales in order to prevent drunkenness. The post commander also added that "from the moment there is any drunkenness either of soldiers or citizens at this post your bar will be closed permanently."³⁰

The establishing of Dodge City helped end some problems with public drunkenness at the post. The new town offered the soldiers a larger selection of saloons and billiard halls. The number of saloons located in Dodge City during the 1870's ranged from three to eighteen. Wright did not receive any further orders about the sale of liquor until September 1876. At that time the post commander restricted the sale of alcohol to no greater than three glasses per day. To prevent continuing disorderly conduct and drunkenness while on duty, the commander ordered Wright to allow enlisted men in the bar only between the hours of retreat and reveille. He further added that any violations of the order would result in closure of the sutler's bar.³¹

By 1877, Robert Wright had a new business partner, Henry M. Beverly. The sutler continued the partnership with Beverly until the following year. In 1878 Beverly, who operated a store in Dodge City, sold his share to James Langston. Although they faced competition from businesses

in Dodge City, the two men optimistically remodeled their store in early 1872. Because of the large number of saloons in Dodge City, Wright and Langston had few problems with the sale of alcohol. Wright received his last notice concerning liquor sales in December 1879. The commander directed the sutler to not sell alcohol to anyone appearing intoxicated and to sell it by the drink. The post commander further ordered Wright to open his store between the hours of reveille and tattoo. Wright and Langston remained in operation until the deactivation of the post in 1882.³²

Despite the problems with alcohol at Fort Dodge, the post commander could not abolish the position of post sutler because the post was almost two hundred miles from a major city that had mercantile stores, and because the army did not supply the men with simple items such as toothbrushes, towels, and extra buttons for uniforms, and alcohol. The army struggled just to supply the isolated post with ammunition and basic food supplies. The sutler assisted with supply and provided an area for relaxation and entertainment.

NOTES

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- ² James William Ladd, diary, 1 January 1865 - December 1865, JWLF; Leo Oliva, "Fort Dodge," 61.
- ³ James W. Ladd, diary, 1 January 1865 - 31 December 1865, JWLF; Weichselbaum, "Statement of Theodore Weichselbaum," 564; Leo Oliva, "Fort Dodge," 21.
- ⁴ James William Ladd, diary, 1 January 1865- 31 December 1865, JWLF; Leo Oliva, "Fort Dodge," 62.
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- ⁸ Henry Douglas, General Orders no. 2, 13 January 1866, Fort Dodge Headquarters Records General Orders and Circulars 1866-1881, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma, M989, roll 23 (Hereafter cited as FDHRGOC); R. S. Morris, General Orders no. 18, 5 March 1866, FDHRGOC.
- ⁹ G. A. Gordon, letter to William Ladd, 22 April 1866, FDHRGOC; G. A. Gordon, General Orders no. 28, 9 May 1866, FDHRGOC; G. A. Gordon, General Orders no. 33, 14 June 1866, FDHRGOC; Strate, Sentinel to the Cimarron, 63.
- ¹⁰ George H. Wallace, General Order no. 39, 11 August 1866, FDHRGOC; George H. Wallace, General Orders no. 40, 12 August 1866, FDHRGOC; Andrew Sheridan, letter to William Ladd, 15 August 1866, Fort Dodge Letters Sent 1866-1868, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma, M989 Roll 23 (Hereafter cited as FDLS).
- ¹¹ Andrew Sheridan, Special Orders no. 106, 24 October 1866, FDHRGOC.

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¹³ Andrew P. Sheridan, Special Orders no. 118, 5 November 1866, FDHRGOC; Isadore Douglas to Mrs. Bowman, 3 February 1867, LCC.

¹⁴ Henry Douglas to John E. Tappan, 27 September 1867, FDLS.

¹⁵ Bvt. Major Smith to Henry Douglas, 14 October 1867, FDHRGOC; Robert M. Wright, "Personal Reminiscences of Frontier Life in the Southwest," Transactions of the Kansas Historical Society 1901-1902 Vol. 7 (Topeka: W. Y. Morgan, 1902), 47-83; Frederick Young, Dodge City up through a Century in Story and Pictures (Dodge City, KS.: Boothill Museum, Inc., 1972), 12.

¹⁶ Henry Douglas to Chauncey McKeever, 19 January 1868, FDLS; Henry Douglas to Chauncey McKeever, 22 February 1868, FDLS.

¹⁷ Thomas S. Wallace to John Cargile, 10 March 1868, FDLS; Henry Douglas to Chauncey McKeever, 11 March, 1868, FDLS; Henry Douglas to Chauncey McKeever, 24 March 1868, FDLS; Henry Douglas to Robert Johnson, 6 May 1868, FDLS.

¹⁸ Henry Douglas to Chauncey McKeever, 19 January 1868, FDLS; George Malissey letter to Alvin G. White, 6 March 1868, FDLS; Thomas S. Wallace to Alvin G. White, 7 March 1868, FDLS; Post Adjutant (name illegible) to Alvin G. White, 7 March 1868, FDLS.

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²¹ Henry Douglas to E. D. Townsend, 5 May 1868, FDLS; Henry Douglas to E. D. Townsend, 13 July 1868, FDLS.

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²³ Henry Douglas to post sutler, 4 September 1868, FDLS; Henry Douglas, General Orders no. 21, 5 October 1868, FDLS.

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³¹ George F. Fowler to Robert M .Wright, 10 September 1876, FDLS.

³² Major Hambright to Robert M. Wright, 17 February 1879,; E. S. Smith to Post Trader, 2 December 1879, FDLS; "Local News," Ford County Globe 25 February 1879, p.3; Oliva, "Fort Dodge," 64.

CHAPTER FIVE

FORT DODGE POST SUTLERS AND DODGE CITY

During the late 1860s, Fort Dodge appeared to be on the edge of civilization. There were few settlers living on the plains of western Kansas. The railroad and the buffalo brought emigrants and civilization to the plains surrounding the isolated post. The sutlers and their clerks at Fort Dodge saw the coming of the railroad and the demand for buffalo as an opportunity to make money. These men actively helped develop the city of Dodge and its economy. Several of these men became prominent life-long members of Dodge City.

In 1871, two important technological advancements occurred that affected the area surrounding Fort Dodge. That year the fort received news that the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroad was to extend as far as the post. Also that year the buffalo hide industry discovered a process of tanning that turned the hide into a usable leather. Early attempts at tanning failed, producing a product that was too spongy. Most people used hides with the hair still attached as blankets and robes. Before 1871, tanned hides had to be obtained through trade with Native Americans.¹

This new tanning process led to a large market for buffalo hides and a boom of buffalo hunters and skinners in western Kansas. Fort Dodge post sutler, Robert Wright, estimated that the plains of Kansas had 100,000,000 buffalo with the herds moving north in the spring and south in the winter. With the news of the railroad, Wright saw an opportunity to capitalize on the buffalo trade and the railroad. During the spring of 1872, the news of the coming railroad, and the buffalo trade attracted other entrepreneurs to the area. One such businessman was George M. Hoover, who opened a bar in a tent near the site of the future railroad. Other entrepreneurs entered the area and opened saloons. In July 1872, Wright formed the Dodge City Town Company with Fort Dodge commanding officer, Colonel Richard I. Dodge; Major E. B. Kirk; the post surgeon; Major W. S. Tremaine, and Captain T. C. Tupper. The Company developed a town site four miles from Fort Dodge, near the future tracks of the new railroad. The men originally planned to develop 320 acres. The law required that the land be held by 100 to 200 occupants. Although people were moving into the area, there were not enough occupants to meet the requirement. The town company decided to develop eighty-seven acres instead. The men issued six hundred shares of stock at ten dollars each for a total of six thousand dollars. They sold town lots inside the

development area for fifty dollars. The men decided to name it after Fort Dodge commander Richard I. Dodge.²

As the railroad neared the site, more businesses opened in Dodge City. During the summer of 1872, Wright joined by buffalo hunter Charles Rath and his sutler store partner A. J. Anthony opened a general merchandise and buffalo trade store on Front Street in the fledgling town. The company specialized in buying and trading hides and selling goods to hunters. By agreement, Wright and Anthony managed the store while Rath hunted buffalo. Two of Wright's sutler store clerks took advantage of the new settlers in the area and the growing town. Clerks Herman J. Fringer and A. J. Peacock built the first frame building in the new town and opened a drugstore. The men supplied the hunters and other businessmen of the city with medicines and notions. Their store also served as Dodge's first post office. A few months later, looking for an even more lucrative business, the men moved down the street and built the Main Street Saloon. The new business offered billiards and drinks to hunters, businessmen, and soldiers.³

The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroad arrived in Dodge City in September 1872. The development of the new city increased rapidly. Upon completion of the railroad, the city consisted of a dozen frame houses, two dozen tents, and a few sod houses. There were also several stores, a

gunsmith, barbershop, and many saloons. By the end of 1872, the town consisted of sixty to seventy buildings and a population of five hundred. The arrival of the railroad created a large boom in the buffalo trade as well. During the first years of Dodge City's existence, it was common to find sixty to seventy thousand buffalo hides and robes awaiting shipment at Wright and Rath's store, Rath and Company. The company shipped 200,000 buffalo hides that year, and two hundred cars of buffalo hind quarters, and two cars of tongues. Wright recalled that buffalo was so plentiful that year that he "often ... shot them from the walls of [his]corral, for [his]hogs to feed upon." ⁴

In 1872, with the large number of people settling in Dodge City and the surrounding area, the townspeople of Dodge tried to have the county declared organized. Despite the recent growth in population, there were not enough people living in Ford County to support this action. Organization finally occurred with the governor's approval on April 5, 1873. During the fall of 1873, the county held elections to fill offices. The residents of Ford County elected former sutler store clerk, Herman Fringer, county clerk. ⁵

The continuous and intense hunting of buffalo significantly depleted the herds in Kansas. By 1876, buffalo hunters began moving farther south to follow the

diminishing herds. Wright realized that unless Dodge City found another source of business, the city would die. The railroad and Dodge City's location made it an ideal site for shipping cattle. In 1875, the citizens of Ford County elected him as their representative in the state legislature. The following year, Wright served on the House Committee on Texas Cattle. Dodge City benefited from his membership on this committee. In 1876, because of disease spreading to domestic livestock in cattletowns, the Kansas legislature drew a quarantine line west of Wichita to stop Texas cattle from entering those areas to the east. With Wright's influence, the line did not extend as far west as Dodge City. With Wichita and Abilene no longer able to ship cattle, Dodge City became the main shipping area in Kansas.⁶

In 1876, Dodge City prepared for the large herds of cattle and business that were to enter their city the following cattle season. Wright realized that Dodge City's future was in cattle shipping and not the quickly disappearing buffalo. The businessman sent agents to Texas to publicize Dodge City. Often, he personally traveled to Texas to talk to the drovers and dealers. To encourage the cattlemen to do their business with Rath and Company, Wright and his partner offered the drovers special banking privileges at the store.⁷

Wright's work proved successful. Dodge City experienced its first big year of cattle shipping in 1877. Robert Wright and his partner Charles Rath had a retail trade of \$250,000 that year. Although the city and the Rath and Company store were successful, Rath dissolved the company. Wright, believing that Dodge would continue to grow and thrive on the cattle business, bought Anthony's share of the business and formed a partnership with a former store clerk, Henry Beverly and another man named Charles Lane. The three men created the Wright, Beverly and Company supply house. They offered the citizens of Dodge and the visiting cowboys everything from clothing to studebaker wagons. Despite Dodge City's economic boom, Herman Fringer sold the Main Street Saloon.⁸

Although Dodge City experienced a growth in cattle shipments, emigrants were settling on the plains of western Kansas and farming the land. These farmers petitioned the Kansas State Legislature to extend the quarantine line farther west. They explained that the cattle carried Texas fever, which was killing domestic cattle. In response, the legislature agreed to extend the quarantine. Wright, running for re-election, protected Dodge City again. With his influence, the committee on Texas cattle extended the line to only the eastern edge of Ford County. This allowed Dodge City to continue shipping cattle.⁹

With business booming in Dodge City, the town held elections in November 1878. Wright ran for representative of Ford County again. Although he helped to develop the city, he did not go without criticism. The editor of the Ford County Globe wrote articles belittling Wright's actions and character. Insulted, Wright "whipped Mr. Murphy the editor in Dodge City's streets for malicious lies." The courts fined Wright for the sum of the editor's doctor bill. Despite the fight, Wright won the election by 407 votes. Herman Fringer also won the election for probate judge and received the appointment for postmaster again. A. J. Peacock and A. J. Anthony won positions as county commissioners.¹⁰

During the early 1880's the cattle industry continued to thrive in Dodge City. Wright continued to chair the Committee on Texas Cattle in the state legislature and protect the town's cattle interest. To encourage drovers to take their herds to Dodge, in 1880 he opened a store in Griffin, Texas. Wright offered the cattlemen the opportunity to purchase goods at his Texas store and pay for them in Dodge City after selling their herds. In October 1882, the army closed Fort Dodge. Wright moved his stock at the post sutler store to his store in Dodge City and dissolved his partnership with James Langston. A year later, Wright accepted the position of post custodian. He

took the position hoping to use the buildings to house cattle drovers and herds awaiting sale of their animals in Dodge City. In 1883, Wright also helped to create the Western Kansas Cattle Growers Association and allowed the cattlemen to use his store for a headquarters.¹¹

As more people moved to Dodge City, there was a greater push to "tame" the western Kansas town that became known as the "wickedest city on earth." Wright helped with the efforts in 1883 by donating money to create a landscaped park. The push for moral reform and temperance began to gain strength in the city. In 1884, the people of Dodge City elected Wright mayor. The families that had moved to Dodge called for Wright to close the saloons and clean up the town. Wright, sensing that moral reform and temperance would discourage cattle drovers from coming to Dodge, ignored the reformers' demands. The governor of Kansas requested Wright to enforce reform in Dodge City, but Wright did not respond. In November 1884, the Attorney General visited Dodge in an attempt to close the saloons. Upon arrival, he found Wright had ordered them closed. After the Attorney General left Dodge City, the saloons reopened and business carried on as usual. That year the farmers of western Kansas also increased their demand for the end of cattle drives. As a result, in November 1884,

the state legislature quarantined Dodge City and ended cattle drives into the town.¹²

Life in Dodge City began to change in 1885. That year Wright's business partner Henry Beverly left Wright, Beverly and Company, and opened his own business in town. Unwilling to give up on the cattle industry in Dodge City, in March 1885 Robert Wright negotiated a right of way through western Kansas for the cattle drovers. That spring, the attempts to change and to reform continued. The citizens of Dodge City demanded that Wright enforce temperance laws. As a result, the saloons became drugstores and the wild days of Dodge City ended. In 1913, Wright wrote Dodge City the Cowboy Capitol and the Great Southwest in the Days of the Wild Indian, the Buffalo, the Cowboy, Dance Halls, Gambling Halls and Bad Men. In the book, Wright retold the story of the wild western town he helped to develop and turn into a western legend.¹³

Always seeking business opportunities, Robert Wright seized the opportunity to create a thriving town based on shipping of cattle and the sale of buffalo hides. Along with his store clerks, Wright helped to develop the town economically and politically. Not interested only in turning a profit, but genuinely interested in the town's development and survival, these men helped the city seek and develop a new industry when the buffalo trade died. After

establishing the cattle trade in Dodge City, Wright worked through the legislature and local politics to protect it. Like his counterparts in Larned, Wright remained in the city he helped to develop rather than taking the money and leaving the area.

NOTES

¹ Robert Dykstra, The Cattletowns (New York: Anteneum, 1968), 59-60.

² Dykstra, The Cattletowns, 57; Wright, "Reminiscences of Frontier Life," 78; "Old Bob Wright Pens a Real Book," Wichita Daily Eagle 13 June 1913.

³ Samuel Carter, Cowboy Capitol of the World: the Saga of Dodge City (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1973), 23; Frederick Young, Dodge City Up Through a Century in Story and Pictures (Dodge City, KS.: Boothill Museum Inc., 1972), 18; "The Drug Store," Ford County Globe 1 January 1878, p. 3;

⁴ Wright, Dodge City, 9; Faulk, 72-3, 91; Dykstra, Cattletowns, 58; "Wright and Beverly and Co.," Ford County Globe 1 January 1878, p. 3; Wright, "Reminiscences of Frontier Life," 78.

⁵ Wright, "Personal Reminiscences of Frontier Life," 75;

⁶ Dykstra, The Cattletowns, 156; George W. Martin, ed. Directory of State Government for the Years 1877 and 1878 (Topeka, George W. Martin Publishing House, 1877), 84.

⁷ Dykstra Cattletowns, 84, 155.

⁸ Dykstra, Cattletowns, 93; Carter, Cowboy Capitol, 36.

⁹ Dykstra, Cattletowns, 156.

¹⁰ Wright, Dodge City 154; "County Officers," Ford County Globe 1 January 1878; "Commissioners Proceedings," Ford County Globe 12 November 1878; "The Drug Store," Ford County Globe 1 January 1878; "Announcement," Ford County Globe 23 July 1878; "Judge Fringer Confirmed," Ford County Globe 11 February 1879.

¹¹ Dykstra, Cattletowns, 95; Oliva, "Fort Dodge," 76.

¹² Dykstra, Cattletowns, 279, 335.

¹³ Dykstra, Cattletowns, 93, 338; Wright, Dodge City
237; "Old Bob Pens a Real Book," Wichita Daily Eagle 12 June
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CONCLUSION

United States army post sutlers, later referred to as post traders, contributed greatly to the quality of life of the frontier soldiers at Fort Larned and Fort Dodge between 1859 and 1882. These businessmen also contributed to town development on the western Kansas frontier. Most of these men during their appointments as sutler, and after the army closed the forts, participated in organizing and promoting of the Kansas towns of Larned and Dodge City.

The post sutler provided the post with an invaluable service. These men provided a ready source of supplemental supplies and food. In addition, they provided the men of the post with entertainment. These services helped to keep morale high among the soldiers, improve their health, and possibly kept many from deserting. The merchandise provided by the post sutler also prevented the army from spending extra money to supply the garrison with goods considered to be a luxury.

The activities of the post sutler, while supplying the soldiers with goods they could not otherwise obtain from the army commissary, also created problems among soldiers, civilians, and other sutlers. Alcohol sales contributed to most of the problems between post commanders, civilians, and the sutler. These businessmen also faced problems with

from other sutlers. Still these problems did not detract from the contributions that these entrepreneurs made to the lives of soldiers at the post.

The post sutlers frequently opened their stores on the post to civilians who needed supplies. These businessmen, always seeking profitable business ventures, helped to organize and economically develop the neighboring towns of Dodge City and Larned. They often became prominent citizens in the two towns, serving in political offices and opening stores. To prevent the towns from dying like so many other prairie towns in western Kansas, the sutlers promoted links between the towns and the railroads, and in some cases to the Texas cattle drovers who were driving cattle up the trails to the railheads in Kansas.

In 1861 the army paymaster general, Benjamin F. Larned, asked in a letter, "Are [sutlers] necessary? If so, they are a necessary evil."¹ The post sutler was necessary to the everyday functioning of frontier army posts, but they were not evil. Sutlers supplying the frontier army were honest businessmen. Unfortunately, the acts of sutlers during the Civil War, and a few minor incidents after the war, tarnished their reputation. These men were hard workers who seized financial opportunities. Their efforts boosted military morale and made life for the frontier army more pleasant. They also helped to develop and settle the plains

of western Kansas. Ultimately, the efforts of the post sutler helped to develop the western frontier and close a chapter in American history.

In the mid-1890s due to problems with alcoholism and growing administrative problems, the army abolished the post sutler system and replaced it with the government owned post exchange system. The post exchange offered a broader selection of goods and services. Army leaders hoped that by owning the post trading system, the army could control the distribution of alcohol, offer more reasonable priced merchandise, and improve conditions for the increasing number of wives and families who accompanied men serving at the posts.²

- ¹ Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders, 8, 211-212.
- ² Delo, Peddlers and Post Traders 128.

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APPENDIX

Schedule of Articles Sold by Post Sutler
 Ft. Larned, Kansas and prices fixed by the
 Council of Administration
 Oct. 15, 1863

(Spelling and punctuation are as found in original document)

ARTICLES SOLD	COST TO SUTLER	COST BY WHICH SOLD
Currents	35 cts per lb	0.60
Chew Tobacco	69 " " "	0.90
Divine Song Books	75 " per doz.	0.15
Union Envelopes	1.75 per box	3.50
Novels	25 cts each	0.50
Blank Books	19 " "	0.35
" "	19 " "	0.35
Red Ink per bottle	1.27 " "	0.30
Canary Envelopes per hundreds	45 cts	0.75
Albata Pens per (<i>illegible</i>)	60 cts	1.20
Medal Pens " "	1.60	2.00
Envelopes per hundred	30 cts	0.50
50 ct Novels	35 cts	0.75
Highlander Cards per pack	12 1/2 "	0.25
Brogans Mens per pair	1.25	2.00
Lin's Gaiter	1.87 1/2	2.70
Top Sole Brogans	2.25	3.00
Knives and Forks per set	1.10	1.50
" " " " "	1.50	2.00
" " " " "	2.00	3.00
" " " " "	2.00	3.00
" " " " "	2.00	3.00
Tea Spoons each one	5 cts	10cts
" " " "	4 cts	10cts
Emery Paper	2.75 per bundle	5.50
Mixed Candy	35 cts per lb.	0.60
Pine Apple bowls	28 " " "	0.50
Peppermint Drops	30 " "	0.50
Stick candy	25 " "	0.40
Rock Candy	30 " "	0.50
Check Shirts	71 cts. Each	1.25
" Shirts	79 " "	1.25
English Pants	1.00 "	1.55
Fancy Shirts	1.00 "	1.50
Linen Handkerchief	29 cts "	0.50
Merino Half hose	50 " per pair	0.75

Black Silk Cravats	1.00	each	1.35
Buck Gloves	19 "	"	1.50
" "	1.18	"	1.75
Military Vests	3.25	"	4.50
" Pants	3.00	"	4.25
Condition Powders	17 cts.	Per bottle	0.40
Playing Cards	12 1/7	per pack	0.25
Box Envelopes	1.50		3.00
Steep Pens per gross	1.20		2.00
Fine Combs	17 cts	a piece	0.25
" "	7 1/2 "	" " "	0.15
Dominoes in sets	6 1/2 "	" "	1.25
Pocket Books	46 "	each	0.60
Rose Oil per bottle	21 "	"	0.30
Diaper Pins	7 cts	"	0.15
French Coffee Pots	1.25	each	2.00
Stove Pans	75 cts	"	1.25
Potatoes per Bushel	50 cts	"	2.25
Apples " "	1.75		3.50
Corn " "	50 cts		7.80
Beer per Glass?	31 cts		1.00
White Sugar per Lb.	14 cts	per lb.	0.25
Saliratus	9 "	" " "	0.20
Soap	7 "	" " "	0.12
Raisins	29 "	" " "	0.50
Pepper	25 cts	per lb	0.50
Indigo	1.25	" "	2.00
Starch	7 "	" " "	0.15
Oysters in can	38 cts		0.25
Peaches " "	42 cts		0.85
Peas " "	41 cts		0.63
Corn " "	46 "		0.85
Lima Beans " "	46 "		0.85
Tomatoes " "	30 "		0.60
Smoking tobacco	13 "	per lb.	0.35
White Fish per fish	7.50	per fish	0.25
Paper per ream	1.20		2.40
" " "	60 cts		1.20
Twine per lb	50 "		1.00
Fine Cur Tobacco per box	2.00		4.00
Shot per lb	11 cts	pr lb	0.18
Saddles	11 dol	each	16.00
Sugar of Lemons	50 cts	per box	0.75
Hats	1.08		1.60
McClellan Cap	1.92		2.50

Panama Hats	1.34	2.00
Leghorn "	1.43	2.10
Straw "	42 cts.	0.50
Shoe Brushes	21 "	0.30
Matches per box of 1 doz	70 "	1.20
Candles	18 "	0.25
Coffee	35 "	0.25
Dried Apples	9 1/3 "	0.14
Pine Apples per can	46 "	0.55
Strawberries " "	46 "	0.85
Tobacco Per lb	75 "	1.00
" " "	22 "	0.44
" " "	40 "	0.75
" " "	50 "	0.80
" " "	50 "	0.80
Pepper Sauce	10 1/2 "	0.15
Tomato Catsup per bottle	12 1/2	0.20
Corks per box	75	1.50
Olive Oil per bottle	46	0.75
Pickles quart	30	0.45
Cream Tarter	37 1/2	0.50
Vermicelli per box	3.00	4.75
macaroni " "	3.00	4.75
Tea per lb	1.00	1.25
Percussion Caps per box	21 cts	0.30
Hostetters Bitters per bottle	67 "	1.00
Myers " " "	62 1/2	0.90
Brandy Cherries " "	42 "	0.60
Clothes Pins per doz	1.00	2.50
Axle Grease	17 cts	0.40
Pine Cheese each	1.00 " each	1.50
Ham "	5 1/2 "	0.08
Raisins " "	20 "	0.40
Extract lemon per bottle	17 "	0.25
" Vanilla " "	21 "	0.25
Tobacco " "	80 "	1.00
Farina per lb	15 "	0.30
Butter Crackers " "	7 "	0.12 1/2
Sweet " " "	8 "	0.13
Soda " " "	7	0.12 1/2
Salmon per can	67 "	1.00
Eso Coffee per box	6 "	0.13
Flanks "Pr." Each	25 "	0.50
Currant Jelly per can	37 1/2 cts	0.50
Lobsters per can	33 cts	0.50

Raspberries per can	46 "	0.85
Assorted Preserves " "	87 ½ "	1.10
Mustard French " "	15 "	0.30
London Club Sauce per bottle	33 "	0.50
Mackerel per ½ lb	7.00	12.00
Seed	10 cts	0.20
Cheese per lb	16 cts	0.22
Fancy Bridles each	1.50	2.25
Stiff bits	1.67	2.50
Hollin Bridles	1.50	2.25
Martingales	58 cts each	0.80
Ciringles	58 " "	0.80
coringets	50 " "	0.75
Cruppers	58 " "	0.80
Cups	15 " "	0.20
Dippers	11 " "	0.15
Coffee Boilers	1.57 " "	2.25
Tea Pots	58 " "	1.00
Coffee Boilers	1.38 " "	1.75
Coffee Boilers	1.12 " "	1.40
Lanterns	29 cts "	0.50
Tin Buckets	91 " each	1.40
Pepper Boxes	5 cts each	0.10
Match Boxes	12 ½ " "	0.20
Molasses Cans	16 ½ " "	0.25
Camp Cups	8 ½ " "	0.12 ½
Gluco Papers	1.59 per ream	2.00
Prints	2.25 " "	4.00
O& H Letter	3.25 " "	2.75
Pass	4.00 " "	4.75
Folscap	4.25 " "	5.00
Mem Books	6 ¼ cts each	0.12 ½
Packets	14 " "	0.20
Kip Brograns	1.17 per pr.	2.00
Canvass Shoes	2.25 " "	3.00
Child's Shoes	68 " "	1.30
Oxford Ties	1.54 " "	2.00
Plantation Bitters	70 cts per bot	1.00
Butcher's Knives	37 ½ " "	0.50
Packs Belts Per pack	80 cts.	1.60
Hunting Knives	37 " each	0.50
Brass Buttons	75 per (<i>illegible</i>)	1.50
Socks per (<i>illegible</i>)	(<i>illegible</i>)	0.15
Green Blankets	\$10.00 per pr.	13.00
Indigo Blue do.	8.50 " "	11.00

Dark " "	12.25 " "	15.00
Blue Cloth	2.25 " yd.	3.00
Chintz Shawl	7.00 Pkg.	11.00
" Handkerchiefs	3.75 "	5.50
Hair Pipe	0.8cts per inch	0.10
Pierced Brooches	1.00 " pr.	1.50
" "	75 cts " "	1.25
" "	40 " "	0.75
Mex. Spurs	1.04 " pr	1.50
" "	1.02 " "	1.50
" " Straps	.17 cts " "	0.25
Axes	1.25	1.60
" Handles	18 cts "	0.25
Rein Snaps	35 " "	0.40
Coffee Mills	31 " "	0.50
" "	67 " "	1.00
Gimlets	4 " "	0.6
Curry Combs	17 " "	0.25
Horse Brushes	68 " "	0.80
Wood Stirrups	40 " per pair	0.75
Wood Robe Hooks	25 " " Doz.	0.40
Chest Lock	13 " Each	0.25
Skillets and Lids	61/2 " per Lb.	0.9 per lb
Mex. Spurs	62 1/2 cts Pr.	0.80
Forks	67 cts Each	0.75
Candle Sticks	6 1/4 cts	0.15
" " sliding socket	11 cts "	0.25
Army Knives	87 1/2 cts "	1.25
Padlocks	9 cts "	0.15
"	12 1/2 " "	0.25
Spurs	52 cts per pr.	0.75
Pie Plates	60 cts per Doz	1.00
Lager Beer Faucets	25 cts each	0.50
Powder Flasks	35 cts "	0.50
Pistol Flasks	1.00 Each	1.50
" "	25 cts "	0.50
Gun Lubes	50cts per Doz	1.00
Pocket Knives	50 cts Each	0.55
" "	56 cts "	0.75
" "	62 1/2 " "	0.75
Scissors	17 " "	0.30
"	37 1/2 " "	0.50
"	62 1/2 " "	0.75
Razors	67 " "	0.88
Coffee Mills	33 " "	0.70

Butcher Knives	33 “ “	0.50
“ “	21 “ “	0.40
“ “	23 “ “	0.75
Powder Horns	83 “ “	1.00
Tea Spoons	33 “ “	0.40
Table “	62 ½ “ “	0.70
Tea “	50 “ “	0.70
Table “	85 “ “	1.00
Fish Hooks	4 “ per Doz.	0.10
Wool Hats	75 cts each	1.25
Mirrors	33 “ “	0.50
“ open	14 “ “	0.25
Silver Ear Bobs	12 “ “	0.50 per pr
Beads	20 cts per string	0.35
Figs per Drum		
Sparkling (<i>illegible</i>)	1.16 per Bottle	1.90 per bottle
One Gallon kegs	67 cts each	1.10
Two “ “	90 cts “	1.50
Sardines	½ boxes cent 36 cts	0.60
	¼ “ “ 24 cts	0.40
Dried Peaches		
Fancy Soap	50 cts per Doz.	1.00 per doz
Gilt Mirrors	25 cts each	0.40
8 Indian Prints	19 “ “	0.25
Fancy Prints	18 cts per Yd.	0.25
Denims	25 “ “ “	0.35
Blue Drill	30 “ “ “	0.40
Blea. Shirling	30 “ “ “	0.40
“ “	20 “ “ “	0.30
Domestics	30 “ “ “	0.40
Turkey Red	20 “ “ “	0.30
Scarlet Ferreting	35 cts per Doz.	0.70
Wound (<i>sic</i>) Cinnamon	2.70 per Box	4.00
Apple Presr	41 cts “ Can	0.70
Asstd Jelly	44 “ “ “	0.75
Ink 2 oz. Bottles	3 “ Each	0.10
Nutmegs	10 cts per oz	0.15
Half Gallon Pickles	46 cts per half gal. Bottle	0.75
Dried Apples	8 “ “ Lbs.	0.12
Eggs	20 “ “ Doz.	0.30
Corn Meal	2 cts per lb.	0.04
Boots	65 cts per pr.	10.00
“	5.00 “ “	7.50
Needles	5 cts “ paper	0.10
Cloves	45 cts “ lb	0.60

Gum Arabid	1.00 “ “	1.50
Whiskey Tumblers	1.50 “ Doz	2.50 per doz
Child's Shoes	65 per pair	1.00
Bowl and Pitcher	1.75 each	2.50
Pipes	1.80 Each	2.25
“	75 “	1.10
“	2.25 “	2.75
“	5.00 “	7.50
“	3.00 “	4.25
Indian Rubber Pipes	9.00 per Doz	13.50
Canton Flan. O. Shirts	1.17 “	1.50
Flour	3.25 per Sack	4.75
Guitar Strings	11 ½ cts each	0.15
Horse Cards	15 “	0.25
Wash Board	33 “	0.50
Brooms	17 Each	0.35
Coffee Mills	1.00 “ large Size	1.50
Butter	15 cts per lb	0.25
Nails	7 cts “ “	0.14
Spikes	7 “ “ “	0.14
Ayers Sarsparilla	67 “ “ Bottle	1.00
Bitters	17 “ “ “	0.30
Pants	250 per pr	3.75
Silk Undershirts	2.00 Each	2.75
Summer Coats	2.00 “	2.75
“ “	2.60 “	3.00
Bed Cord	25cts “	0.40
Tripoli	90 cts per Doz	1.80
Quart Pans	20 cts Ea.	0.50
Milk Strainers	23 “ “	0.50
Quart Masons	10 “ “	0.30
Nutmeg Graters	10 “ “	0.20
Chocolate	30 cts per pound	0.50
Tobacco Boxes	11 cts Each	0.25 Each
India Rubber Pouch	24 “	0.40
Leather Tobacco Bags	11 c “	0.25
Whiskey	50 cts per gal.	1.50 per gal
Revolvers with flask	\$10.00 Each	20.00
Hoop Skirts	1.75 “	2.50
“ “	1.25 “	2.00
Grind Stones	4 cts per lb	0.10
Silk Sashes	13.00 Each	16.00
“ “	12.00 “	15.00
Shoulder Straps	1.75 per pr.	2.50
Thimbles	3 1/3 cts each	0.10 each

Furniture Print		22 cts per Yd	0.30
Pacific Plaid		30 " " "	0.40
Ticking		22 " " "	0.30
Canvas		25 " " "	0.35
Vest Buttons		8 1/3 cts per Doz	0.15
Fancy Wool Shirts		1.50 cts each	2.00
" " "		83 " "	1.60
Tooth Brushes		11 " Each	0.20 each
Mustang Liniment		14 1/2 " "	0.25
Bean Oil	" "	25 " "	0.40
Bay Rum	" "	60 " "	0.50
Boots	Per pr.	1.87 " "	2.50
Brogans	" "	95 cts	1.20
Epsom Salt	Per Lb	12 "	0.25
Castor Oil	Per Bot	11 1/2 "	0.25
Chalk	per lb	6 "	0.10
Flour of Emery	" "	20 "	0.50
Shaving Brushes		8 1/2 " each	0.15
Black Stick Pommade		6 1/4 "	0.12
Hair Dye	per bot.	71 "	1.25
Sirdlitz Powder	Per Box	31 1/4 "	0.50
Flax Seed	per lb	17	0.30
Essence Cinnamon	per doz	75 "	1.25
" peppermint	" "	75 "	1.25
do " "		6 1/4 "	0.12 1/2
Sage	per lb	40 "	0.60
Painkiller	per Bot.	19 "	0.30
Gurgling Oil	" "	19 "	0.30
Sweet Oil	" "	12 "	0.20 per bot.
Turpentine	" "	8 1/3 "	0.15
Verdogris	per oz	45 cts "	0.60
Powhatten Pipes	per pipe	2 1/4 cts "	0.05
Reed stems	per doz	6 "	0.15
Killikimmick Tob	per bale	\$1.00	1.50
Fancy Pipes		12 1/2 "	0.25
Murschaum Tobacco	per bale	\$2.50	3.50
Smoking Tobacco Cans	1/4 lb.	25cts	0.40
" " "	1/2 "	41 1/2	0.75
" " "	1 "	67 cts	1.00
" " Billy Braulys		4.00 per Bale	5.50
Virginia Chewing Tobacco		55 cts per lb.	0.75
Cigars Cerrantes		3.50 per box	4.50
Claret		34 1/2 cts " bottle	0.55
Sparkling Catawamba		1.08 1/3 cts " "	1.75
Indian Rubber Pipes		41 cts each	0.65

“ “ “	25cts “	0.40
“ “ “	62 ½ “	1.00
Monitor Cigars	3.00 per hundred	4.00
Cherokee Indian Tobacco	6.00 “ Bale	8.00
Flan. Shirts (Fancy)	1.55c Each	2.00
Linen Shirts	208 1/3 c Each	2.50
Hickory “	70cts “	1.00
Chick “	70 cts “	1.00
Paper Collars per doz.	30cts “	0.50
Linen Collars	17cts Each	0.25
Suspenders	37 1/2cts per pair	0.50
Glove (White)	17 “ “ “	0.20
Almond Soap	6 ¼ cts per cake	0.12 ½
Cologne	17cts “ bott	0.25
Clothes Brushes	37 ½ cts each	0.50
Hair “	41 ½ “ “	0.60
Goggles	37 “ per pair	0.50
Opera Hats	83 ½cts each	1.25
“ “	1.00 “ “	1.50
Hungarian Wool Hats	1.02 ½ cts “	2.25
“ “ “	1.00 “ “	1.50
Blue Jean Pants	3.50 per pair	4.25
Lt. Blue Military Pants	7.00 “ “	10.00
Dk “ “ “	7.00 “ “	10.00
Kersey Shirts	1.25 Each	1.85
Plaid. “ “	1.67cts “	2.15
Cotton Half Hose	21cts per pr	0.30
Asstd Soap	5 ½ cts per Cake	0.10
Wallets	19cts Each	0.40
White Gloves	19cts per pair	0.25 per pair
Plainvill Shirts	1.50 Each	2.00
Bro. Drill Drawers	39 ½ “	0.75
Coten(<i>sic</i>) Flannel “	44cts “	0.80
Watch Keys	3cts “	0.05
India Rubber Combs	11 cts Each	0.25
Glass	17 “ “	0.30
Merino Shirts	75 “ “	1.25
Col'd Cott Gloves	12 ½ “ per pair	0.25
Silk Stripe Cravats	17 “ Each	0.30
Cotton Hankerchiefs	11 “ “	0.20
Silk Pocket “	1.00 “	1.25
Black Silk Cravats	75cts Each	1.25
“ “ “	12 1/2cts “	1.75
Linen Handkerchiefs	30 “ “	0.50
Quilted Button Boots	3.75 “ per pair	5.00

Calf Pump Sole do.	3.50	“ “	4.25
Fancy Top “	2.50	“ “	3.50
Santa Fe Brots “	1.87 ½	“ “	3.00
Balmoral Shoes	2.00	“ “	2.50
Brogans	1.25	“ “	2.00
Oxford Ties	1.10	“ “	1.75
India Rubber Coats	3.00	Each	4.50
Overalls	50 cts	per pair	0.75
Rubber Leggins	1.12 ½	cts “ “	2.00
Cottonade Pants	1.50	“ “	2.00
Leather Valises	3.33	Each	4.25
Buck Gloves	80 cts	per pair	1.25
Ribbon Ties	17 cts	Each	0.25
Buck Purses	21 cts	“	0.49
Ink Stands	12 1/2 cts	“	0.25
Merino Undershirts	1.12 ½	“ “	1.60
Unbleached Drawers	84	“ “	1.20
Planters “	1.33	“	1.75
Enameled Bays	2.25c	Each	3.00
Military Vests	3.00	“	4.00
Lisle Tho. Gloves	21 cts	per pair	0.40
Wire Twist Tick	25 cts	“ Yd.	0.35
Russia Crash	12 ½	“ “ “	0.21
Black Russia Crash	17 ½	“ “ “	0.25
Furniture Print	25	“ “ “	0.35
Irwin Mills Bros. Prints	25	“ “ “	0.35
Mixed Cott Half Hose	21	“ “ “	0.30
Military Vests Buttons	18	“ “ Doz	0.35
West Branch Ticking	37 ½	cts per yd	0.45
Blue Nankin	37 ½	“ “ “	0.45
Scarlet Cloth	2.50	“ “	3.25
Brown. Shunting	40	“ “	0.50
Square Cut Shawls	21 cts	Each	0.50
3 Pr. Blankets	9.00	per pair	12.00
2 ½ “ “	8.00	“ “	11.00
Ivory Combs	11c	Each	0.25

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VITA

Stacy Webb Reaves

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Thesis: "A NECESSARY EVIL. . ." THE POST SUTLER
FORT LARNED, AND FORT DODGE, KANSAS

Major Field: History

Biographical:

Personal Data: Daughter of Silas and Deborah Webb;
married to George Reaves IV.

Education: Graduated from Adamsville Jr./Sr. High
School, Adamsville, Tennessee in May 1992;
received Bachelor of Science degree in Historic
Preservation from Southeast Missouri State
University, Cape Girardeau, Missouri in December
1995; Completed the requirements for the Master of
Arts degree with a major in History at Oklahoma
State University in May 1998.

Experience: Employed by Oklahoma State University as a
graduate teaching assistant; Department of
History, 1996-present. During summers employed as
a seasonal park ranger for the National Park
Service at Fort Larned National Historic Site,
Larned, Kansas, 1997 and Shiloh National Military
Park, Shiloh, Tennessee, 1992-1995.

Professional Memberships: American Association
of State and Local History, American
Association of Museums, Phi Alpha Theta.