“Pretty Well Fixed for Defense”: Enclosed Army Posts in the Northern Plains, 1819-1872

(Article begins on page 2 below.)

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Article Summary: The great western forts in the movies were enclosed to protect their garrisons. This was not true of all actual forts, but more than one-third of those built on the northern plains were in fact closed in by log or heavy board walls, adjoining buildings, or even sod and earthworks.

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"Pretty Well Fixed for Defense":

ENCLOSED ARMY POSTS IN THE NORTHERN PLAINS, 1819-1872

By Thomas R. Buecker

Remember those great western forts we all saw in the movies? The ones with log walls, blockhouses, and huge gates through which rode the likes of Gen. George Custer, Randolph Scott, and John Wayne? They were strong, secure, palisaded structures that protected their garrisons from attack by warring tribesmen. They were, in fact, what the fort in the West should look like. We knew this. I remember my disappointment upon learning that the Fort Lincoln from which Custer rode did not have walls or a gate. Similarly, a question asked by more than one alert tourist after visiting the Fort Robinson Museum was, "OK. Now, where's the fort?"

But the enclosed fort on the plains isn't just a Hollywood myth. The accompanying map (fig. 2) shows sixty-three northern plains army posts built between 1819 and 1880, in Nebraska, the Dakotas, Montana, and Wyoming. All these posts were occupied a minimum of two years, and were specifically built for military purposes. The forts or camps shown in capital letters on the map are those I consider "enclosed" forts: closed in by log or heavy board walls, or adjoining buildings, or even sod and earthworks. Twenty-five posts—more than one-third of those built on the northern plains—were of the enclosed type.

We can identify five different types of enclosed fort. Our first example is the **building-enclosed** type, where back walls of contiguous buildings form the enclosure's defensive wall. The first United States military posts west of the Mississippi River were of this type: Cantonment Missouri, built in 1819,

Figure 1: Plains forts, Hollywood-style: Custer rides out of a stockade-enclosed Fort Lincoln in a 1936 serial titled, *Custer's Last Stand*. Courtesy of Brian Dippie

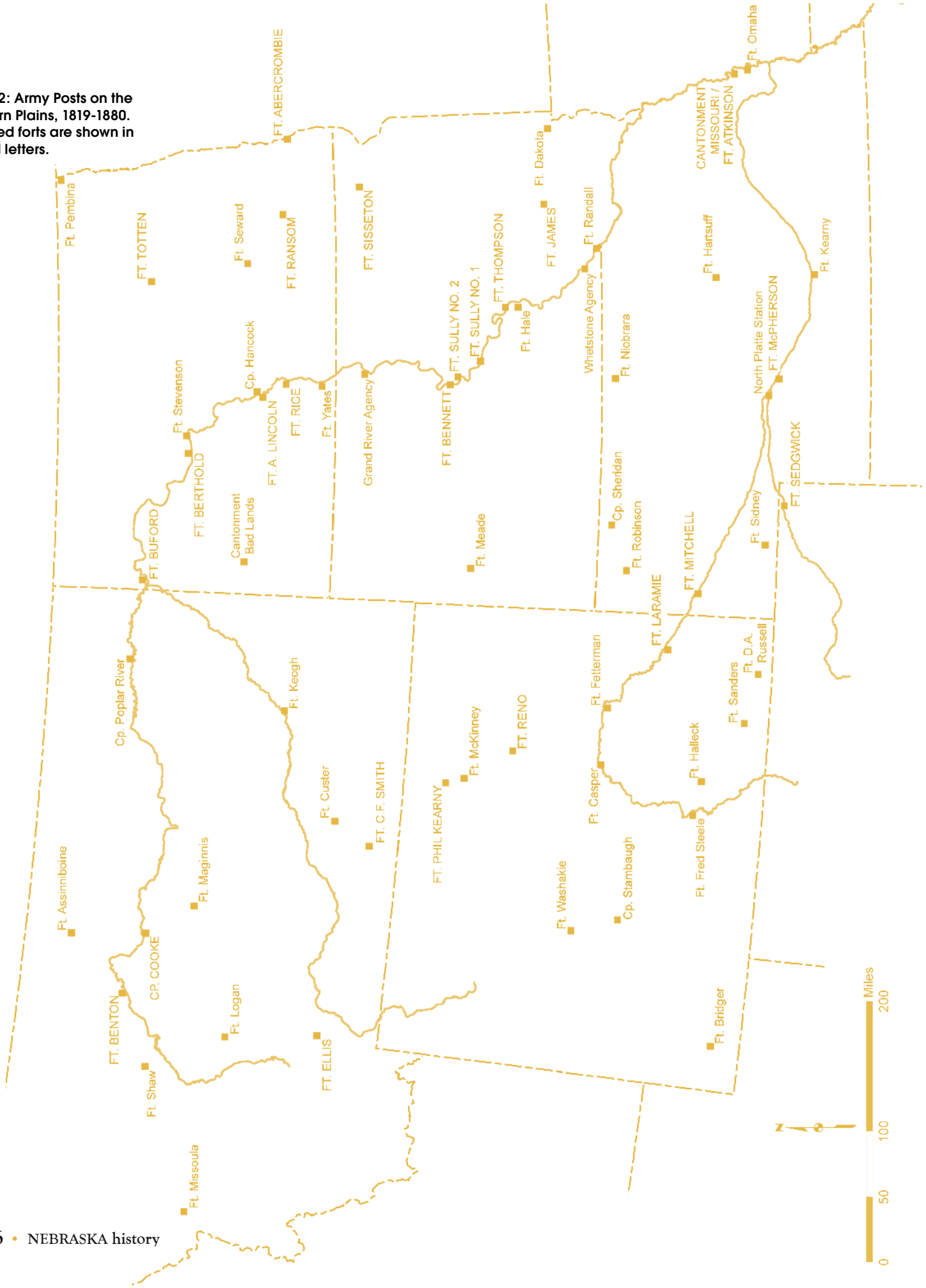

Figure 2: Army Posts on the Northern Plains, 1819-1880. Enclosed forts are shown in capital letters.

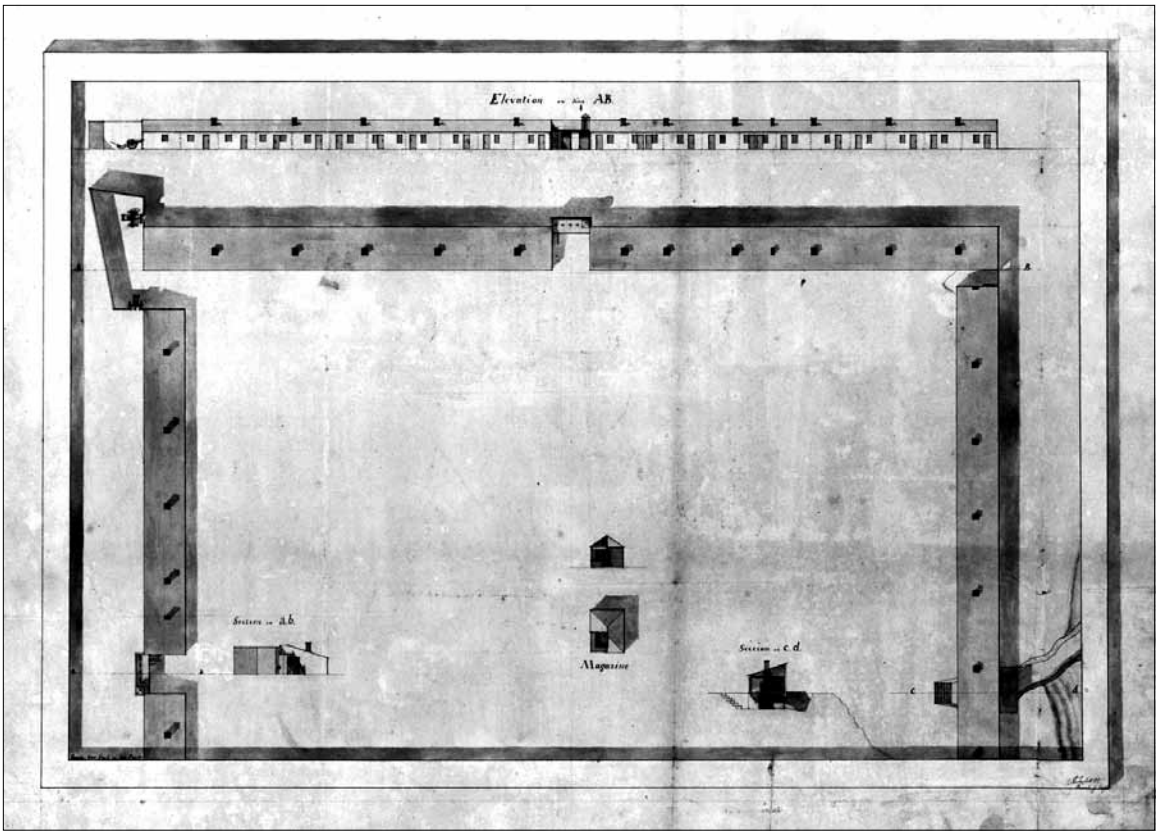

Figure 3: Plan of the north half of Fort Atkinson, showing the northwest bastion, with the Missouri River on the east (right) side, and the magazine in the center of the parade ground. Library of Congress

and replaced by Fort Atkinson in 1820 (fig. 3). At that time, Fort Atkinson was the largest army post in the United States, with each side of the fort enclosure more than two hundred yards long, and a capacity of one thousand soldiers, plus dependents. The first Fort Sully, built in present-day central South Dakota in 1864, was another example of a building-enclosed fort. Fort Mitchell, Nebraska, a small one-company post also built in 1864, was building-enclosed on three sides, with a stockade-protected corral adjoining on the east (fig. 4).

The **palisade-enclosed** fort was the traditional enclosed type, with a defensive wall completely surrounding the buildings. This wall was made of logs set vertically in a trench, or sawed boards fastened to a framework. The classic example of a palisaded fort in the West was Fort Phil Kearny (fig. 6). Built in 1866, it was the largest fully enclosed fort built on the northern plains. Engineered by Col. Henry Carrington, the palisade was built of pine logs, cut eleven feet in length and side-hewn to touch. The logs were set in a three-foot ditch, with a continuous banquette, or firing platform, and flared loopholes cut in at the tops between every fourth and fifth log.[1] Another enclosed fort was Fort Reno (1865-68, fig. 11), also on the Bozeman Trail, where its palisade walls were a separate construction feature that surrounded the buildings. A separate wall is also apparent in the original plan of Fort Ellis, built in 1867 in Montana Territory.[2]

Although Fort Buford, established near the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers in northwestern North Dakota, began as a full palisade-enclosed, one-company post in 1866, it was expanded to five-company size the next year. The rebuilt fort had a palisade wall on three sides, but was left open and not stockaded on the south side facing the Missouri River. Fort Thompson, built to guard the Crow Creek Agency, South Dakota, was surrounded by a cottonwood stockade three hundred by four hundred feet in size.[3]

On the northern plains, seven forts were originally built with palisade walls. Wall height was certainly not standard, varying from eight feet at Fort Phil Kearny, to a wall eighteen feet tall reported at Fort Totten (fig. 15).

Combination-enclosed forts were a common type on the northern plains. They were formed by

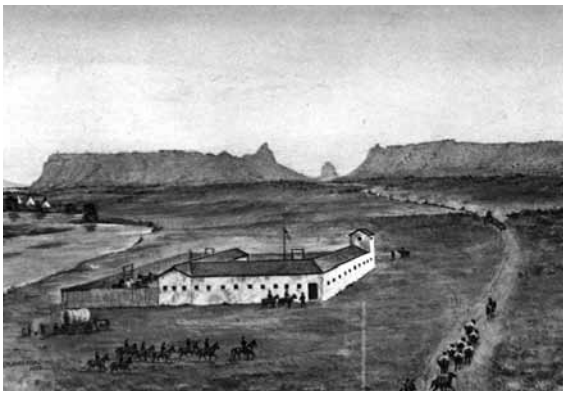

Figure 4: Fort Mitchell (1864-67) on the North Platte River with Scotts Bluff in left background, as painted by William H. Jackson. William Henry Jackson Collection at Scotts Bluff National Monument

the back walls of separate buildings, with log palisades filling in the gaps. An excellent example was Fort C. F. Smith (the third fort built on the Bozeman Trail, fig. 13), with log walls set between adobe buildings. Fort Rice is another example, as originally constructed in 1864 on the Missouri River in south-central Dakota. In the plan shown here (fig. 7), sections of palisade fill in between the buildings. The first Fort Totten, also in North Dakota, and Fort Cottonwood, later to become Fort McPherson, Nebraska, were both examples of combination construction.

Two structural adjuncts were necessary to effectively defend any enclosed perimeter: bastions and blockhouses. A bastion was simply a projection from the enclosing wall which enabled defenders to deliver an enfilading fire along the walls, with rifles or artillery. As shown on the plan for Fort Atkinson, one bastion could sweep two stretches of wall with cannon fire. At Camp Cooke in Montana Territory, at least one bastion was built to protect the post's more openly exposed perimeter.

A blockhouse was a small fortified building used as a flanking device in enclosed forts. Blockhouse design and purpose changed little from the earliest forts built on the American frontier. The first military blockhouse built on the northern plains was at the original Fort Kearny, built in southeastern Nebraska in 1846. At some posts, blockhouses were built as strongholds without a defensive wall. After touring western posts in 1866, Gen. William T. Sherman, commanding general of the United States Army, stated that army posts should have "two or three blockhouses" so that a few men in each could cover the perimeter with protective fire.[4] As a result, freestanding blockhouses appeared at several new forts, including

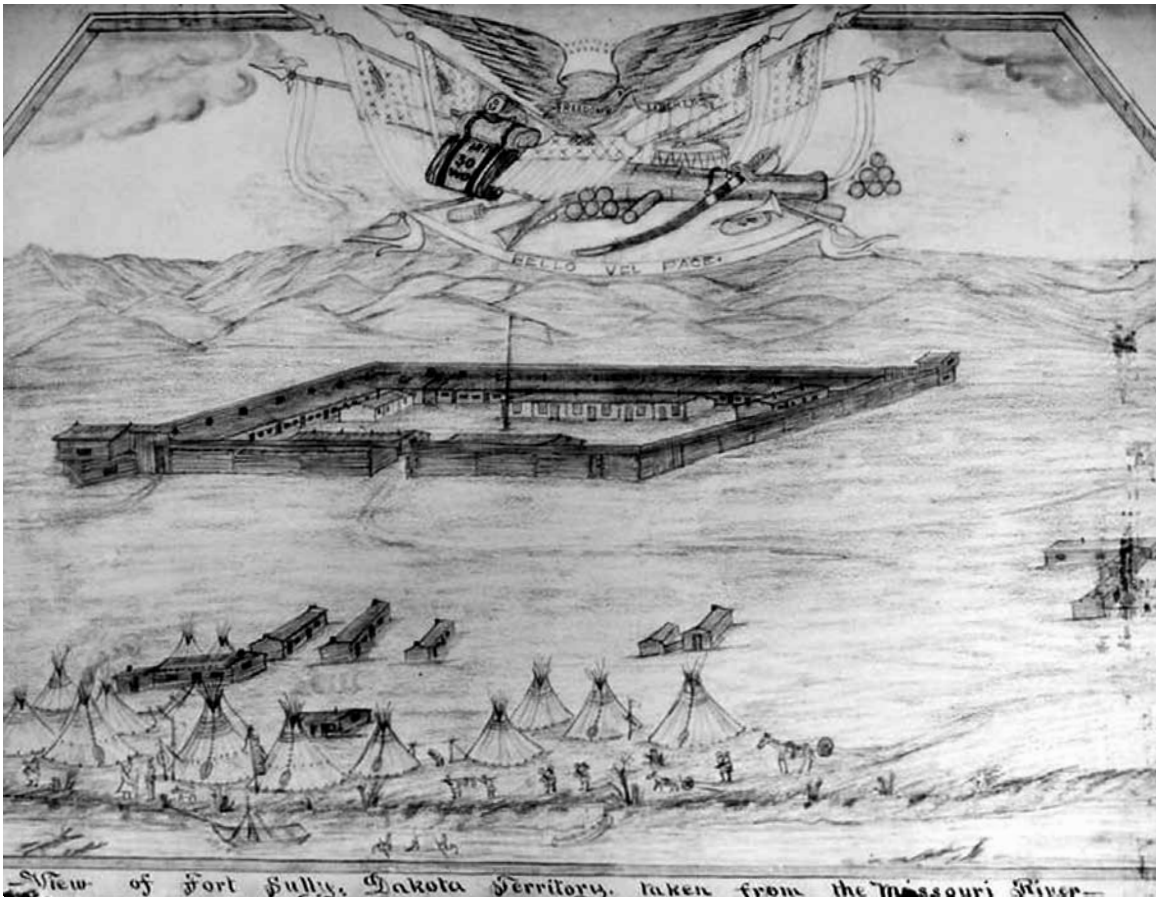

Figure 5: Sketch of Fort Sully I on the Missouri River, located on today's Farm Island Recreation Area, three miles east of Pierre, South Dakota. FortWiki.com

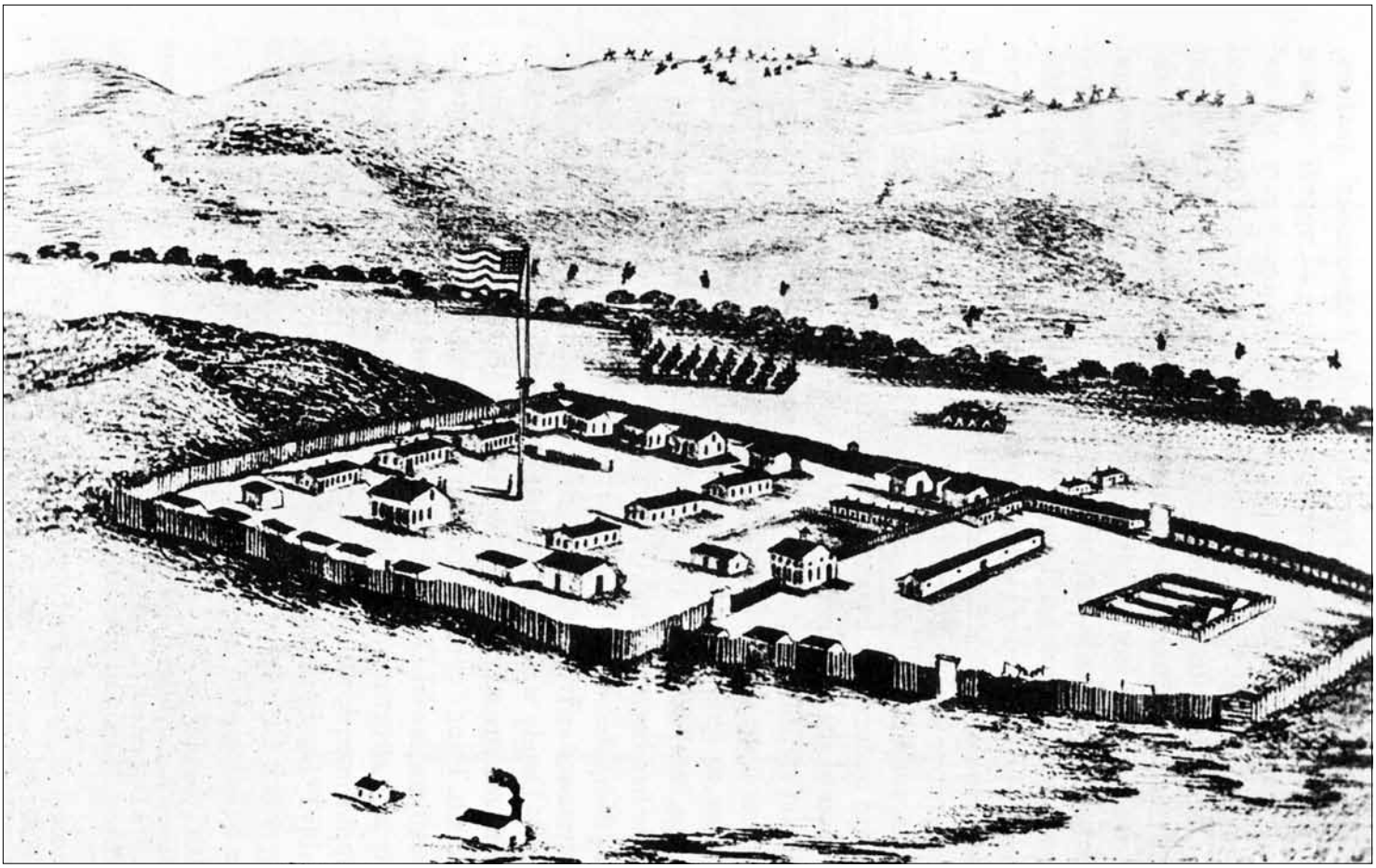

Figure 6: Fort Phil Kearny, with main post in center and quartermaster corral to right. National Archives

D. A. Russell and Sanders in Wyoming Territory, and Camp Baker in Montana.

It is important to note that three northern plains army posts began as enclosed civilian fur trade posts, purchased by the government for military use. Unfortunately, by the time the army took them over, the old structures were generally worn out and unfit for any habitation or long-term use. The first such post was Fort Laramie, purchased in 1849. Fort Benton, which became an army post in 1869, was too small, leading the post surgeon to remark, "Its capacity is sufficient for one superintendent and about 20 employes [sic], but not for a company of soldiers."[5] From 1864 to 1867, Fort Berthold in North Dakota was rented from the Northwest Fur Company. However, due to a dispute with their agent, the government evidently never owned or paid rent for its use.[6] Regardless of physical condition, each served for a time as an enclosed army post.

Two other types of enclosed forts were a little more down-to-earth. During the Civil War, defensive works were largely earthen fortifications. In the eastern theater, earthwork forts proved to be the state of the art, able to survive bombardment or heavy assault. Although Plains Indians lacked any form of artillery support, soil was available and several earthwork fortifications did appear in the southwest and on the northern plains.

Employed to a lesser degree than previously mentioned enclosed forts, **earthwork-enclosed** forts were those in which the buildings were completely surrounded by an earthwork and ditch. Several examples in classic form were located on the northern plains. Fort Wadsworth (fig. 9), later renamed Fort Sisseton, was built in northeastern South Dakota in 1864, and was protected by a six-foot-high earth breastwork surrounded by a ditch. Here, as in the case of eastern-theater earthen fortifications, embankments had to be continually resodded to prevent erosion. Another earthwork-enclosed fort was Fort Ransom (1867-72), built in southwestern North Dakota, where only its earthwork, ditch, and several cellar depressions remain.

One benefit of earthwork fortifications was that defensive works could easily be added to existing forts, if there was an available workforce. This was the case at two large trail forts in 1864-65. After

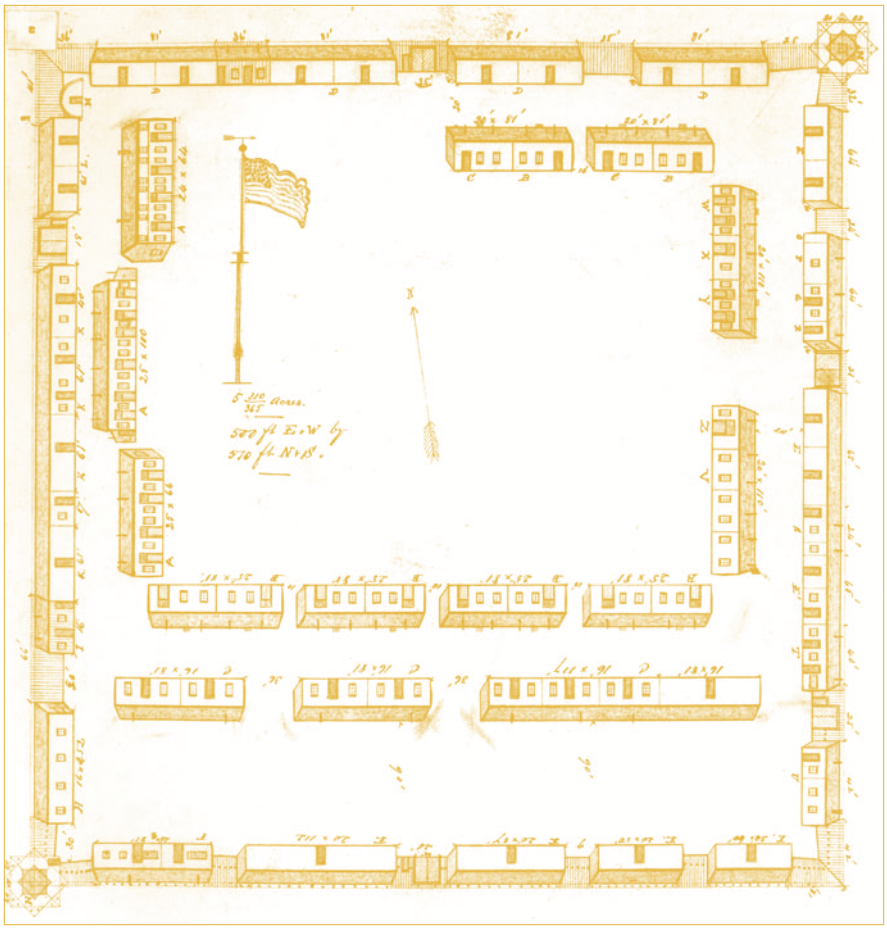

Figure 7: (Above) Plan of the first Fort Rice, an example of a combination-enclosed fort. Minnesota Historical Society

Figure 8: (Right) One of the three blockhouses built to protect Fort McKeen, the infantry post of Fort Abraham Lincoln. State Historical Society of North Dakota (A5822)

the Mud Springs fight in February 1865, soldiers at Fort Laramie dug three battery emplacements connected by a defensive trench to protect the open northeastern approach to the fort. In 1866, an adobe redoubt was built next to the Laramie River to anchor the line. Fort Kearny, located in extremely flat, open country along the Platte River, had fortifications dug during the 1864-65 Indian War. While the two smaller works were built to cover the northwest and a corral to the northeast, a large rectangular work, known as East Fort or Fort Mitchell, was built with a connecting trench to protect the fort's southern approach. Because neither Fort Kearny nor Fort Laramie ever came under direct attack, these fortifications were never put to use. As a later example, earthworks also appeared at the first site of Camp Sheridan, established in 1874 near the Spotted Tail Indian Agency. A long trench was dug to protect the south side of the camp, while revetments were placed on the corners of the bluff overlooking the agency.[7]

Sod-enclosed forts were built at several locations on the northern plains. The first was Fort Grattan, a small defensive work built by the 1855 Harney Expedition at the mouth of Ash Hollow. Constructed wholly of sods, its walls were three feet thick and six feet high. However, this fortification was barely completed before it was abandoned.

The second site was Camp Rankin, later renamed Fort Sedgwick. Although located in Colorado, Sedgwick was assigned to the Department of the Platte. The post was established in 1864 by the Seventh Iowa Cavalry. When the troops arrived, they were "ordered by telegram to make a fortification and prepare to hold the place at any odds." The sod stockade they built was 240 by 360 feet in size, with walls eight feet high (fig. 10).[8]

At least one stone fortification appeared on the northern plains. During the 1857 "Mormon War," the Mormons built a stone fort one hundred feet square with an adjoining stone corral at Fort Bridger in southwestern Wyoming. Several months after completion, the fort was seized by U.S. forces to be used as a supply depot. Inside the walls soldiers built storehouses, and then added two lunette fortifications, mounted with cannon, at the salient angles of the walls to create a defensive stronghold in case of attack (which never came). After Fort Bridger became a regular post, the stone fort was used for storage until it was gradually removed.[9]

An entirely different type of enclosure appeared at Camp Robinson, established in 1874 to guard the Red Cloud Indian Agency. As a means of protection in case of attack, hundreds of cords of firewood,

delivered by contract, were stacked as a defensive breastwork around the post buildings. For several years the garrison was surrounded by this temporary barricade. However, as the seasons changed and the "wall" served as the post fuel supply, it was gradually reduced in size.[10]

Naturally, the reason to enclose a fort was for protection. Early settlers in New England built stockades and blockhouses for defense. As settlement moved west, stockades were considered necessary to survive Indian attacks. At Fort Sully II, an inspecting officer reassured, "The post has a stockade and blockhouses of the most substantial construction."[11] In hostile settings, the building of the palisade was a high priority. A soldier resident boasted Fort Sully was "pretty well fixed for defense and cannot be taken very easily by the Indians."[12] However, western tribesmen were not prepared to besiege a fortified place.

The great majority of northern plains enclosed forts were built between 1863 and 1867. This time span corresponded with a period of intense warfare, which began with the 1862 Minnesota Uprising, followed by the Indian War of 1864-65, and then the Bozeman Trail war. In the five years following the 1862 attack on Fort Ridgely, the army built twenty-six forts on the northern plains. Eighteen, or 70 percent, were enclosed types.

A stockaded fort provided its inhabitants with a certain sense of security. While stockades could not be penetrated by any weapon commonly used by Indians, a fort's artillery could reach any attacking force well out of range of rifle fire. Stockades also provided a protective obstruction which an attacking force could not charge through.

Where stockades were built to hold cavalry and quartermaster animals, losses to post livestock were prevented. The corral enclosure at Fort Reno was one of the first defensive features completed at the post (fig. 11). At Fort Phil Kearny a massive quartermaster enclosure adjoined the south side of the main post. Built in the shape of a trapezoid, 525 by 675 feet in size, the quartermaster stockade protected mule stables, civilian employee quarters, and shops. At Fort Buford, the quartermaster and cavalry areas were integrated into the main post stockade.

Strong defenses were necessary at smaller, temporary military stations which housed fewer defenders. Troops were frequently needed to protect stage stations along the overland route through Nebraska and Wyoming, particularly during the 1864-65 Indian war. During that time, Fort McPherson provided guards to stations up to

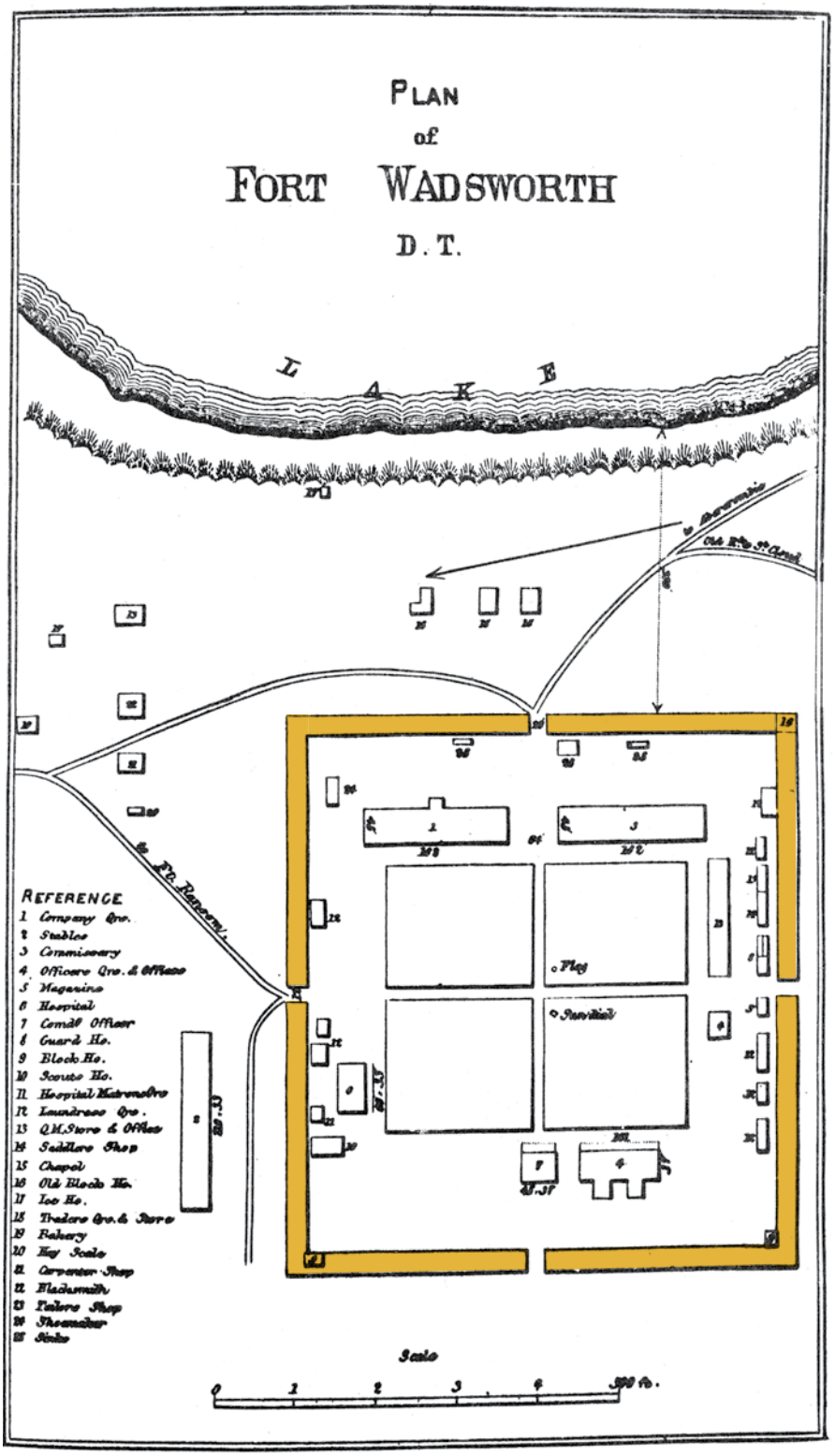

Figure 9: Plan of Fort Wadsworth (renamed Sisseton in 1876) with enclosing six-foot-high earthwork (highlighted). Philip H. Sheridan, *Outline Descriptions of Posts in the Military Division of the Missouri* (Chicago: Headquarters Military Division of the Missouri, 1876)

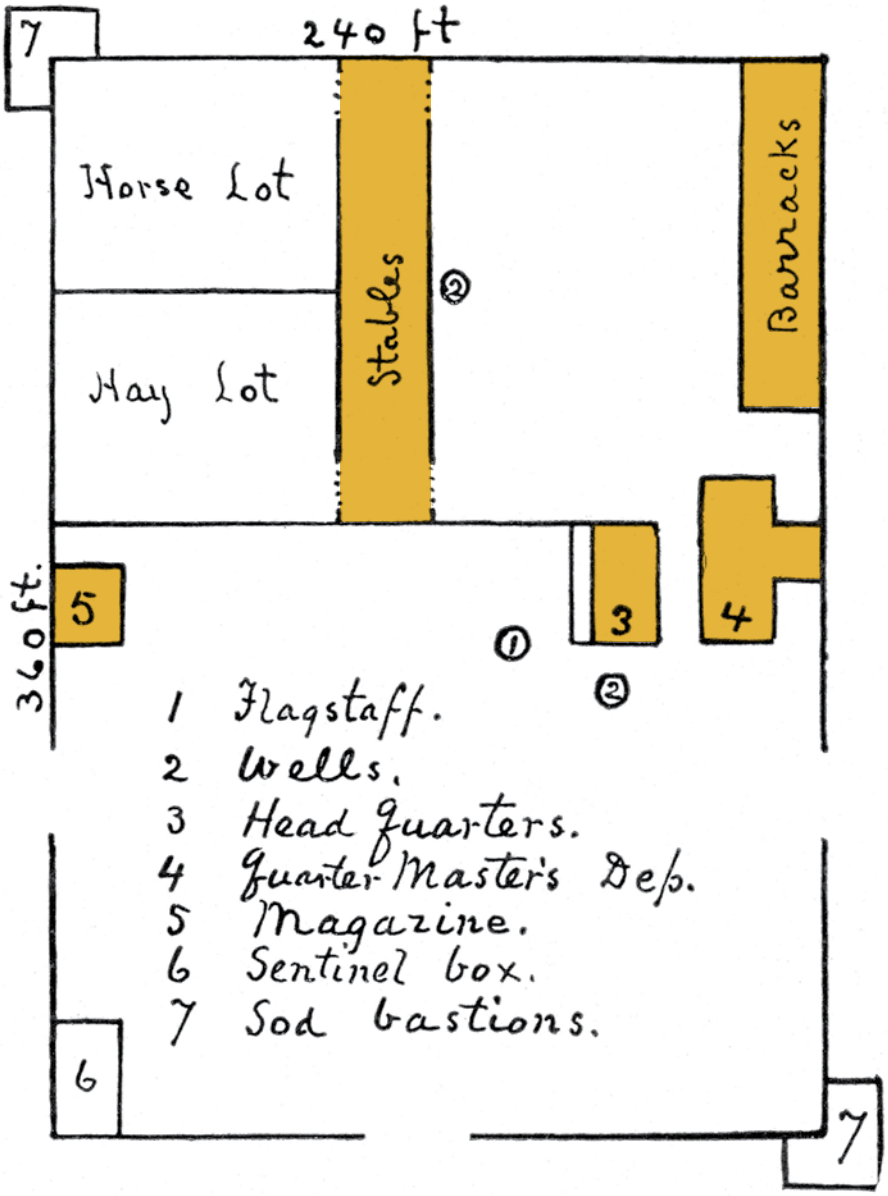

Figure 10: Plan of the sod-wall-enclosed Camp Rankin (Fort Sedgwick) before it was rebuilt as an open post. For clarity, the post's roofed buildings have been highlighted. Eugene F. Ware, *The Indian War of 1864* (Topeka, Kan.: Crane & Co., 1911), 329

one hundred miles west of the post. Other military outposts were established at stations east and west of Fort Kearny. Along the Platte River trail, sod walls protected buildings and corrals. Southeast of present-day Lexington, Plum Creek Station was established as a subpost of Fort McPherson. It had sod walls one hundred yards long with two corner bastions. Farther west, the stockade at O'Fallon's Bluff was extended to perform effective defense, "and could be held against any force of hostile Indians."[13] At the same point, it was reported the stockade around the corrals and sod buildings at Beauvais Station provided "ample protection to the garrison."[14]

At several major forts, defensive enclosures were planned but not built. War Department economics were the main reason against building: construction of walls at large posts could prove an expensive proposition. For example, the army plan for Fort Laramie called for a stout board fence or rubble wall, with blockhouses in diagonal corners. These defensive measures were rejected. Likewise, the original plan for Fort Kearny, Nebraska, was to enclose an area of four acres. But due to the expense of hauling lumber, and the fact that neighboring Indians were never a threat, the wall was not built. At Fort Stevenson, constructed to replace the ill-fated Fort Berthold, the sally port entrance to the fort "surmounted by a tower 10 feet square, from which the flagstaff rises" was built, but no other defensive works.[15]

Experience eventually proved such defensive measures unnecessary in many locations, such as at forts in open areas that were free from sudden attack. Army posts near populated areas and railroads, like Sidney Barracks or Fort Fred Steele, did not need to be fortified. Larger forts located out of harm's way were built as open posts and remained that way. Omaha Barracks and Fort D. A. Russell, the two largest forts built in the post-Civil War West, were never enclosed.

Because there were no walls or fortifications at open forts, travelers passing by were frequently confused and disillusioned. This was particularly the case at Fort Kearny (fig. 12), where one early visitor commented, "I had never seen a fort before and confess I had a good idea of curiosity to see this one . . . I was greatly disappointed with its appearance." Some passersby mistook the fort for a trading post.[16]

Although plains Indians were generally reluctant to attack fortified positions, they waged war on the white soldiers. In September 1862 Sisseton and Yankton Sioux attacked Fort Abercrombie, then an open post, and threatened the fort. Coming just weeks after the assault on Fort Ridgely, the post was "in immediate peril for many days, having no stockade." By February 1863, a stockade and blockhouses were completed, making the post "defensible against almost any number of Indians."[17]

The Upper Missouri forts came under fire shortly after they were established in the mid-1860s. This was particularly true at Fort Buford, where frequent hostile demonstrations were made just outside the garrison. On those occasions, artillery fire from the fort effectively drove off the harassing warriors. Fort Sedgwick became the point of refuge when nearby Julesburg came under heavy attack several times in early 1865. And between 1866 and 1868, a near-constant state of war existed at Fort Phil Kearny and along the Bozeman Trail.

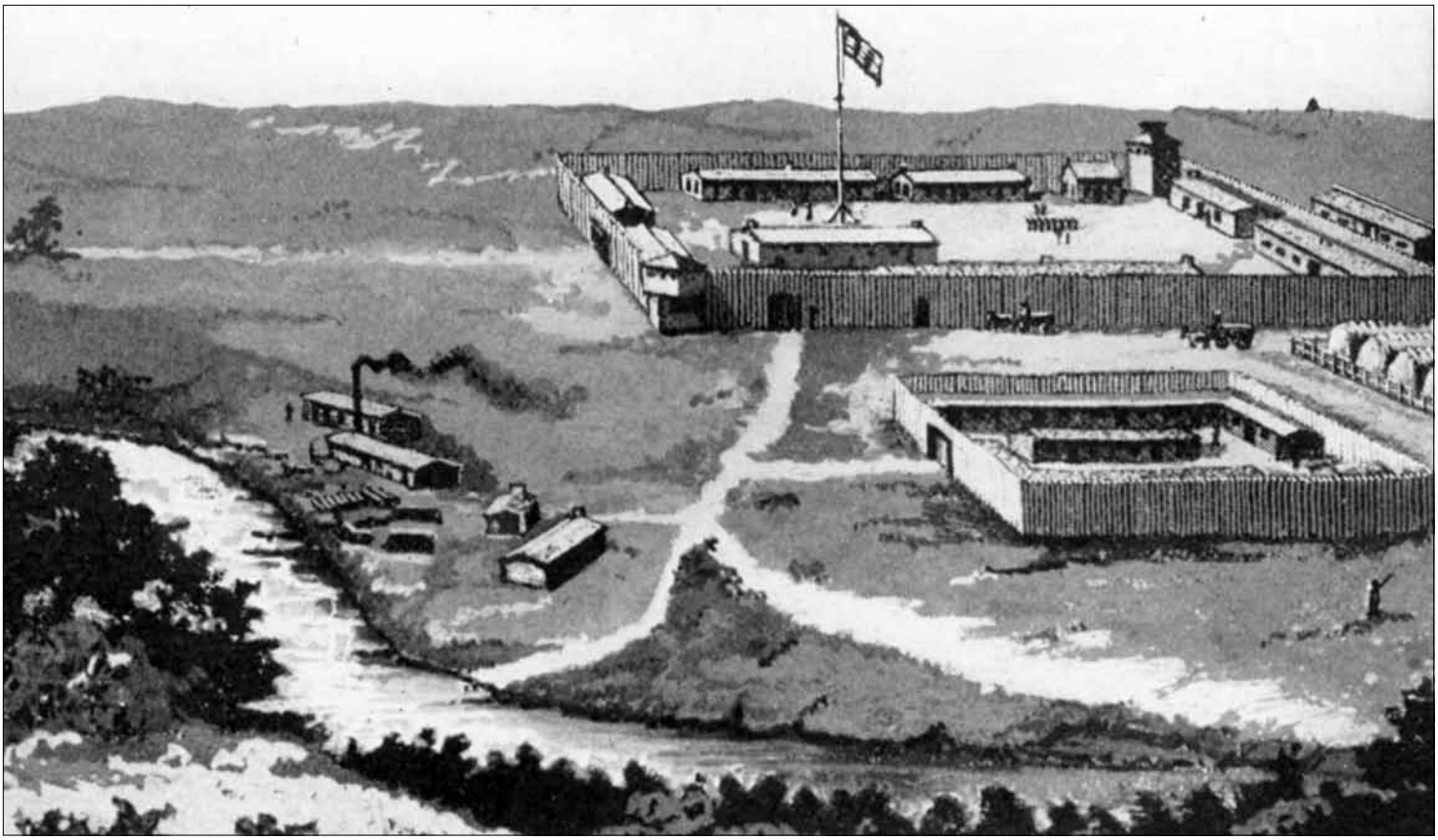

Figure 11: Enclosed by a log palisade, Fort Reno was the first fort on the Bozeman Trail. The separate palisaded quartermaster corral was 120 feet square. NSHS RG2448-2

Even with defensive works, fort inhabitants were frequently in fear of attack. For some days after the Fetterman disaster, constant drifting snowstorms made it possible for men to walk over the stockade at Phil Kearny. As a preventive measure, the beleaguered soldiers continually shoveled snow to clear it ten feet away from the palisade. During the emergency the troops received artillery training and each man "had his designated loop-hole or other position."[18]

Up the trail at Fort C. F. Smith, Elizabeth Burt, wife of Capt. Andrew Burt, expressed several concerns about the fort's safety. She feared that attacking warriors would climb over the log walls into the enclosure, or that they could climb through the windows of her quarters, which opened through those outside walls. Additionally, she noted that fire, once started among the log palisades between the buildings, could "sweep through the fort like a flash."[19]

Fire was also a danger at Fort Sedgwick during an attack in February 1865, but for a different reason. Although the walls and buildings of the fort were built of sod and therefore fireproof, two officers chose to observe the fight from the highest point in the enclosure, the top of a large haystack. As a precaution, two enlisted men were detailed with kettles of water, in case fire arrows from the attackers ignited the observation point.[20]

Although many considered stockades to be an essential component of western posts, their construction faced difficulties. First, there was generally a lack of timber on the northern plains, and it was expensive to freight-in the necessary materials. The estimated cost to build a wall around Fort Laramie, for example, was $12,000. Second, the construction was labor intensive. Thousands of trees had to be cut and formed into logs, and long stretches of ditches dug. At Fort Phil Kearny, it was determined to complete the stockade before work on other buildings could begin. If some of the thousands of hours involved in building the stockade might have been spent on training, this could have formed a basis for a truly effective defense.[21]

Stockade construction depended upon the skills of the builders. The first wall built around Fort Reno was carelessly constructed of cottonwood lumber. It had to be dismantled soon after completion and the logs cut to even lengths, realigned, and reset. Other stockade disadvantages were noted at Fort Reno. During Indian alarms, so many men watched the action from building roofs, stockade walls, and

Figure 12: Always an open post, Fort Kearny disappointed many travelers on the Overland Trail who expected to see a true fortification. William Henry Jackson Collection at Scotts Bluff National Monument

bastions for grandstands that the sentries were issued orders to fire upon anyone doing so. Additionally, the post surgeon complained that soldiers were in the habit of urinating "against the stockades at the calls of nature."[22]

Some officers in the late 1860s and 1870s were skeptical of the real value of stockades. Gen. Philippe de Trobriand, commander of the District of Dakota, thought it was better for troop morale to depend on vigilance and breechloaders rather than hide behind palisades. He felt the log walls around Fort Totten gave the place the disagreeable air of a prison.[23] Others, too, believed stockades were detrimental to troop morale. Troops on the upper Missouri had to face the fact that life beyond post walls was dangerous. Consequently, soldiers frequently seemed content to wait out emergencies rather than ride out into harm's way. When they did go out in pursuit, they faced the frustration of chasing an enemy that could not be caught.[24]

After inspecting Fort Phil Kearny, Maj. Gen. William B. Hazen criticized the building of a stockade for such a large garrison. He also believed that if no officers' wives were with the command, the two months of labor spent on the stockade could have been used on storehouses and quarters.[25] Medical officers were critical of the poor air circulation inside palisaded walls. The post surgeon at Fort Totten was pleased that the new fort had no heavy stockade "which tends to obstruct ventilation and demoralize the troops."[26] Similarly, the Fort Rice surgeon complained that the space between the buildings at the rebuilt fort was too close to admit adequate daylight.

Stockades began to disappear by the early 1870s as the realization set in that walls might not be necessary. The last permanent army post with fortifications was built in 1872. This was Fort McKeen (fig. 8), later to become part of Fort Abraham Lincoln, where three blockhouses connected by palisades protected the post. At other posts walls were on the way out. The Fort Buford stockade was removed as early as 1871, and 1875 saw the removal of the stockade at Fort Ellis and the earthwork protecting Fort Wadsworth.

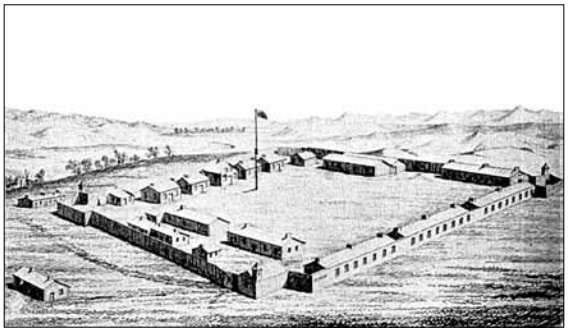

Figure 13: Originally built as a palisade-enclosed fort, Fort C. F. Smith, the third post on the Bozeman Trail, was rebuilt as a combination type. The enclosure was formed by log palisades filling gaps between adobe buildings. National Archives

The deteriorated condition of palisade works warranted their removal. This was particularly true in construction with cottonwood logs, which rotted off at the bottoms. In 1880 part of the rotted stockade at Fort Sully was blown down in a storm. Instead of rebuilding the palisade, it was simply removed. Likewise, the stockade around the Cheyenne River Post gradually disappeared, washed away by the encroaching Missouri River. The replacement fort had neither stockade nor blockhouses.[27]

Stockades disappeared at other locations when fort complexes were rebuilt. Such was the case at Fort Sedgwick, completely rebuilt in 1867 as an open post. The same was true at Forts McPherson and Abercrombie. An exception to the rule was at Fort Rice, where a new palisade of two-inch planks with two sally ports and two blockhouses was built in 1868 (fig. 14). Fort Rice remained enclosed until it was abandoned as a military post in 1878.[28] When enclosed forts were abandoned, the buildings and palisades were dismantled for salvage, used for fuel, or as in the case of the Bozeman Trail forts, burned down by celebrating northern warriors.

In some cases the blockhouses remained long after the enclosing walls were removed. While some were retained as defensive works, the majority were reused for other purposes. Blockhouses became guardhouses, storerooms, and one even a magazine. By 1881 the two blockhouses at Fort Sully were used to store laths, lime, and iron bunks. The blockhouse at Fort Sanders, near Laramie, Wyoming Territory, was used for a time as officers' quarters.[29]

Even though war on the northern plains was not over, the days of the enclosed fort were. Although several temporary enclosed outposts did appear, such as at Red Canyon, Dakota, in 1876, the paranoia resulting from the Minnesota Uprising and the 1860s wars had ended. After the end of the Great Sioux War, great change came for the army in the West. For the main part, the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe tribesmen who stubbornly resisted white encroachment were restricted to the reservation. Consequently, military protection for settlers and routes of transportation from northern warriors was no longer needed. Additionally, with the expansion of railroad routes, troops could be rapidly deployed to areas of need.

Redeployment and consolidation of the army brought the abandonment of smaller, more isolated posts, and construction of a new generation of

Figure 14: The new Fort Rice, rebuilt with frame buildings surrounded by a ten-foot-high plank palisade with protective blockhouses. State Historical Society of North Dakota (B0764-04)

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large army posts, such as Forts Custer, Meade, and Niobrara, to hold the reservation Indians in check (fig. 16). The new forts were all of open design; none of the post-Sioux War army posts had any form of fortification, as was common just fifteen or so years before. Selected northern plains forts, such as Forts Robinson, Nebraska, and D. A. Russell, near Cheyenne, were eventually improved and expanded. The fort became a military station, rather than a defensive work as the early travelers across the plains had expected. The long-lasting period of conflict on the northern plains was over. Likewise, the need for protective log or adobe walls, blockhouses, and earthworks.

Over the years, much has been done to commemorate the enclosed forts of the northern plains. During the Depression years, North Dakota rebuilt blockhouses and palisades at the sites of Forts Abercrombie, Lincoln, and Rice. In other projects, the earthworks once surrounding Fort Sisseton, South Dakota, have been reconstructed, and likewise portions of Fort Phil Kearny's stockade were rebuilt to help interpret that site. Perhaps the most impressive reconstruction effort of an enclosed fort is at Fort Atkinson State Historical Park in Nebraska. Here, three complete sides of what was once the largest military post in the United States have been reconstructed. In conclusion, we can say that Hollywood was at least partially correct in its depiction of western forts.

Notes

[1] Robert A. Murray, *Military Posts in the Powder River Country of Wyoming, 1865-1894* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968), 38.

[2] Surgeon General's Office, *Circular No. 4, A Report on Barracks and Hospitals with Descriptions of Military Posts* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870), 407.

[3] Ibid., 401; Robert G. Athearn, *Forts of the Upper Missouri* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 101-2.

[4] Alison K. Hoagland, *Army Architecture in the West: Forts Laramie, Bridger and D. A. Russell* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 34.

[5] Surgeon General, *A Report on Barracks*, 405.

[6] Ibid., 395.

[7] Robert A. Murray, *Fort Laramie, Visions of a Grand Old Post* (Fort Collins, CO: Old Army Press, 1974), 69-74; Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969), 215-16; Thomas R. Buecker, "History of Camp Sheridan, Nebraska" *C.A.M.P. Periodical* 22(1995): 58. The earthworks to protect the first Camp Sheridan are readily visible today.

[8] Captain Eugene F. Ware, *The Indian War of 1864* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1960), 236. The map is on page 238.

[9] Otis G. Hammond, ed., *The Utah Expedition 1857-1858, Letters of Capt. Jesse A. Gove, 10th Inf., U. S. A.* (Concord: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1928), 97.

[10] Thomas R. Buecker, *Fort Robinson and the American West, 1874-1899* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1999), 40-41.

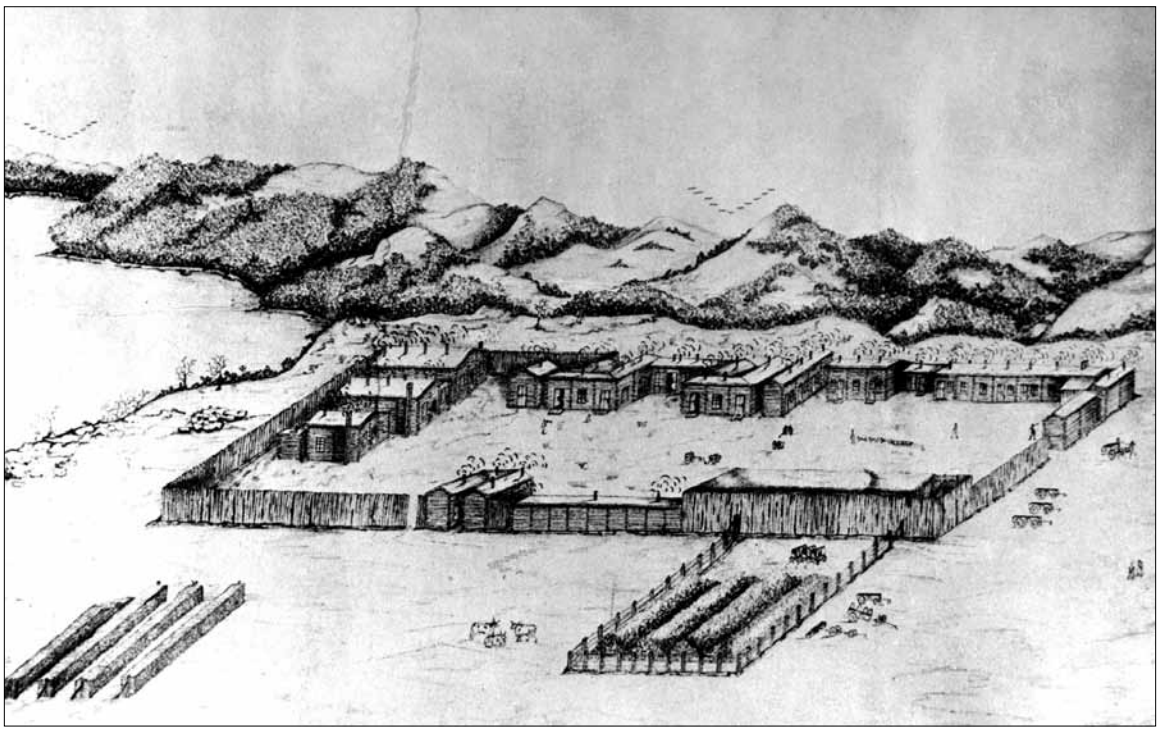

Figure 15: The first Fort Totten, North Dakota, built in 1867, was a combination-enclosed fort. Devils Lake is to the left. National Archives

Figure 16: Fort Niobrara, seen from east about 1895, was one of the new generation of fully open army posts built on the northern plains. National Archives

[11] Harold H. Schuler, *Fort Sully, Guns at Sunset* (Vermillion: University of South Dakota Press, 1992): 60.

[12] Ibid., 51.

[13] "Report of Maj. John Wilcox for the year ending December 31, 1866," in Brig. Gen. Nathaniel B. Baker, *Report of Adjutant General to Hon. William M. Stone, Governor of the State of Iowa,* Vol. I (Des Moines: F. W. Palmer, 1867), 549.

[14] "Report of Col. Robert R. Livingston to the Adjutant General, Nov. 1, 1864," in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,* Series I, Vol. 41, Part 1, p. 828.

[15] Murray, *Fort Laramie*, p. 63; Mattes, *Great Platte River Road,* 181; Surgeon General, *Circular No. 4,* 398. Today the historic site of Fort Stevenson is flooded beneath Garrison Reservoir.The fort is commemorated through Fort Stevenson State Park, where the sally port is reconstructed on a bluff high above its original location.

[16] Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, 168.

[17] Surgeon General, *A Report on Barracks,* 373.

[18] Frances Carrington (Grummond), *My Army Life (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co.,* 1910), 156, 158.

[19] Merrill Mattes, *Indians, Infants and Infantry: Andrew and Elizabeth Burt on the Frontier* (Denver: Old West Publishing Co., 1960), 143.

[20] Ware, *Indian War of 1864*, 371.

[21] Murray, *Military Posts*, 78.

[22] Ibid., 21, 94.

[23] Milo M. Quaife, ed., *Army Life in Dakota: Selections from the Journal of Philippe Regis Denis de Keredern de Trobriand* (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1941): 25, 320.

[24] Athearn, *Forts of the Upper Missouri*, 246.

[25] Hoagland, *Military Architecture,* 29-30.

[26] Surgeon General, *Circular No. 4,* 384.

[27] Schuler, *Fort Sully,* 61; Philip H. Sheridan, *Outline Descriptions of Posts in the Military Division of the Missouri, repr. 1882 ed.* (Fort Collins: Old Army Press, 1969), 60. The plat map on page 60 illustrates in stages how the Missouri River shoreline gradually washed the fort site away.

[28] Surgeon General, *Circular No. 4,* 391. The river side of the stockade was removed by 1874.

[29] Ray H. Mattison, "The Army Post on the Northern Plains, 1865-1885," *Nebraska History* 35(March 1954): 21; Mattes, *Indians, Infants and Infantry*, 101.