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Article Summary: In 1877 James H Hamilton photographed a group of army officers, veterans of the 1876 Sioux campaigns, relaxing at the Camp Robinson post trader's store. Recent research has made it possible to identify those pictured and to more precisely date the photograph.

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Names: James H Hamilton, Charles A Johnson, Deane Monahan, William E Annin, Bainbridge Reynolds, Frederic S Calhoun, Thomas F Tobey, James F Simpson, James F Cummings, Six Feathers, Black Coal, Sharp Nose, Dr Valentine T McGillicuddy, White Horse, Lt Charles A Johnson, Old Eagle

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Photographs / Images: officers of the Fourteenth US Infantry and Third US Cavalry at the Camp Robinson store; Monahan family version of the preceding photograph; stereo card portrait of Six Feathers, 1877; Arapahoe chiefs before they moved to the Wind River Reservation, fall 1877: Friday, Six Feathers, Black Coal, Sharp Nose, Dr Valentine T McGillicuddy, White Horse, Lt Charles A Johnson, Old Eagle; carte-de-visite image of Lt Charles A Johnson; Capt Deane Monahan in retirement at Denver; Bainbridge Reynolds's 1873 West Point graduation photograph; Frederic S Calhoun in later years (portrait from Calhoun ACP file); Capt Thomas Tobey (Tobey ACP file); James F Cummings's 1876 West Point graduation photograph

A Photographic Epilogue TO THE GREAT SIOUX WAR

By Thomas R. Buecker

By fall 1877 the Great Sioux War on the northern Plains was over. Sitting Bull had fled to Canada, and most of the non-treaty warriors, including those led by Crazy Horse, had been defeated and forced to their agencies. One of the most important army posts during the war to subjugate the Sioux and Cheyenne was Camp Robinson, established in 1874 to protect the Red Cloud Indian Agency in northwestern Nebraska. During the winter and spring of 1876–77 hundreds of warriors who had destroyed Custer and a good part of his Seventh Cavalry returned there to surrender.

Although the fighting had ended, rumors spread through the camps at Red Cloud Agency that Crazy Horse and his band (who had surrendered May 5, 1877) would break away and renew the war. In early September the army leadership decided to arrest the warrior-chieftain and separate him from his followers. Additional cavalry forces were quickly sent to Camp Robinson. On September 5 Crazy Horse was mortally wounded by a soldier's bayonet while attempting to flee the post guardhouse. He died five hours later. In the last days of October all the Indians at Red Cloud Agency were moved to reservations—the Sioux to Dakota Territory and the Arapahos to the Wind River country in Wyoming.

In September or October several army officers, an Indian scout, and a civilian sat for a group photograph at Camp

Robinson. At that time James H. Hamilton, a Sioux City, Iowa, photographer, was on his way to the Black Hills to take pictures of the gold rush. Like other photographers traveling to the mining towns, he spent some time at Camp Robinson taking photographs of soldiers, scouts, and friendly agency chiefs. One can imagine the scene: several officers of the Fourteenth U. S. Infantry and Third U.S. Cavalry had gathered to relax at the post trader's store. The soldiers likely knew each other; most had served in George Crook's 1876 summer campaign. Perhaps this photograph commemorated that event. An Indian scout and civilian acquaintance were invited to sit in. At least two separate images were made before the men went

about their business. The moment caught on glass plates was over. By November most of the officers had left Camp Robinson for other duties.

For some years historians have known about this photograph, acknowledging it as an excellent 1870s image of Indian War officers at Camp Robinson (fig. 1). The problem was, none of the individuals was identified. It was an interesting period photograph, but who were those guys? Cap insignias could be plainly seen identifying the Fourteenth Infantry and Third Cavalry, the regiments stationed at Robinson during the fall of 1877. However, photograph comparisons would be needed in order to identify the men themselves.

Research began to provide the an-



Fig. 1. Courtesy The Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, F17445

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Sioux War Photograph



Fig. 2. The Monahan family version of the photograph. Courtesy Sigrid Brudie

swers in 1994. At the National Archives, a search of the Appointments, Commissions, and Personal (ACP) files of several Fourteenth Infantry officers stationed at Camp Robinson brought results. Evidently in the 1890s it became common to place photographs of retiring officers in their files. Those of Capt. Thomas F. Tobey and Lt. Frederic Calhoun were so located and matched to the Camp Robinson portrait. Soon thereafter the Nebraska State Historical Society received a donation of papers and letters relating to Lt. Charles A. Johnson, Fourteenth Infantry. A Carte-de-visite in the collection verified Johnson's identification. Also within the Society's extensive photograph collection was a stereo card image of a familiar-looking Indian man. The card was one

of several collected by General Crook's long-time aide, John G. Bourke. On the back of the card in Bourke's hand was written "White Horse," who was then an Indian scout at Camp Robinson. The stereo card image shows the same man pictured in the group photograph. Lt. James F. Cummings, Third Cavalry, also suspected of being in the group photograph, was identified through comparison with his West Point graduation picture. The man in civilian dress, three other cavalry officers, and the bearded infantry officer smoking the interesting pipe, remained unknown.

The break in the case came a few years later when Eli Paul at the Nebraska State Historical Society received a letter from Sigrid Brudie, a great-great-granddaughter of Deane Monahan, the

bearded Third Cavalry company commander wearing gauntlets* in the front row. She sent Paul a copy of a photograph in the family's possession and asked for further information (fig. 2). It was the same group view, except for the absence of the infantry officer seated at the end of the front row. Brudie also included the names of the men in the picture, found in a letter written by Monahan's daughter, Anna, in 1926. At that time Anna sent the photo, and information she compiled on Captain Monahan's 1876-79 service, to her brother, who was researching the Sioux War period. As a child, Anna would have known the officers; her letter verified the identifications of Calhoun, Tobey, Johnson, and Cummings. The Arapaho scout was listed as Six Feathers, not

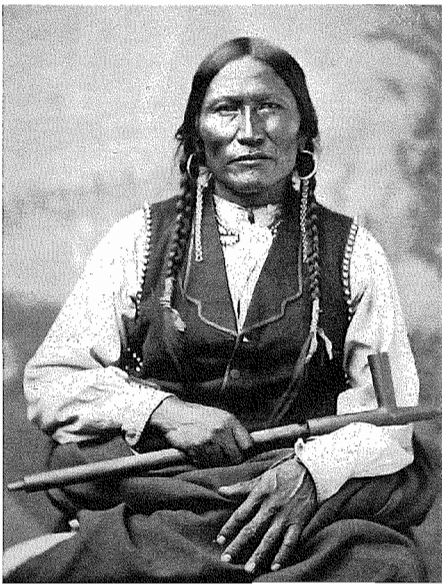


Fig. 3. Stereo card portrait of Six Feathers, 1877. Misidentified on the back as White Horse. NSHS-RG2955-9A



Fig. 4. Arapaho chiefs before they moved to the Wind River Reservation, fall 1877. Front Row (L to R): unknown, Friday, Six Feathers, Black Coal, Sharp Nose, unknown, unknown. Back Row (L to R): unknown, Dr. Valentine T. McGillicuddy, White Horse, Lt. Charles A. Johnson, Old Eagle. NSHS RG2955-28

White Horse— Anna Monahan likely received his identification from her father. Apparently we were misled by the incorrect label Bourke put on the stereo card more than a century ago.

Unfortunately the photograph owned by the Monahan descendants did not identify the officer seated at the end of the front row in the first image—he did not appear in the photograph they had. Nor was a name provided for the individual in civilian clothes. But now, for the first time, faces could be associated with the names of officers that show up continually in the records of the frontier army.

Although they were from diverse backgrounds, the officers in the photograph (fig. 2) represent a cross-section of company-level leadership typical in the army of the American West. Five of the seven officers pictured were veterans of Civil War service; four had held wartime commissions. Two were recent West Point graduates. While all seven achieved only company-grade rank in the frontier army, six had remained with the original regular army regiments in



Fig. 5. Carte-de-visite of Lt. Charles A. Johnson. NSHS-RG1652AM

which they were commissioned. Four of the men eventually served more than twenty years. Frontier duty was hard on many soldiers, both physically and

mentally. Three of the seven officers were retired due to disability; three left the army early because of personal or service-related difficulties. Regardless of past records or future indiscretions, in 1877 these soldiers had played their part in defeating the Plains tribesmen and bringing an end to the Sioux War.

Seated in the front row (left) is Six Feathers, a trusted Arapaho Indian scout at Camp Robinson (see also figs. 3 and 4). One of the nine hundred Northern Arapahos who resided at Red Cloud Agency, he was a prominent warrior, but not then considered a headman. In the fall of 1876 he enlisted as an Indian scout and served the army well in the winter Powder River campaign. In 1877 Six Feathers reenlisted and was known as one of “the able men to whom Arapahos looked up.” After the Arapahos moved to their Wyoming reservation, he was one of the subchiefs who acted as advisors and counselors in dealings with the whites and was a member of the reservation police. In later years Six Feathers was said to have the powers of prophesy.

Sioux War Photograph

Second from the left is 1st Lt. Charles A. Johnson, Company F, Fourteenth Infantry (see also figs. 4 & 5). Johnson, a Pennsylvania native, served with several Wisconsin regiments during the Civil War. In 1867 he was appointed a second lieutenant in the Fourteenth Infantry. He arrived at Camp Robinson with Crook's expedition in October 1876, and acted as company commander while his captain served as acting Indian agent after the army took over control from the civilian agents. Johnson also served as agent at Red Cloud Agency from January 11 to July 1, 1877, during the period of the largest surrenders of northern warriors. He remained on duty at Camp Robinson until 1879. Johnson retired due to disability in 1892 after twenty-six years of military service. He died in Washington, D. C., on December 22, 1893, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Third from the left, front row, is the true veteran of the group, Capt. Deane Monahan, commanding Company G, Third Cavalry (see also fig. 6). A native of Ireland, Monahan enlisted in the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen in 1856 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the new Third Cavalry in 1862. After the Civil War he remained with the Third in the Southwest and later on the upper Plains in Nebraska and Wyoming. Described as "a great, tall man with giant shoulders and with few peers as a horseman," Monahan commanded one of the four companies sent to capture Crazy Horse in early September 1877. He retired because of disability in 1884 and died in 1920 at Denver, Colorado.

The dapper gentleman in civilian dress (fourth from left) was identified by Monahan's daughter as "either the post trader or his assistant." The post trader in 1877 was Benjamin S. Paddock in partnership with William E. Annin. Considering the known age difference between the two, the individual pictured might be Annin.

To his left is 2d Lt. Bainbridge Reynolds, Company F, Third Cavalry. The son of Bvt. Maj. Gen. Joseph J.



Fig. 6. Capt. Deane Monahan in retirement at Denver. Courtesy Sigrid Brudle



Fig. 7. Bainbridge Reynolds's 1873 West Point graduation photograph. Courtesy Paul Hedren

Reynolds (recently retired colonel of the Third Cavalry), the younger Reynolds graduated from West Point in 1873

(see also fig. 7). Assigned to his father's regiment, he participated in the 1876 battles of Little Powder River, Rosebud, and Slim Buttes. Arriving with the cavalry companies sent from Fort Laramie early that September, Lieutenant Reynolds left Camp Robinson in late October as part of the escort moving the Oglalas to their Dakota reservation. In the course of eighteen years of service in the Third Cavalry, Reynolds was court martialed for drinking and had conduct charges pending when he resigned his commission in 1891. He died in 1901 in Washington, D. C.

The infantry officer holding a cue stick at the end of the row in figure 1 remains unidentified. His absence from the Monahan image is made conspicuous by the empty chair; perhaps he returned to the game before the second photograph was taken. If he was an officer stationed at Camp Robinson in the early fall of 1877, we are left with three possibilities: Capt. Thomas B. Burrowes, Company G, Ninth Infantry; Capt. James Kennington, Company B, Fourteenth Infantry; or Capt. Daniel W. Burke, Fourteenth Infantry. Further research or suggestions by readers may give us the answer.

The officer standing in the back row (left) is 2d Lt. Frederic S. Calhoun, Company F, Fourteenth Infantry (see also fig. 8). The brother of Lt. James Calhoun, Seventh Cavalry, himself the brother-in-law of George A. Custer, Frederic Calhoun was commissioned in 1875 from civilian life into the Fourteenth Infantry. He narrowly missed receiving a temporary assignment with the Seventh Cavalry that fateful summer of 1876. A veteran of Crook's "Horsemeat March," Calhoun was serving as the post adjutant at Camp Robinson at the time of this photograph. After fifteen years of service, all in the Fourteenth Infantry (but including one hundred days in the Civil War as a private in the 137th Ohio Infantry), Calhoun retired due to disability in 1890 and died in 1904.

Next is Calhoun's commanding officer, Capt. Thomas F. Tobey, who



Fig. 8. Frederic S. Calhoun in later years, portrait from Calhoun ACP file. National Archives and Records Administration.



Fig. 9. Capt. Thomas Tobey, from Tobey ACP file. National Archives and Records Administration



Fig. 10. James F. Cummings's 1876 West Point graduation photograph. U.S.M.A. Library, West Point, New York

commanded Company F (see also fig. 9). From 1862 to 1864 Tobey served with the Seventh Rhode Island Infantry, mustering out as a major. In 1865 he enlisted in the Fourteenth Infantry and remained with the regiment until his retirement twenty-six years later. He was promoted to captain in 1874 and led his company during the starvation march and the Slim Buttes fight. At Camp Robinson he was acting Indian agent from October 1876 to January 1877, and left with his company to Camp Douglas, Utah, on November 4, 1877. Tobey retired in 1892 and like Monahan (who also had twenty-eight years of service) died in 1920.

On Tobey's left is 2d Lt. James F. Simpson, Company G, Third Cavalry. He saw Civil War service from 1862 to 1864 as a captain in the Fourteenth Connecticut Infantry and participated in the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg before being wounded at Weldon Railroad, Virginia. After his recovery, he became a captain in the Second U. S. Veteran Volunteer Infantry

in February 1865. In 1867 Simpson received a regular army commission and served with the Fortieth Infantry (later reorganized into the Twenty-fifth Infantry), before transferring to the Third Cavalry in 1871. He was present at the Rosebud and Slim Buttes fights in the Great Sioux War. His company was also deployed to Camp Robinson during the September Crazy Horse troubles, then transferred to Camp Sheridan, Nebraska, in November 1877. Although a reliable officer, Simpson, like Reynolds, fell into personal difficulty and spent several periods in the government insane hospital in Washington. He was retired in 1887 and died at Prescott, Arizona, in 1899.

The last identified officer in the photograph (back row, far right) is 2d Lt. James F. Cummings, Company L, Third Cavalry. A native Texan, Cummings graduated in 1876 forty-sixth out of a class of forty-eight at West Point (see also fig. 10). He was assigned to the Third Cavalry Regiment and reported for duty at Camp Robinson in October of that year. In February 1877 the new

shavetail successfully led Company C of the Third to the Black Hills on a pursuit, attack, and capture of a hostile raider camp on Crow Creek near present Spearfish, South Dakota. He left Camp Robinson in October for the new Red Cloud Agency in Dakota Territory. Cummings continued to serve with the Third Cavalry in Nebraska and Wyoming before the regiment returned to the Southwest. There he ran afoul of regulations by double-selling his pay accounts and was dismissed from the army in 1884. His entire military service was with the Third Cavalry. After leaving the army Cummings was employed as a school superintendent, newspaper editor, and worked for the U. S. Engineer Department before his death in 1912 at Washington, D. C.

In addition to having no identification of its subjects, the first photograph (like the Monahan photograph) was not dated. Through examination of the post returns for Camp Robinson and the regimental returns for the Fourteenth Infantry and Third Cavalry, dates when

Sioux War Photograph

all the officers were present at the post can be established. The only possible periods are September 2–19 and October 1–24, 1877. According to a later reminiscence by Hamilton's son, Charles, the former period corresponds with the dates when photographer Hamilton was at Robinson. The picture setting was likely the post trader's store. In the background is a board and batten wall, the same construction technique used by the trader in some of his buildings. His store complex had an officers' billiard room, and in the first photograph the seated infantry officer is holding a cue stick.

The photograph also provides a valuable record of officers' clothing and appearance in the late 1870s. The three Company F infantry officers are in proper garrison uniform. While Calhoun and Johnson appear more casual with their blouses unbuttoned, Captain Tobey looks still on duty, wearing his

waistbelt and sword. The cavalry officers wear headgear typically seen in frontier garrisons; an assortment of issue and non-regulation hats. Monahan wears tall, non-issue boots, beaded gauntlets, and a private's five-button blouse without shoulder straps. The yellow, one- and one-half inch stripe worn by cavalry officers is visible on the trousers of Monahan and Reynolds; the dark blue version for infantry officers can be seen on Johnson and the unnamed officer on the right. Six Feathers is holding a standard Model 1873 Springfield carbine. The high regard held by many officers toward the Indian scouts is reflected by his presence.

The photograph reflects a number of interesting post-Civil War/Indian War army themes. It represents the high period of service for Civil War soldiers who had received regular army commissions after the war. The men in the picture participated in the 1876 Sioux

campaigns and were veterans of its battles. The photograph connects to the temporary assignment of army officers as agents at the Sioux agencies in 1876–77; three officers who so served at Red Cloud Agency are present.

These men witnessed the death of Crazy Horse, the most famous event in Fort Robinson's history. In the case of Lieutenant Calhoun, a certain irony resulted from the famed warrior's death. Crazy Horse had led the warriors that killed his brother and many Seventh Cavalry friends at the Little Bighorn. After his wounding, Crazy Horse was taken into the office where he later died, the office of post adjutant Lt. Frederic Calhoun. What at first appeared to be only an interesting frontier army photograph has, through further research, become an important artifact from the closing chapters of the Great Sioux War.