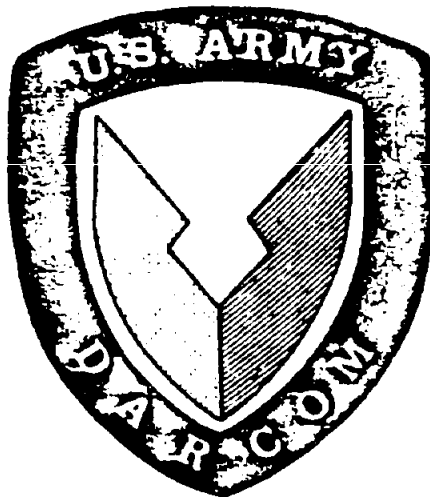


FW -1

**HISTORY OF FORT WINGATE  
DEPOT**

*FORTS FAUNTLEROY*

*AND LYON*





FORT WINGATE

Fort Wingate Army Depot traces its history back through three locations and the colorful events of New Mexico to 1850, when a post was established by the United States War Department at Cebolleta (Seboyeta), where a small mission had been established by Don Joachin Codallos y Rabal in 1746 for christianizing the Indians.<sup>1</sup> The post was abandoned by troops in 1851 but was maintained until 9 September 1862, when it was moved to El Gallo on the south bank of the Rio De Galto, 21 miles southwest of Mount Taylor near the present site of San Rafael (five miles south of Grants).<sup>2</sup> This was the Fort Wingate established by Brig. General James H. Carleton. Quarters were furnished for six companies.<sup>3</sup> It was named for Captain Benjamin Wingate of the 5th Infantry, who died as a result of wounds received in the Battle of Val Verde near Socorro, New Mexico.<sup>4</sup> Meantime, Fort Fauntleroy, which was later to become Fort Wingate, was established at Bear Springs at the headwaters of the Rio Puerco of the west, on 31 August 1860.

For many years after the American occupation of New Mexico the Navajo Indians were most persistent trouble-makers. Their thieving operations along the Rio Grande extended from the upper settlements down to the vicinity of Socorro, and west to the Copper Mines (Santa Rita). In spite of many expeditions against them, and many treaties of peace, the Navajos were unwilling to accept the rule of the white man.

Trade routes of the Southwest could be as errantly haphazard and changeable as the course of a dry wash. In common with the region's larger rivers, however, the major trade routes remained reasonably constant, determined secondarily by men after concessions to nature's topography.<sup>5</sup>

Enclosed for all of its length by mountain slopes or redrock mesas, Wingate Valley is a hundred-mile link in one of several ancient trade routes from the Rio Grande to California. Starting approximately at the malpais or lava beds south of Mount Taylor, Wingate Valley curves northward to the Mesa de los Lobos and then drops off into Arizona and vanishes in an open plain below Fort Defiance. Antiquity of the valley and its centuries of use by prehistoric traders are attested, for nearly its full length, by countless ruins and in them the presence of trade wares: pottery and beads of seashell and turquoise.

Prior to the fall of 1849, Indian Agent James Calhoun recommended the establishment of a military post in the vicinity of Mount Taylor, where the "Navajos and Apaches are exceedingly troublesome---not a day passes without hearing of some fresh outrage." In consequence, Col. John Munroe, Military Governor of New Mexico, stationed a company of dragoons at Cebolleta, on the eastern approach to Wingate Valley.

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1 Twitchell, The Leading Facts of New Mexico History, Vol III.

2 Special Order 176, Hq. Dept. N.M., Sept 27, 1862, Post actually established Oct 22, 1862.

3 American Guide Series, New Mexico, p. 322

4 M. H. Thomlinson, Col., New Mexico Magazine, October 1946

5 McNitt, Frank, Indian Traders.



Possibly there were other spots on the trail that would have served the purpose as well as the one selected, but Ojo del Oso (Called Shash B'toh, Bear Springs, by the Navajo because bears were so often seen eating acorns in the oak thickets that grew along the tiny streams fed by the spring) was well and favorably known-here was a traditional rendezvous of the Navajo; here Manuel Antonio Chavez and a civilized Navajo boy had stopped in 1834 to tend wounds received in a battle with the Navajo at Canyon de Chelly. This battle resulted from a raiding party of New Mexicans seeking Navajo captives to sell as slaves. Unfortunately for them, their small party of fifty men encountered a huge ceremonial encampment at Canyon de Chelly and all were killed except Chavez and the Navajo boy. The boy died at Bear Springs. It was the site of the first peace conference between the Navajos and the United States and here the first treaty was reached in November 1846 when Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan of the First Missouri Volunteers met with the Chiefs of "The People" at Bear Springs.



ALEXANDER W. DONIPHAN

Doniphan was serving under General Kearney, who was engaged in the war of expansion against Mexico. It was he who first promulgated a code of laws for New Mexico and appointed a governor.<sup>2</sup> Kearney had promised the New Mexicans protection against raiding Indians in return for their support of the United States in the war, and so ordered detachments of Doniphan's men out to put teeth in the pacification efforts with the Indians - to invade the Navajo country, release captives, reclaim stolen property and awe or beat the Indians into submission. It was after the

1. Thomlinson, H.H., "Indian Country Outposts," New Mexico Magazine, October 1946. (from National Archives Records).
2. Army Almanac, 1950, p.947

march of these detachments through the Navajo country, when they won grudging admiration from the Indians, that the meeting took place at Bear Springs during which the treaty was signed. The whole campaign lasted only six weeks.

Commanding one of the detachments into the heart of the Navajo country was a Captain Reid, with thirty picked men. This handful of soldiers traveled always under a suspended sentence of massacre. Hundreds of Navajos were on all sides of them, sometimes traveling and camping with them. What saved the soldiers was the very audacity of their venture. It vindicated the rumor now traveling the whole Indian country that this breed of whites had better be respected.<sup>1</sup>

As Reid's thirty men got farther into the Navajo country, the Navajo came by the hundreds to look them over. They had danced with some of the Pueblo Indians over Navajo scalps; now, finding a party with some fresh Pueblo scalps, they shuffled with the Navajo in the vengeance dance. They joined the Navajo games and they gaped at the sham battles. They traded their worn out horses for fresh mules; got buckskins to replace their tatters and sat around campfires while hundreds of Navajos danced, sang and related incidents of their great valor. Reid finally collected more than 800 Navajos and harangued them into a promise to meet with Doniphan and make a treaty. He returned then to the encampment which had been moved to Cubero. The Navajo who had agreed to follow them took up the trail, but on the way met other Indians who predicted that Doniphan would massacre them, and so turned back and were not among the Indians who finally signed the peace treaty.

Doniphan reached the Bear Springs rendezvous on November 21, 1846 and hordes of Navajos came to listen to "Long Knife," so called because of his long saber of command. There followed the slow, stately and preposterous ceremonies by which the Indians and Army officers were accustomed to reach agreements - parades, feasts, drama and endless oratory. The Navajo claimed allegiance with the Americans who had come here to make war on the New Mexicans, and when the Americans asked the Indians not to do the same they could not understand. With some difficulty, Doniphan got that point cleared up and the New Mexicans classed as Americans who must not be murdered and robbed.

A treaty as formal as one with a major power was drawn up. By its terms the Navajos agreed to cherish the New Mexicans and the Pueblos as well. Doniphan, Jackson and Gilpin signed it on behalf of James K. Polk, the "White Father" in Washington, and no less than fourteen Navajo Chiefs, led by Sarcillo Largo a young Navajo Chief of prominence, scratched their crosses underneath. After it was over, Doniphan made a detour to the Zuni Pueblo and signed a treaty with them also. It proved to be worth a little more than the Navajo treaty for the Zunis were less warlike.

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<sup>1</sup> Captain (later General) Reid was a pioneer landowner in Kansas City, Missouri. He was elected to Congress in 1860. The Kansas City Times, August 25, 1960. (Copy in depot historical files.)

Morse Code visual signalling was first used by the Army in the Navajo country on June 21, 1860 and was found to be a highly successful means of communication between military units.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the history of the site at which, in August, 1860, a new post was established by Companies E, F and K, 3rd Infantry.<sup>2</sup> Established for the protection of the whites, it was designed for a garrison of eight companies and named Fort Fauntleroy.

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Record of Events - (See par. XI, Circular (A.G.O.) Sept. 30, 1856)

*The post Fort Fauntleroy was established on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 1860  
It is situated on the road  
from Albuquerque to Fort Defiance  
It is 136 miles a little north of west  
of Albuquerque*

*A. B. Roswell  
Bvt. Brig. Capt. E. 2*

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(Facsimile of excerpt from post return announcing the establishment of Fort Fauntleroy. Taken from National Archives Records)

Colonel Thomas Turner (Little Lord) Fauntleroy was Department Commander when this post was named for him. He fought Indians off and on in New Mexico for ten years before the Civil War.<sup>3</sup> While thus engaged, Colonel Fauntleroy wrote to General Winfield Scott:

The greatest embarrassment arises from the fact that many of the claims set up against the Indians of New Mexico for plundering, stealing stock and the like, are either fabricated or to a considerable degree exaggerated, and if war is to be commenced upon the simple presentation of these claims, the cause for war becomes interminable, or the Indians must be extirpated.

As it was hardly customary to honor a living officer by naming a post after him, it is quite likely that some back-slapping went on, because we find that at about the same time this happened, Fauntleroy himself recommended that another new post in his department be named Fort Floyd, in honor of the then Secretary of War.<sup>4</sup> (Both were from Virginia and both "went South" during the Civil War; Fauntleroy turning in his resignation on May 13, 1861). A provisional reserve of 100 square

1. Army Almanac, 1950, p.941

2. General Order No. 6, AGO, 12 March 1860 and General Order No. 1, AGO, 18 January 1861, National Archives.

3. Keleher, Will, Turmoil in New Mexico, footnote 94, p. 138. (H.R. Mis. Doc. No. 85, 36th Congress, 1st Session, May 21, 1860)

4. Twitchell, History of Arizona and New Mexico

miles was laid out at that time, with east Bear Springs as its center. Occupying the region at about the time of the American entry was a band of Navajo Indians led by Chief Mariano, who used this section as an agricultural and watering place. Lake Mariano to the north was named for this Chief, whose descendents still live in this vicinity.

On February 16, 1861, peace negotiations with the Navajo resulted in a treaty being signed at the fort. Barboncito, one of their principal chiefs, was among the Indians who signed.

Fort Fauntleroy had a short and troubled existence. The month following its establishment, Indians attempted to stampede the mule herd, and not long after, Major H. H. Sibley (as a Confederate he commanded the troops that captured Santa Fe) used the post as a base for his campaign against Indians in the Chusca Valley. On the first of January, 1861, the garrison consisted of Companies C, D, F, G and K, Fifth Infantry, commanded by Captain N. B. Rossell, Captain William Chapman and Captain Henry R. Selden (in that order), but great events were impending and this force was steadily diminished until by summer all the regulars were gone. Their places were taken by four companies of the New Mexico Volunteers.

In September, 1861, there was an unfortunate "collision" between the volunteers and Navajo Indians at the post over a horse race.<sup>1</sup> At that time, Fort Fauntleroy was an oasis in the remote Indian Country. The Navajos went there on a fixed day each month, ordinarily the first Saturday, to receive rations of meat, flour and other provisions. The rations were distributed in the hope, and with the expectation, that the Indians would reciprocate by not raiding the white settlements. For the Navajos, ration days were days of importance and excitement. Men, women and children traveled great distances, on horseback and on foot, to see the fort, watch the soldiers, and get their provisions for the ensuing month. A custom had grown up at the fort of having the Indians race their horses against soldiers horses. Among the Navajos, horse racing was more than a sport, it was almost an obsession. They were willing to gamble almost anything they had - money, horses, a wife or two - on the outcome of a match race. Indians and soldiers bet freely on the outcome of the races. Some officers bet horses instead of money. If they won, they could sell the horses to the government for cash. If they lost, they could pay their bets with horses belonging to the government. It was not difficult for them, with the assistance of conniving clerks, to adjust their accounts to cover up their manipulations.

Ration day at Fort Fauntleroy, September 22, 1861, began like most other ration days. The weather was ideal. The tang of fall was in the air, heavy with the scent of cedar and pinon. The Navajos were in good humor on this particular day, willing to unbend and be quite friendly in their own stolid way. The soldiers, enthusiastic about the horse racing program scheduled for the afternoon, mingled freely with the Indians, trading tobacco for Indian trinkets and whiskey for Navajo blankets.

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1 Keleher, Will, Turmoil in New Mexico, p. 297.



The afternoon horse races proved the big attraction of the day. Horses won and horses lost. Indian and white man, in a spirit of true sportsmanship, paid off on their wagers. The final and most important race of the day was between Post Surgeon Kavanaugh's quarter horse, with a Lt. Ortiz riding, and an Indian pony owned by Pistol Bullet, a giant Navajo who stood six feet 4 inches in his moccasins. Large sums were bet on this race. Both entries were off to a good start, but in a matter of seconds the Navajo rider and his horse were in serious difficulty. All the spectators, or so it seemed, rushed out at once to learn what had happened. It was seen that the bridle rein of Pistol Bullet's horse had been recently slashed with a knife, which caused the rider to lose control of his mount. In the meantime, Kavanaugh's horse had finished the course. Claiming they had been tricked, the Navajos angrily demanded that the race be run again. But the judges, all soldiers, held that the defective bridle had just been hard luck for the Indians. They officially declared Kavanaugh's horse winner of the race. When an interpreter announced the decision and the Indians realized that they had lost their bets, they made a wild rush for the inside of the fort. The Officer of the Day ordered the sentries to shut the gates and keep all Navajos on the outside.

To celebrate the victory, the Kavanaugh horse was paraded about inside the post grounds. Crowds of soldiers, beating drums and playing on fifes and fiddles, joined in the celebration. An apparently drunken Navajo tried to force his way inside the fort. Sentry Morales fired at him point blank. Hearing the shot, the Navajos still outside the fort bolted for open country, dragging squaws and children with them. Soldiers, with rifle and bayonet, pursued. In the melee, twelve Navajos were killed and forty wounded. The terrified Indians fled for their lives, leaving their dead and wounded behind.

The Commanding Officer ordered the Officer of the Day to bring out two Mountain Howitzers, to fire upon the Indians, and to continue firing at them as long as they were within range. When the Sergeant in charge of the Howitzer, seeking an excuse to delay firing, pretended he had not understood the order, the Officer of the Day cursed him and told him to obey orders or he would be shot. The Howitzers were then placed in positions and fired repeatedly in the direction of the fleeing Navajos. Thus were treaties destroyed.

September 22, 1861, marked a day of vast importance in Navajo memory. From that day forward, all Navajo Indians excepting a few squaws, who were favorites of the officers, remained miles away from Fort Fauntleroy. Ration day at the fort was discontinued. The Navajos nursed their grievances and waited for a day of retaliation. Officers at the fort, in an attempt to make another peace treaty with the Indians, sent out some of the favored squaws to try to arrange a meeting, but all the women got for their trip was a good flogging by the Indians.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Twitchell, The Leading Facts of New Mexico History, Vol. III, Footnote 200, P. 340

In September, also, a general order of the Department of New Mexico changed the name of the post from Fauntleroy to Lyon,<sup>1</sup> to honor General Nathaniel Lyon, who had been killed at the Battle of Wilson's Creek a few weeks earlier. (Fauntleroy had resigned his commission to join the Confederate Army). Lyon and Canby, the latter now Department Commander, had served together for many years as junior officers in the Second Infantry.

A letter from a soldier at Fort Lyon, dated late in September states that the garrison consisted of Companies A, B and C, Second New Mexico Volunteers, commanded by Captains Manuel D. Pino, Jose D. Sena and Manuel Baca y Delgado. Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Chavez was Post Commander, the same Manuel Antonio Chavez who had bathed his wounds at Bear Springs in 1834. He had been rescued by Mexican shepherds, taken to Cebolleta and in 1860 was commissioned Lt. Colonel in the Second Regiment New Mexico Volunteer Infantry and sent to Fort Lyon. The writer of the letter complained bitterly of the activities of the sutler, one R. T. Gillespie, a "Secessionist". Another complaint was registered during the early months of the Civil War by one Private William Need of the New Mexico Territorial Militia, who wrote,<sup>2</sup>

"I have visited five forts-Buchanan, Breckenridge, McLane, Fillmore and Fauntleroy - within the last six months, and at each of these posts I have uniformly found the Sutlers to be bold, open, avowed Secessionists in favor of the Confederate States of the south, real, live, pure adamantine Jeff Davis rebels - sucking blood, charging about five prices for everything they have to sell to Union soldiers." In locating Fort Fauntleroy for his readers, Private Need wrote, "Fort Fauntleroy is located about 140 miles west of Albuquerque, a town on the Rio Grande. It is far advanced in the Navajo Country---The distance from here to Old Fort Defiance (deserted) is about 45 miles; from Fort McLane (burnt down or destroyed) about 120 nearly due south."

On October 7 of that year, the Pony Express was officialy discontinued and other means of timely communications between stations had to be devised.<sup>3</sup>

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1. General Order No. 41, Dpt. New Mexico, 25 September 1861, National Archives.
  2. Keleher, Will, Turmoil in New Mexico, p. 395.
  3. Army Almanac, 1950, p 948.

## CHAPTER II

### OLD FORT WINGATE

Early in November, 1861, the troops at Fort Lyon comprised four companies of the Second and Third New Mexico Volunteers but before the end of December they were gone. General Canby was assembling all his available force to meet Sibley's threat from the south and southwest. General Sibley organized a group of Confederates around El Paso for the purpose of traveling up the Rio Grande through Albuquerque into Colorado. There, he planned to seize the mines to help finance the Confederacy. Fort Lyon was abandoned on 10 December, 1862,<sup>1</sup> and the troops moved to the fort at San Rafael, which had been established in October and first garrisoned by Field and Staff, and Companies B, C, E and F, 1st New Mexico Volunteers, under Colonel J.F. Chavez.<sup>2</sup> (No record has been found of the physical aspects of old Fort Lyon).

The troops from Fort Lyon, with the others, met the Confederate forces near Socorro in the Battle of Val Verde. The Union forces finally withdrew from the battle in defeat, but it was a near thing for Sibley. It was during this battle that Captain Benjamin Wingate suffered fatal wounds. The Confederates occupied Albuquerque and went further up the Rio Grande to occupy Santa Fe.

The Union forces, reinforced by troops from Colorado, engaged the Confederates at Glorietta, east and a little north of Santa Fe. There they defeated the Confederate forces.

Two old leather bound books found (in 1957) in the District Court Clerks vault in Albuquerque give interesting sidelights on the life of the troops at these old posts. They are a day-book and ledger of F. E. Kavanaugh, sutler, stationed with the troops at Fort Fauntleroy and Fort Lyon, and later at a union supply depot and small garrison of 42 men at Cubero (also spelled Covero in some of the post returns) 60 miles east of Albuquerque.<sup>3</sup>

Kavanaugh was sutler, post surgeon and confederate spy - he operated the post exchange, selling the soldiers "spirits" in considerable quantities horse blankets, chances on raffles, red flannel drawers, etc; doctored their ailments; and swore secret allegiance to the confederacy. Among his customers in the Fort Fauntleroy days were many well known New Mexico military men, including Colonel E.R.S. Canby, Captain Benjamin Wingate and Captain H.R. Selden. In those days, a few civilians were hired by the post; interpreters at \$40.00 per month and one ration for Navajo Interpreters; and \$50.00 per month and one ration for Spanish Interpreters; teamsters at \$40.00 and one ration, herders at \$20.00 and a ration and wagon masters at \$50.00 and one ration.<sup>4</sup>

1 Outline Index, Military Posts & Stations, Book L, Reservation Division, AGO, National Archives, p. 529.

2 U. S. Army Commands (Army Posts, 3-ring binder marked Posts: Lamont - Yates, R. G. 98, National Archives.

3 Howard Bryan, Albuquerque Journal Newspaper, December 19, 1957.

4 Ration: daily food for one person

On March 3, 1862, a garrison at Cubero was surrendered to four Confederate civilians - none other than R. T. Gillespie of whom the soldier had complained so bitterly, Dr. F. E. Kavanaugh of the unfortunate horse race, and two others, George Gardenhier and R. T. Thompson. Kavanaugh took charge of the post until a detachment of confederate soldiers arrived from Albuquerque on March 5, and business continued as usual at the post exchange.

Concentration of the troops at Fort Wingate (San Rafael) increased the garrison there to three companies, including one of California Volunteers and two of the first New Mexico Volunteer Infantry, under the command of Lt. Colonel J. Francisco Chavez. It was occupied late in September by companies D and G, First Cavalry (Old First Dragoons) under Captain H. R. Selden, then of the Fifth Infantry but who later died in the service as Colonel of the First New Mexico Volunteer Infantry, and who is best remembered at that old ruined fort on the river near Radium Springs. In 1862, Chavez and his men accompanied Colonel Pino to Val Verde and took part in that battle.

Old Fort Wingate saw much activity. It was built solidly, with the idea in mind that the post would be the central military depot of supplies for the Navajo Country.<sup>1</sup> During May and June of 1863, the troops were engaged in erecting buildings, cutting timber, making roads, etc. The exertions of Lt. Col. J. Francisco Chavez, the Commanding Officer, were indefatigable in superintending the buildings, and the labors of 1st Lt. Benjamin Stevens, 1st New Mexico Cavalry, A. A. Q. M., were equally arduous. During May there were some 25 citizen employees, and about 75 or 80 extra-duty men engaged in the various departments such as Carpenters, Millwrights, Masons, Timber Cutters, Road Makers, Adobe Makers, and the like. A contract for making 380,000 adobe bricks was awarded to Messrs. Pool and McBride, to be used for erecting the officers and company quarters, Quartermaster Storehouse, and Hospital. The target date for completion of the fort was late summer or early fall.

The diagram, or plans of the fort, cut the cardinal points at right angles and a large space was kept between officers and company quarters for a parade ground. A row of Sycamore trees were planted around the borders to afford a cooling shade during the hot summer days. As it was generally believed this was to be a permanent post, no pains were spared in adopting its capacity to minister to the comforts of the command, as well as beautifying the environs and making it secure from the attacks of all "outside barbarians".

A writer for the Rio Abajo Weekly Press noted that on the 25th and 30th of May, Major J. Howe Watts, Paymaster of the Department, paid off four companies of New Mexico Volunteers in GREENBACKS, up to the 20th of February, 1863.

The Commissary Building, completed in May, was considered one of the best buildings of the kind in the territory. A magnificent "Baile" was held there as a christening party on May 29. All the gay Senoras and Senoritas of the post and from the neighboring villages of Cebolleta and Cubero attended. Upwards of \$1200.00 were subscribed and paid by the

1. Rio Abajo Weekly Press, Albuquerque, N.M., June 23, 1863

officers and soldiers of the post that summer for the benefit of the "suffering poor" of Socorro County.

Some experimental farming was undertaken at the post during the summer of 1863. Government officers and Padre Rafael Chavez found that wheat grew well - the nights were too cold for corn - and onions and beans flourished. The same writer who commented on the troop payday recommended that tomatoes be planted since they contained a medicinal value, that Jerusalem Artichokes should be cultivated for the feeding of stock, especially for the fattening of swine, and that the cranberry plant was decidedly the best line at that time, when jelly was bringing from \$2.00 to \$3.00 a bottle, and the experiment of planting them would "cost only the expenditure of a few dimes, an ounce of common sense, and a little elbow grease".

Fort Wingate was one of Kit Carson's bases in the highly successful and ruthless campaign waged by General Carleton against the Navajo and saw the departure of the greater part of that nation for Bosque Redondo (Fort Sumner). New Mexico Volunteers, commanded by Lt. Col. J. Francisco Chavez, arrived at Fort Wingate on Feb. 1, 1863, marking, the first step in Carleton's campaign to chastise the tribe.<sup>1</sup> The first Navajos were taken to Fort Sumner in the spring of 1863. While Gen. Carleton was at Fort Wingate, Colonel Chavez sent for Barboncito and Delgadito, his brother, but they did not reach the fort until the General had left. They overtook him at Cubero, where they talked with him about moving the Indians to Fort Sumner. Carleton told them that all Navajos who desired to be friends must remove to Bosque Redondo "under the protection of the government". Barboncito's reply was that "he would not go so far from his country but would remain with his family somewhere in the neighborhood of this Post (Fort Wingate) and that he did not intend to fight even if he were to be attacked by the troops-they might kill him but he would not run".<sup>2</sup>

Colonel Chavez held a council with Navajo Chiefs in the summer of 1863. He urged them to get their people to come to terms. Barboncito, Delgadito and Sarracino with Jesus Arviso (Spanish captive and Navajo interpreter) came to Fort Wingate from beyond Zuni. When informed by Chavez that they had only a few days to comply with Carleton's ultimatum, Barboncito again replied that neither he nor his people would leave Navajo country for Fort Sumner. Carleton had told Chavez in a letter written June 23, 1863 that July 20 would be the time limit for the Navajos to surrender to the troops or be killed. Orders received by Col. Chavez read in part " - - - after that day (July 20, 1863), every Navajo able to bear arms will be attacked and destroyed or captured unless he comes in before July 20th. The rule is a plain one and needs no future correspondence to define its meaning".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Will Keleher, Turmoil in New Mexico, pg 303, 308, 487, 489

2. J. Lee Correll, Barboncito Navajo "Naat" "Anni", Navajo Tourist Guide, 1966.

3. Twitchell, Leading Facts of New Mexico History, Vol. III, footnote 206, page 345,

Kit Carson arrived at the fort on July 10, 1863,<sup>1</sup> and remained three days receiving supplies for his men. He left two companies of his men there to wait for two supply trains, and pushed on to Ojo del Oso where he stayed from July 16 to 18 to rest his mules before continuing on his march to Canyon de Chelly. The two companies remained at the fort until the supplies reached them, then joined Carson on his march.

A letter from General Carleton to Carson read, "If any Indians desire to give themselves up, they will be received and sent to Fort Wingate, with a request from that post that they be sent to Los Pinos." The initial consignment of 51 Navajo prisoners was delivered at Bosque Redondo on Sept. 4, 1863, by Lt. Thomas Jones of the First New Mexico Volunteers. The prisoners were taken first to Fort Wingate, then to Fort Union where they were confined for a time, and finally to the Bosque.



Kit Carson, about 1855

In the fall and winter of 1863 the Navajos harrassed the troops at Fort Wingate. Carleton wrote a scolding letter to Chavez, criticizing him for allowing officers to go on leave to Cubero, some 20 miles away. Carleton said, "Shall the Indians always get the best of Fort Wingate troops? I see that officers from your post go to Cubero. They have no duties there."

<sup>1</sup> Twitchell, Leading Facts of New Mexico History, Vol. III

Send me an abstract of all officers who have been absent from your command since Oct. 31, 1863. Stop half of their pay when absent. Every train going from Fort Wingate to Fort Canby<sup>1</sup> will be escorted efficiently and the escort will be commanded by an officer - - - the escort to each train should have spies on ahead, on the flanks, and in the rear to prevent surprise."

In 1863, a troop of U. S. Cavalry was ambushed by Navajos at Many Arrows (present site of China Springs). An old Navajo later gave this version of the encounter:

"We found out that more soldiers were being sent to Fort Wingate near Bear Springs. Some Navajos had been there and spied on them. A band collected at Many Arrows. They hid behind the rocks - all in a line and not far behind. A troop of soldiers came up the road, and the Navajos all shot at once. Chaali Sani shot the soldier captain right in the middle of the back of the neck and the bullet came out through his eye. Other soldiers, which we called 'Those Who Shoot From the Side', were shot down. Some got away on their horses."<sup>2</sup>

Discovery of gold near Prescott in 1863 brought much traffic over the western road, which had to be protected. Major Edward B. Whipple, First Infantry, California Volunteers, left here on Nov. 7, 1863 to establish Fort Whipple in Arizona. The next year the fort was used as the base for an expedition against Apaches on the Gila and San Carlos rivers. One of the commanders about this time was Major Ethan Eaton.<sup>3</sup>

Harrassed by the soldiers, who burned and destroyed their crops and cut down their fruit trees, Barboncito and Manuelito both gave up and went to Fort Sumner in 1864, but soon decamped and returned to their native haunts. In the fall of 1866, Barboncito and Manuelito surrendered. The need for medical attention for himself (he was badly wounded in the arm) and food for his starving band prompted Manuelito to surrender at Fort Wingate on September 1, 1866, with 23 other Navajos, mostly relatives.<sup>4</sup> When it became known that Manuelito had surrendered, other last-ditch leaders of the tribe decided to give up the fight. Chief Barboncito, with a band of 21, surrendered near Fort Wingate on Nov. 7, 1866, followed soon after by 43 others. On November 28, 1866, another band of 138 men, women and children came in to the fort from the Little Colorado Country and surrendered, along with their 400 sheep and goats and 60 horses.

1. Fort Defiance. It was renamed Fort Canby during the Navajo Campaign of 1863-64.
2. McNitt, Frank, Indian Traders
3. Keleher, William A., The Long Walk, article in the Gallup Daily Independent Newspaper, Gallup, N.M., Aug. 6, 1957.
4. Letter from Sgt. R. L. Baldwin (retired), Socorro, N.M., filed in depot historical files.

After the departure of the Navajos for the Pecos, the garrison of Wingate averaged rather small and experienced frequent changes - regulars, New Mexico Volunteers, both foot and horse, and units of the California took their turn at the post. Among the New Mexican Commanders were Jose M. Sanchez, Conaciana Montoya, Nickolas Rodt, and Strongard. The last annual return shows all regulars: four companies of the 37th Infantry and Third Cavalry, six officers and 286 men. The Volunteers had gone home.

Chief Barboncito





## CHAPTER III

### NEW FORT WINGATE

In 1868, after languishing four years on the reservation at Fort Sumner until broken in spirit and ready to conform to white mans laws, the Navajos were permitted to return from their exile on the Pecos, but it was felt that "old" Fort Wingate was too far from the Indian country to permit efficient supervision of the inhabitants so the location on the Rio de Galto was abandoned, after a period of use of only six years, and the "new" Fort Wingate was established on the site of old Fort Lyon (Fauntleroy) at Ojo del Oso.

Doors, window sashes and vegas from the old fort were carried away and used in other buildings in the countryside.<sup>1</sup> In the following years the buildings were gradually destroyed and the land leased or sold to farmers until by 1959 the only traces left were a few perimeter posts set deep into the ground. There were barely enough to trace the outline of 2 sides of the old fort. All the Sycamore trees were gone.

Major Charles J. Whiting, 3rd Cavalry, escorted 7,000 Indians back to Fort Wingate. He had in his company a Col. Cressey and Lt. William Ayers of the Third Cavalry, Lt. William Krause of the 37th Infantry, and the Indian Commissary, Mr. Rosenthal, all of whom he complimented highly in his reports. He stated that he doubted that the same number of troops was ever marched through a country doing as little damage as those 7,000 Indians did.<sup>2</sup>

The life of the troops at these early forts was no easy existence. Death by torture; hunger and thirst; scorching heat and bitter cold; abuse and neglect; for a whole year, 1878, Congress left the Army without pay - such was the lot of the Army, a lot accepted with courage and stoicism as it carried on to fulfill its mission of opening up the West by the conquest of the hostile tribes.<sup>3</sup>

On Jan. 13, 1868, a citizen of Cubero reported to the Commander at Fort Wingate, Capt. V. K. Hart of the 37th Infantry, that Indians had raided between Wingate and Cubero. They drove off over 3,000 sheep, killed one man and wounded two others. The citizen reported that he saw 3 Indians who fired upon him, but he escaped and made his way to the fort for help and protection for the people of Cubero which Capt. Hart was unable to give for lack of cavalry.

All of their problems were not with Indians. On Mar. 19, 1868, Lt. Wells Richards was Officer of the Day. For some reason not made clear in the report, he searched the quarters of Juan Jose Junela, whose family was employed as laundresses, and found fourteen bottles of whiskey stashed away. Perhaps justly feeling that this was a bit more whiskey than the man needed for his own consumption, the Officer of the Day confiscated the whiskey and reported the incident to 1st Lt. G. Russell, 3rd Cavalry. Lt. Russell turned the family out of the 1 & 2 Ltr Fort Wingate, May 7, 1869, Arrott Microfilm Roll 18, Rodgers Library, Highlands University, Las Vegas, N.M.

3 Fairfax Downey, The Old Army, Ordnance Magazine, Jan-Feb '60.

post, turned the liquor over to the first surgeon for government purposes, and searched vainly for Juan, who had somehow managed to make his escape.<sup>1</sup>

And on the 24th day of the same month, a Lt. Baldwin reported that three prisoners escaped from the guardhouse because the high alkali content of the adobes caused them to crumble, making escape easy. It was only large enough to accommodate up to 10 prisoners.<sup>2</sup>

Life apparently slowed down enough that the troops and officers grew somewhat lax in the performance of garrison duties, for on Dec. 4, 1868, Capt. Hart felt it necessary to reprimand his officers for the loose, and unmilitary manner in which certain duties were performed. He wrote, in part:

"It is not the intent of the order which requires an officer to attend Roll Call that he should merely get outside of his quarters in time to receive the report from the 1st Sgt. (sometimes standing at a distance of 75 to 100 yards from the Company parade) but the order is issued to the ends that an officer should be actually present - - -"<sup>3</sup>

Most of the Navajo people were content to return to the reservation and a law-abiding existence, but there were the ever-present few who continued to be troublemakers. In March, 1869, Lt. Henry Ayers had to take a party of soldiers out in pursuit of Indians who broke into the post hospital store room.<sup>4</sup> By June 16, Maj. A.W. Evans reported that the conduct of the "bad" Indians was getting worse. Besides frequent thefts committed at Forts Wingate and Defiance, there had been several instances of serious robberies of animals from the frontier settlements by thieves who apparently lived close enough to the fort to be aware of the reduced condition of the garrison. Three animals were stolen from Roman Baca of San Mateo because, according to the Indians, Baca had one or more Navajo peons in his possession, whom he refused to release. Although Mr. Baca denied the charge Major Evans expressed the opinion that it was true.

United States Troops were engaged in war against the Southern Apaches about this time. In both May and June, groups of Coyotero Apaches presented themselves at the fort to declare that they had no connection with the hostile tribes and to seek assurance that they could continue their farming in peace. The first of these groups, four Apaches and a Mexican captive, were led by "Miguel" (The One-Eyed), and the other, a group of 15 Apaches, led by "Pedro". Delgado, the most prominent of the Navajo leaders at that time, agreed

1 & 2 Ltr Ft. Wingate, May 7, 1869, Arrott Microfilm Roll 18

3. Circular, Arrott Microfilm Roll 18, Rodgers Library, Highlands U

4. Spec. Order 28, Ft. Wingate, Mar 22, 1869, Arrott Microfilm Roll 18, Rodgers Library, Highlands University.

to have the Apaches settled on the Navajo Reservation.<sup>1</sup>

The Mexican people in the area aggravated troubles with the Indians somewhat by their practice of revenging a wrong upon the first innocent party met.<sup>2</sup> Delgadito and his bands were considerably excited during May of 1869 by the killing of a woman and child and the wounding of a man, all of their band, as a revenge measure by the people of McCarty's Ranch in the Romances above Cubero. Major Evans was called upon to obtain redress for the Indians and to put a stop to this practice.

There were few, if any, whites living in the immediate vicinity of Fort Wingate at this time.<sup>3</sup> A few lived at Fort Defiance and others in the San Rafael area.

Mescalero, Ute and other tribes from the north of Wingate were continually warring against the Navajo as well as the white. Mescalero's and Utes habitually teamed up against the Navajo and kept them in a state of unrest. The Navajo, indignant over the attacks and unwilling to depend on white soldiers for protection, kept scouts out to warn them of impending attacks. They would rush their children and sheep out of harm's way and fight off the marauders alone.

A hygiene report prepared by Assistant Surgeons R.S. Vickery and J. V. Hanne, U. S. Army,<sup>4</sup> describes Fort Wingate as " - - - situated in Lat. 35°20' north; Long. 31°22' west; altitude 6,822 feet. This post was formed about the middle of August, 1868, by the arrival of troops with the Navajo tribe of Indians, who were moved by General Sherman from Fort Sumner, New Mexico, back to their own country. At the same time, old Fort Wingate, 60 miles southwest, was abandoned and the troops moved to this point. The present fort is west-northwest of Albuquerque, about 150 miles from it by road and about 45 miles southeast of old Fort Defiance. It is on the Pacific slope of the mountains, about 23 miles west of a slight elevation called the Dividing Ridge, and is situated on gently rising ground at the south side of a valley about two miles in diameter, opening to the north. - - - the stream from the spring crosses the east angle of the plan. The buildings of the post are near the head of the valley - - - one of the greatest needs of this post is soft water. The supply for drinking and irrigation is from Bear Springs, a few yards distant, and is abundant, but the water is very hard. Cisterns are much needed."

1 & 2 Ltrs Fort Wingate, 4 May, 16 June, Arrott Microfilm Roll 18  
Rodgers Library, Highlands Univ., Las Vegas, N.M.

3 Memories of Jeff King, Navajo Scout, as related in 1961. Translated interview filed in depot historical files.

4 Circ.#8, War Dept., Surgeon-Generals Office, Washington, page 311.



Copy of Remington Drawing of an old Army Soldier  
(from photo in "Armor" magazine)

President Ulysses S. Grant reserved a military reservation ten miles square, corresponding to the provisional reserve of 1860 on Feb. 18, 1870. Boundaries were announced in General Order No. 7, Dept. of Missouri, 1870. Upon recommendation of several military authorities, including Robert Todd Lincoln, Secretary of War, an addition of thirty square miles to the south was made on March 26, 1881, to furnish fire wood and building materials for the fort. Boundaries for this additional tract were set by General Order No. 7, Dept. of Missouri, 1881. This action caused considerable adverse comment from the cattlemen who had moved to the area by that time. The officer in command of the fort had sizeable herds of cattle which he proceeded to graze on the additional tract of land, and it was felt by many that the need for graze for these cattle was the primary reason for his recommending that the land be acquired by the government.

During the following year the fort served as a base for ethnological and archeological expeditions in this region.

The original plan for "new" Fort Wingate was unique. It consisted of a circle within a square. Living quarters were to be built around the circle, facing the parade ground in the center, while shops, storehouses and stables lined the exterior wall that formed the square. Economy experts made the plan, but they forgot about future expansion, so after a brief start on the odd design, it was dropped and the place emerged in the rectangular form that is so familiar to the old Army.

Willie Spiegelburg was the first trader at the new fort when the Navajos reached there in July, 1868. The tradership succeeded to John L. Waters when Willie left the following March. Wingate was a fort in name only at that time; more a tent camp than anything else, a few dozen acres aswarm with Indians and blue-coated soldiers. Not until 1870 were plans for the fort approved and work started on the permanent buildings.<sup>1</sup>

The commissary used a token (or seco) in place of silver or gold in trade. It was called a "hindquarters check" because one side of the token was stamped "Good for 5 lbs. of beef", and the reverse side stamped, "Good for 5 lbs. of Beef Hindquarters."

On May 28, 1875, the Navajo Chiefs, meeting in council, petitioned Washington for the removal of W. F. M. Arny, Indian Agent. They accused him of being a "prevaricator of the truth" (wording supplied for them by Lorenzo Hubbell, who later became a prominent trader in the area). Complaining that Arny resorted to threats and coercion to get his way with them, they requested that he be replaced with Thomas V. Keams, another trader. Receiving no response from the Commissioner, thirty of the principal Chiefs met again on July 15 at Fort Wingate and wrote a second petition addressed to President Grant.

Arny was, at the time, in Washington trying to arrange to trade off the San Juan Valley portion of the reservation for less desirable tracts on the east and west of the reservation. While he was gone, having received no satisfaction from their appeals to Washington, the Indians quietly walked into the agency at Defiance, seized control, placed his  
1 McNitt, Frank, Indian Traders

family and other employees under guard, and instituted a search of the buildings and grounds which uncovered a pack-rat collection of letters from the agency's store-rooms.

Dr. Walter Whitney, left in charge during Army's absence, smuggled out two letters of warning to Army and another message to Fort Wingate, asking for help. Ill-feeling between the Army and the Navajo Agency had been growing for some time. The extent of its growth was reflected in the reply of Captain C. A. Hartwell, Commanding. He was sorry, said the Captain, but "without instructions from District Headquarters" it would be impossible to send troops to Whitney's aid. He did agree to forward the appeal to Col. Irwin Gregg in Santa Fe and await the district commanders' instructions.

Army finally tendered his resignation through the Commander at the fort, and the Commanding General of the Dept. of Missouri issued orders for Captain Hartwell to take possession of the Agency.

On September 9, Major William Redwood Price rode into the agency, accompanied by a corporal and two troopers. He was met by the refusal of Dr. Whitney to turn the place over to him. The major coolly answered that he did not recognize Whitney in the matter at all, but if Whitney chose to resist, he would take the place by force. Whitney still refused to cooperate, so a military ambulance and wagon were put at his disposal and on September 13 he departed very unwillingly.

It was necessary that Army return to the agency to straighten out his accounts and turn the agency over to Major Price. When he displayed a similar lack of cooperativeness, he received the same firm, cold treatment from Price, whose dreary duty it was to conduct an inventory of all property and supplies at the agency. The property dispute which ensued was finally settled by a long, drawn-out investigation by the Indian Office.

Altogether, the new Wingate was a good post. Blessed with a good location and fine climate, it appealed to soldiers and Indians alike because it furnished the necessities of a good camp - a spring of water, wood in the hills and grass in the valley, and in the early days plenty of game. The surgeons report from the early Seventies shows that there was considerable sickness but very few deaths from disease. Fevers, respiratory ailments, dysentery and venereal trouble account for most of the illness, with only three deaths from these causes in a four-year period. The food situation appears to have been good despite the comparative isolation of the place - the Zunis and nearby Navajos were farmers and probably supplied what was needed to supplement the dry issues from the commissary. In any event, the Army Scurvy Report for the period shows only three cases of that telltale disease at Wingate in seven years. About 1870, the old road to the east through Laguna and Albuquerque was augmented with a short cut that ran directly east from the post to the Rio Grande, where it crossed at San Felipe.<sup>1</sup> It was built from the fort to Agua Azul (Blue Water) in 1869 and cut off 8 to 10 miles in that distance. At that time, mail to Washington required from nine to ten days - the stage met the railhead in Kansas.

<sup>1</sup> Ltr Fort Wingate, May 7, 1869, Arrott Microfilm Roll 18, Rodgers Library, Highlands University, Las Vegas, N.M.

The post was further enriched in 1877 by the appointment of Lambert N. Hopkins, Jr., as Post Trader. Flour, coffee and sugar - in that order - were the staples most demanded and therefore most in supply at the old trading posts. By comparison, an inventory of the traders' stock at Fort Wingate was down-right exotic. It had a display of goods of the very best quality, put up in excellent style. This included raisins, almonds, ~~egg~~, olives, honey, preserves, pickles, canned salmon and other fish, and varieties of wines and liquors, all of California production.

These delicacies, needless to say, were not for Indians nor ~~cavalry~~ <sup>cavalry</sup> - men of the ranks - but for the posts' officers and their wives. It even had a private room for ladies shopping, which Lt. Bourke commended as an idea to be used by other military traders.

"My national pride was aroused by the display of goods of the very best quality - - -", the lieutenant exulted.

Mr. Hopkins, incidentally, built himself a \$4,000.00 stone house close by on the military reservation - and ran out of cash-paying officers. In 1882, he was bankrupt, his home going to W. S. Woodside, his chief creditor, for one dollar.<sup>1</sup>

Washington Mathews, who later became Surgeon General of the United States, served at the post hospital for many years in the 1880's. General Cushing was at the fort during the time Mathews was stationed at the hospital, coming with the Powell Expedition to explore the Green, Grand, and Colorado Rivers.

Again in 1880, the Navajos were greatly dissatisfied with the regime of their Indian Agent, Galen Eastman. By early spring, the military officers at Fort Wingate were frankly alarmed by the situation. Col. L.P. Bradley, who was commanding the post, recommended strongly that Eastman be replaced before more trouble erupted, but he was not removed until January of 1883.

In March, 1884, two white men named Walcott and McNally were murdered by Navajos. Col. R. E. A. Crofton, then commanding Fort Wingate, sent twenty-five cavalymen to Defiance where they camped. Three prisoners were taken back to the fort under military escort and locked up.

Early in August, Troop K, Sixth Cavalry, was dispatched under Lt. H. P. Kingsbury on a military expedition to recover the bodies and capture the guilty Indians. One body was returned, but no more Indians were captured in the week or two the troops were out.

As at most army posts, there were many uneventful days, and the officers and their families took advantage of every opportunity to break the monotony.<sup>2</sup> It was Christmas shortly after the arrival of "The Second"

1. McNitt, Frank, Indian Traders

2. Cora Carleton Glassford, Memories on Parade, New Mexico Magazine, Mar 1938

from old Fort Lowell, in Arizona, which was to be abandoned.<sup>1</sup> Christmas, 1887,<sup>2</sup> with a regimental eggnog party in "The Club" at the end of Officers' Lane, to celebrate. The creamy eggnog had been made by the newest shave-tail<sup>3</sup> in the Regiment. Everyone had a wonderful time and much of the eggnog was drunk, by the ladies as well as the officers. At last time came to go home to waiting Christmas dinners. The ladies withdrew to the dressing room to put on wraps and overshoes, and all was gaiety and smiles until they came out onto the upper landing and started down those long steep stairs to the lower hall. Those steps seemed impossible to negotiate. After the first two or three steps, each lady sat down and there she stayed! After two or more hours of waiting, the officers finally discovered that the young Shavetail had put everything into the eggnog except the milk - and the ladies were waiting for the effects to wear off before trying the stairs. The general consensus of opinion, however, was that it had been a fine Christmas party.

The following fall, one young bride - a New York girl - had planned a big birthday party for her husband. The latest in stylish cake decorations had been ordered from New York weeks in advance to enhance the cake to be baked by her Chinese Cook, Sun. An early, heavy snowstorm delayed mail delivery, however, and the decorations failed to arrive. Distressed by his mistress' disappointment, Sun assured her that he would fix everything. Wrapping himself in a huge buffaloe overcoat belonging to the young officer, he trudged through the deep snow to the Post Traders Store, where he bought a sack full of little candy hearts, from which he intended to copy decorations for the cake.

At the party, he brought the candle-lighted cake in with a grand flourish - and after one look, the guests shrieked with laughter. Unable to read English, Sun had carefully chosen the fanciest looking motto from the candy hearts, and painstakingly copied it on the cake. It read "Prepare to Meet Thy God."

The band at these army posts was always pampered, if only because they were so far from everything that the band, the one source of music, must be cherished. During the late winter, the troops were ordered in turn to chop ice from the pond to store in the ice house. One morning, sometime in the 1880's, the young Quartermaster Captain, who did not buy this "pet the band" idea, issued orders that the band was to take its turn cutting ice the following day. An outcry went up from the Adjutant - loud protests to the Commanding Officer: "The band should not have to cut ice! The delicacy of their fingers would be impaired by such hard work - their hands would be frozen!" The matter was referred to the Quartermaster Captain. He, perceiving that the Colonel commanding seemed to lean a little to the side of the Adjutant and his pet, the band, got his mad up and decided that that pampered band would work!

1. Cora Carleton Glassford, Memories on Parade, New Mexico Magazine, Mar 1938
2. Date established from "Old Fort Lowell", by Mary Hughston, Arizona Highways Magazine, April 1958.
3. "Shavetails" - West Point graduates named after the green, bumptious Army mules whose manes had been roached and tails shaved to distinguish them from the older, more tractable animals.



Very suavely, in reporting to the Colonel, the Captain said, "Sir, in this matter of the Band and the ice cutting: If the Colonel prefers that the band should not risk injury to its delicate fingers by actually cutting and sawing the ice blocks, it is acceptable to me, since the band is intended solely to be a means of entertainment to the post, to have them report as directed at the pond, and while Troop C is cutting ice, stay there and play for them so that their duty may not seem so long and onerous!" The non-plussed Colonel issued the order.

Later, and all through the day, every man, woman and child of that garrison trudged to the pond to see for themselves the amazing sight of the regimental band seated solemnly upon the ice blocks (there were no other seating arrangements provided) playing sweet ditties for the delectation of grinning Troop C, manfully heaving away at the ice cutting.

Gallup, which was to become the nearest trade center, began life in 1880 as a general store and saloon, surrounded by a few shacks, in the center of rich but as yet undeveloped coal fields.<sup>1</sup> The saloon was operated by one Tom Dye, a rather notorious character suspected of murdering his mother-in-law and sister-in-law. Mr. Dye started the first coal mine operations, but eventually ended up in prison for selling liquor to the Indians.<sup>2</sup>

The Atlantic and Pacific Railroad (Later the Santa Fe) had not yet reached the tiny community, then located in the western reaches of Bernalillo County (McKinley County was not organized until 1901). The Saloon, called the Blue Goose, served as a stagecoach stop. The railroad reached the community in 1881. The first Mayor of Gallup was W. F. Kuchenbecker, a native of Germany who had served in the 15th Infantry at Fort Wingate from 1875-1880. He was prominent in the business and political life of the small community for many years.

Inevitably, the railroad brought in its wake saloons and the problems of drunken Indians. Close to Fort Wingate, but off the Navajo reservation, Trader Hans Neumann stocked a supply of liquor for Wingate officers who found his rug room at Guam, N. M. offered greater privacy and quiet than the bars of Gallup, which were frequently patronized by enlisted men, some of whom were pretty tough. Sometimes the officers took their wives with them to Guam, and on such occasions the card games and drinking usually did not last through the night.

Sunday, generally a quiet day at the fort, was the day when the officers wives were most likely to appear at the store, however. As their husbands played cards, the wives whiled away the day pretending interest in Neumann's rug collection. The cost of the blankets was not high - but neither was the pay of a lieutenant or captain, so sales were few.<sup>3</sup>

General Douglas McArthur lived at Wingate as an infant when his father was stationed at the fort, during 1881-1882. His father was a Captain in command of Company K, 13th US Infantry, and was transferred from Fort Wingate to Fort Selden, New Mexico.<sup>4</sup>

Two incidents occurred during the late 1880's which caused much trouble and were responsible for the army beginning to recruit Navajo men for scout duty.<sup>5</sup>

1. Howard Bryan, Off the Beaten Path, Gallup Daily Independent
2. Twitchell, Leading Facts of New Mexico History, McKinley County
3. McNitt, Frank, Indian Traders.
4. Ltr from McArthur to Wingate, 23 Nov 58, filed in depot historical files
5. Memories of Jeff King, Navajo Scout. Filed in depot history files.

A mailman was killed carrying mail through the country, and a short time later San Carlos Apaches ambushed a group of soldiers, killing them all.

The Apaches piled boulders on the side of a mountain and rolled them down on the troopers as they attempted to go through the pass below. It was then the army decided to recruit Navajo Scouts.

Manuelito, biggest of the Navajo Chiefs, and four others agreed for 25 braves to serve six month hitches with the army in a noncombatant capacity; to serve as mail messengers and scouts. Although two of these original scouts were killed in the line of duty, they were allowed to take no captives nor were they allowed to fight Mescalero's, who seemed to be the chief trouble-makers.

Mariano, another prominent chief, wanted the Navajos to serve in the army. Though they risked getting killed, it would give the tribe an advantage in negotiating with the government, he argued. Old Man Manuelito was opposed to the idea.

"My children (the tribe)," he said, "Have put away bows and arrows and any sharp thing that has to do with war or killing, and I will not pick them up again."

Mariano then argued for an agreement to be made with the government to extend the boundaries of the reservation in return for the services of Navajo men in the army. Manuelito gave in to Mariano on this point, but insisted that his people be given an opportunity to speak their own minds on the agreement. A tribal meeting was arranged and the agreement approved by the tribe.

Eventually, the army picked up about 150 scouts from the tribe, then set about making soldiers of them. Rifle handling, marching, and cavalry tactics were not too difficult, but they ran into some trouble inducing the scouts to dress and have their hair cut the white man's way. Each Navajo wore low on the back of his head the "bi'tse-yele"<sup>2</sup>, a knot of hair



Navajo with traditional hair-do

1. The term "Old Man", as used by the Navajo, is a term of respect used to imply wisdom gained with age.
2. Spelling is an approximation of the Navajo sounds, there being no written Navajo language.

tied 'round with string. They were more than simply a fashion or vanity, but were closely associated with Navajo tradition and religion. Asking a brave to have this hair cut off was a serious business.

Somehow, the army convinced them, however, and the first 40 or 50 scouts recruited bowed to the barbers shears on the same day. In short order, the ground was littered all about with great masses of black hair, still tied up with string.

Then, as now, the Navajos were willing to try anything once, and so most of them promptly tried out all the "military sins" of an enlisted man - and ended up in the stockade to pay for their fun; some were even discharged for disorderly conduct. A little bit of "the spirits" went a long way with the Indians, and imbibing was one of the quickest and surest ways to land in trouble.

Soldiers from Fort Wingate went on a campaign against Mescalero Apaches in about 1897, accompanied by Navajo Scouts. The Mescaleros were, at that time, near the Mexican border on a high mountain from which extended a long hill. Although the soldiers had engaged in many skirmishes with them and had chased them many times, the Indians always escaped them in the rough country. On this one campaign, however, the soldiers found that the Mescaleros had built a fort (or wall) of lava rock on the hill. They had been raiding from there, until finally the ranchers and other civilians in the area chased them back to their stronghold and laid siege to it.

This was the situation the army found then: the Mescaleros holed up in the fortress, vowing never to be taken alive; the whites surrounding them, cutting off their water and food supplies.

After the soldiers joined the fight and completely blocked off the only water supply so that the Mescaleros could not even slip out at night for replenishment, the leaders saw that the children were hungry and thirsty, and their braves out of ammunition. They laid down their weapons and came out with their arms folded to surrender.

"How long will we run and be afraid, and go with hunger and thirst?" they asked their people. "We might as well give up today and let the government do as it will."

When the soldiers got inside the wall, they found that the Mescaleros had indeed run out of food, water and ammunition. The ground inside the walls lay thick with bullets, showing the bitter fight the Indians had put up.

Nine warriors escaped as the Mescaleros were being taken to Fort Wingate and fled into Mexico where they joined Mexican rebels. Later, the army was called on to go back and hunt down the escapees, who had been raiding white ranchers, killing and stealing. After months of fruitless chasing, the renegades were fooled into attacking a group of 'women' (white settlers dressed in women's clothes) and were captured.

During this same period, some 91 Hopi Indians went on the warpath because they did not want to send their children to school. Troops from Fort Wingate were sent out to settle the dispute, with orders from Washington not to fire on the Indians unless they attacked first.

The soldiers found the majority of the Hopi's adamant. They would not send their children to school. More than that, they threatened, they had a secret weapon - a fire stick that would burn every soldier and all the whites who lived near, and they would strike it if not left alone!

The Hopi children were hidden in caves in a nearby canyon during the daytime and brought out by their parents only at night. At last the commander of the troops grew tired of the argument and gave orders to move in on the village during the night, to surprise and capture the Indians at dawn. The tactic was successful and the village fell without a shot being fired. The soldiers never did discover the wondrous fire-stick upon which the Hopi's had placed so much trust.

When the parents still refused to send their children away to school, the troops handcuffed the fathers, formed a big circle of soldiers and herded the children into it. Reluctant ones were spanked into the circle if necessary. Five wagons were loaded with children and taken away to the white man's school. Forlorn and defeated parents were told that they would not see them again for three years.

The Indians had lost one more battle; the whites had encroached a bit farther into their lives.

John J. (Blackjack) Pershing served as a lieutenant at the fort during 1889-90. The quarters occupied by him were referred to for years as the "Old Pershing Place". In later years, school children around the area believed them to be haunted by the wife of an officer who killed her there in a jealous quarrel. (Major F. E. Pershing, a nephew of Blackjack, was also stationed at the post in 1942)

In January, 1889, Pershing was transferred from Fort Stanton to Fort Wingate. In May of that year, word reached the fort that the Zunis, usually peaceable, were under arms and besieging white men at the S ranch. Pershing was ordered to take a detachment of ten men, go immediately to the ranch and rescue the white men from the Indians.<sup>1</sup>

After a hard ride, the detachment saw a little clearing surrounded by about one hundred Indians firing a steady fusillade at a log cabin in the center. Pershing rode up and hailed the Indians. They were greatly excited and angry. The white men in the cabin, they explained, had tried to steal a herd of Zuni horses and, being discovered, had killed some of their people in a running fight; the Indians were determined to take the murderers dead or alive.

Pershing, for his part, explained his orders to rescue the white men and bring them back under arrest to Fort Wingate. It was no easy task to persuade the Zuni Chiefs to permit this; to see known thieves and killers ride off safely and unpunished was not according to their Indian code of swift justice. For a moment it looked as if an attempt to remove the white men would bring on a clash with the Zunis. But the Chiefs finally agreed reluctantly and ordered the fusillade against the cabin stopped.

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1. The New Mexico Historical Review, Univ. of N.M., July 1963

Pershings next task was to get the white men inside to surrender their arms and accompany him in arrest back to Fort Wingate. He walked to the cabin, demanded their guns, and assured them of his protection against the hostile Indians. His assurances must have seemed pretty weak to the thoroughly frightened prisoners; they saw one hundred armed and angry Indians arrayed against only ten American soldiers. But, as they were doomed inevitably if they stayed where they were, they decided to take their chances with Pershing.

The critical stage, of course, was when they all stepped outside to pass through the crowd of Zunis who gathered around threateningly. There was no telling when some young, hot-blooded buck would pump a bullet into their midst, and what wild melee would follow if that happened - one shot liable to touch off a general engagement! Pershing knew that the escape must be done quickly, with efficiency, and with no show of fear. On the way in he had said to one of his men, "We are going to take those men away and if those bucks get hostile remember we mean business". He gave an example of a "cool head" now. He put the prisoners on a buckboard, mounted his men on either side, and rode through the lines of threatening braves. There were no shots fired and the detachment reached Fort Wingate safely.

Colonel Carr, commanding Fort Wingate, commended Pershing for successfully handling a touchy assignment. Pershing appreciated the commendation, but must have wondered afterwards if Indian justice was not better, after all, than white man justice. Of the three horse thieves and murderers, one escaped from the guardhouse, and the other two were later released without punishment.

In September, 1889, Pershing was transferred back to Fort Stanton, his favorite post. While there, he fulfilled a promise he had made to Colonel Carr. Carr was very fond of hunting, especially for bears, which were plentiful near Fort Wingate. Pershing had mentioned once that a family living near Fort Stanton specialized in training dogs for bear hunting. When Pershing was ordered back there, Carr asked him to buy one of these dogs and ship it to him. This he did. Spending fifty dollars of Colonel Carrs' money, he purchased what the sellers called a "wonder", had him carefully crated, and sent him to Carr at Wingate. Carr, in turn, then organized a bear hunt, inviting some of his staff, and promised good sport and a bear meat feast - all because of the new dog which Pershing had bought.

The hunt began and before long a bear was spied. The dog was brought forward, took one look at his adversary (standing on its hind legs and roaring ferociously), turned tail, and ran all the way back to the post. It was a long time before Pershing heard the end of that incident.

Pershing's happy stay at Fort Stanton was threatened in August, 1890, by a department order dissolving Troop L (his troop). Fearing lest his assignment to a new troop would mean his being assigned to a different post, John wrote his regimental commander, Colonel Carr, asking to be assigned to Troop D (also stationed at Fort Stanton). Troop D had an officer shortage, said Pershing solicitously. Colonel Carr forwarded the request to the Department Commander with an interesting comment on human motivations: "Respectfully forwarded. Disapproved. This officer

wrote me a private letter saying that he had invested in mines near Fort Stanton, and wanted to remain there to look after his interests. I replied that I wished him success in his financial enterprises; but that they should not interfere with his duties." Colonel Carr recommended that Pershing be transferred to Troop A (stationed at Fort Wingate).

To Fort Wingate then came Pershing. "Well, I am back here again," "L" troop having ascended", he wrote Julius Penn in September 1890. "This post is a S.O.B. and no question - tumbled down, old quarters, though Spots is repairing as fast as he can. The winters are severe-----it is always bleak and the surrounding country is barren absolutely-----"

In late October, an old friend arrived at Fort Wingate -- Chauncey Baker, class of '86, U. S. Military Academy. With him came Brigadier General Alexander McG. McCook and Thomas J. Morgan (respectively, Commander of the Department of Arizona and U. S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs), on their way to visit the Navajo and Hopi reservations. Pershing was detailed to escort them with a small detachment.

At Keams Canyon, New Mexico, a large number of Indians assembled to meet the General and the Indian Commissioner; they celebrated the meeting by holding athletic contests in the afternoon - footraces, horseraces (they ran a winning horse repeatedly until he was worn out), and wrestling. Chauncey Baker, a great teaser, told the Indians that Pershing was a champion wrestler, and the latter soon found he had a challenge on his hands. Not trusting his wrestling prowess in an engagement with some powerful brave, he excused himself by saying that he was a runner, not a wrestler. That was alright with the Indians. They promptly put their champion runner up against him. Caught and unable to back out without losing face, Pershing stripped down to about as little clothing as the Indian and made ready for the race.

The distance was stepped, Chauncey Baker and an old Indian Chief were selected as judges, and bets were placed. The Indians wagered heavily on their man and the small group of white soldiers backed Pershing with their money. When the starting signal was given, both men dashed off and were even for about the first fifty yards. After that Pershing slowly pulled away and ended several paces ahead, winning the race.

His finish was rather unorthodox. He had a trick ankle due to a sprain at West Point, and as he neared the finish line, his ankle gave out, so that he rolled rather than ran across the finish line. But the Indians made no difficulty about the form of the finish and conceded that the white man had won. They offered a rematch, which Pershing prudently declined.

On November 23, 1890, Pershing and the 6th Cavalry received orders to prepare to move north into Dakato country where some Indian troubles had broken out.

J. T. Freeman came from Chicago to the fort in 1895 to become Bandmaster of the 2d Cavalry, bringing with him his wife and three children.

1. Mrs. Thomas E. Hunt, personal memories. Mrs. Hunt, of East Shore Rd., Jamestown, R. I., was five years when her father, J. T. Freeman, brought her to the post in 1895.

They remained five years, and during their stay the band became quite popular in the surrounding country. They were allowed to take playing engagements as often as possible. The band was returning from one such engagement at Needles, California, and as their train was pulling into Winslow, they discovered that John Phillip Sousa and his band were ready to pull out. Freeman and Sousa were old friends, so Sousa serenaded the 2d Cavalry Band, which promptly returned the courtesy. It was quite an event for both groups. During these years, the recreation hall was used for school (when a teacher was available), for dances, concerts and church services. Rev. Simpson, a Methodist Minister from Gallup, conducted Protestant services about twice a month, while Father Julliari, a Jesuit Priest serving as a missionary to the Indians, held Catholic services whenever he could return to the post.

Early in 1900, a great fire broke out in one of the mens barracks. Whipped by a strong wind, the fire destroyed almost all of the mens personal belongings, and many valuable records of the post.

Charles C. Pierce, Post Chaplain, took care of the spiritual needs of the troops at the fort during the mid-1890's. A letter in the Rodgers' Library, Highlands University, relates that he baptised one Mary Elizabeth Brett on July 12, 1896. She was the daughter of 1st Lt. Lloyd Milton Brett, Adjutant, 2d Cavalry, and Elizabeth (Wallace) Brett. The child's sponsors were Colonel George Gibson Hunt of the 2d Cavalry, and Mrs. Alice (Knight) Wallace, the wife of Major Wallace of the Second.<sup>1</sup>

Gallup saloons still were running wide open, but the town was beginning to achieve some decorum in the late '90's or early 1900's when King Albert, of Belgium, made a special stop in Gallup to absorb some of the western atmosphere and witness dances by a group of Navajos.<sup>2</sup>

In July, 1901, a detachment of 30 soldiers of I Company, 23d Infantry, arrived at the fort, making a total strength of 88 men.<sup>3</sup>

Indian troubles of that time were mostly of the nuisance variety - attacks on isolated whites by drunk or renegade Indians, such as the instance of the killing of a clerk working alone at the Woodgate Trading Post 2 miles northwest of Wingate Railroad station in 1901.<sup>4</sup> A Lt. Woodhouse and a small detachment of men arrested two Navajos for the crime.

The annual territorial fair was held in Albuquerque each fall. In those years the fair borrowed from the old Wild West shows; half of the excitement provided by Navajos brought in to put on dances and take part in the parades, etc., the other half of the spectacle provided by mounted drills and simulated war maneuvers by cavalry sent over from Fort Wingate.

In September, 1907, two troops of the Fifth Cavalry went from Fort

1. Ltr Arrott Microfilm Roll 18, Rodgers Library, Highlands University
2. McNitt, Frank, Indian Traders
3. McKinley County Republican Newspaper, July 27, 1901, Santa Fe Museum
4. Santa Fe New Mexican Newspaper, June 14, 1905, Santa Fe Museum

Wingate to Fort Defiance on what turned out to be the last armed expedition the United States Army ever made against the Indians.<sup>1</sup>

For sometime, a number of Indians under the leadership of two bucks named Polly and Bylilie, had been disobeying the regulations issued by the Indian Agency at Fort Defiance, until finally their actions amounted to open rebellion against the U. S. government. Dr. W. F. Fish, a veterinarian sent to New Mexico to help dip sheep in New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona, ran into opposition from the Indians and asked for troops from the fort.

Bylilie, the Medicine Man, insisted that he could doctor the sheep just as well as Dr. Fish. In the argument, the veterinarian threatened to call out a cavalry of soldiers to come and kill a few Indians, whereupon the Indian boasted that if a bullet hit him square in the forehead, it wouldn't hurt him a bit.

The troops were called, and after a short fight with the Indians, restored order and the sheep dipping proceeded as planned. According to an article written by Dr. Fish for "The Goshen Practitioner", fall 1949 issue (published by Goshen Laboratories, Inc), there were 3 Indians killed in the fight. The Navajo leaders fled north into the Four Corners area, where the troops overtook them, and in a short skirmish the two ringleaders and eight of their followers were captured. The prisoners were taken to Fort Wingate, where they were tried and sentenced to serve terms in the military prison at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

In July, 1908, four troops of the Fifth Cavalry, the entire garrison at Fort Wingate, went on a practice march across the Navajo reservation to Black Mountain. The purpose of this expedition was not only field experience for officers and men, but to remind the Indians of the lesson they had been given the year before. Col. A. W. (Art) Hanson, then a lieutenant just out of West Point, was a member of both the 1907 and 1908 expeditions.

In 1908, Fort Wingate was one of four government installations cooperating with the forest service in the conservation and management of woodlands; West Point, N. Y., Rock Island Arsenal Ill., Picatinny Arsenal, and Fort Wingate.<sup>2</sup> The War Department in that year disposed of 25,000,000 feet of western yellow pine at top prices.

On New Year's day, 1909, the Fifth Cavalry left Fort Wingate for station at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. They were relieved by a squadron of the Third Cavalry, which remained at Wingate until the post was deactivated in 1911.<sup>3</sup>

Col. Doress, stationed in Denver, was commander of the Third Cavalry, but a Major Brown commanded the two troops at Wingate. He surrendered his command to Capt. Frank McCoy, who became quite prominent as a general during World War I. Captain Johnson relieved Capt. McCoy in command.<sup>4</sup>

1. Ltr, Mrs. W. F. Fish, May 5, 1960, depot historical files
2. Santa Fe New Mexican Newspaper, Jan 24, 1908, Santa Fe Museum
3. Personal memories, Mrs. Art Hanson, ltr filed in depot history.
4. Personal memories, Virgil C. Sydney, 417 S. Troy, Royal Oak, Mich., stationed at Wingate as a sergeant with Troop 364, Third U. S. Cavalry, 1908-1910.



Among the austere rows of small, white stones in the national cemetery at Santa Fe, New Mexico, there stands a stone monument of a soldier reclining against a tree trunk, hat and rifle held carelessly by his side.<sup>1</sup> The monument has a touching and tragic story behind it. Two privates, Hunter and O'Leary, stationed at Fort Wingate in the early 1900's, became close friends and enjoyed hunting together in the hills back of the post. On one such trip, while O'Leary was resting against a tree, Hunter accidentally shot him. Following the burial, Pvt. Hunter was so grieved and depressed over the accident that his officers and friends became seriously worried for his sanity. When he developed a habit of disappearing into the hills every day after his tour of duty, they became more worried and had him followed. They found he was going into the woods to a large piece of native stone and carving a grave marker for the boy he shot - the reclining figure, the tree trunk, the rifle and hat, all were there. Although he was not known to have done any carving before (and apparently never tried it again) he produced a very creditable likeness of young Dennis O'Leary. The marker stayed in the small cemetery at Fort Wingate until 1915 when the bodies of all military personnel were moved to the cemetery at Santa Fe. There it still stands, a tribute to the affection and comradeship between two soldiers and a mute apology from one to the other for an unfortunate accident.

In 1909, S. F. Stacher, Indian agent to the Eastern Jurisdiction for Navajos, called for troops to quell a Navajo uprising in protest against certain government regulations.<sup>2</sup> Agency headquarters had been established on April 1, 1909, at Chaco Canyon, also known at that time as Putnam and as Pueblo Bonita. The soldiers camped near the large ruins there for about ten days. During this time the trouble makers were rounded up, brought in and made to understand that the government would use the soldiers, if necessary, to keep the peace and prevent trouble. The presence of the soldiers with their weapons, going through military drills, with bugle calls echoing from the rock walls of the canyon were very impressive and helped to convince the Indians that they must cooperate with the white man's government. The canyon had many cotton tail and jack rabbits, and when the soldiers went rabbit hunting to provide fresh meat for their camp, the sound of their rifle fire echoing in the canyon sounded like a real battle taking place. These sounds also helped to impress the Indians, who ceased their attempted revolt.

Troopers at the post were issued mounted passes and went into Gallup during their off-duty hours to visit friends, eat a good meal, or patronize one of the town's several saloons.<sup>3</sup> Their first duty on arriving in the town was to properly stable and feed their horses. This was a measure of self-protection as well as an obedience to regulations, especially for the saloon customers. If the soldier took on a few drinks too many, he was simply hoisted onto his horse, headed in the direction of the fort, and his horse given a hearty whack across the rump. By the time the horse ambled into the post, the trooper had had plenty of time to sober up.

The majority of men at the post, however, entered into the social activities of the town and there were many marriages between local girls and men at the fort.

1. Personal memories Virgil C. Sydney, 417 S. Troy, Royal Oak, Mich., stationed at Wingate as a sergeant with Troop 364, Third U. S. Cavalry, 1908-1910.
2. Ltr Herbert C. Stacher (son of S.F. Stacher) filed in depot history
3. Personal memories Virgil C. Sydney, Royal Oak, Michigan

The post was deactivated between 1911 and 1918<sup>1</sup> except for a short period during 1914-15 when it was garrisoned for the purpose of guarding 4,000 Mexican troops and families who fled the Pancho Villa uprising, entering Texas at Marfa. They were remnants of a Mexican Federal Army that had been chased across the border by the rebels, and had requested asylum in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Moved from El Paso, Texas, to Fort Wingate in the latter part of May, 1914, these prisoners were billeted in tents on a broad, flat plain below the post. They had been moved from El Paso to prevent them escaping the group and joining other Mexicans on this side of the border in an effort to be allowed to stay here when the rebellion was over.

The camp was surrounded by barbed wire with raised sentry boxes at four corners. Soldiers manning these boxes were armed, with orders to shoot to kill if anyone tried to escape. One man did try and was shot. Two others managed to escape but were hunted down by Apache Scouts and soldiers, and returned to the fort. They were a heterogeneous group, including five generals, some of whom had brought their families; part of a large band, some of whom had managed to bring their instruments with them; and a great many "Soldaderas", raggle-taggle women who formed an integral part of the Mexican army, foraging and cooking for their men and often fighting beside them.

They were issued rations and fuel to cook with and did their own cooking over open fires or other makeshift arrangements. This brought on one more incident in the never-ending feud between higher staffs located at a distance, and local commanders.<sup>3</sup> The regular army rations issued to the Mexicans were definitely not to their liking. They were accustomed to freshly killed beef and to corn products. They flatly refused to eat



Tortilla's were cooked on open fires or makeshift stoves.

1. Abandoned on 4 Feb 1911, G.O. No. 213, War Dept., 16 Nov 1911
2. Personal memories Mrs. W. H. Lloyd, ltr in depot history files
3. Personal memories Col. R. H. Elliott (Ret.), son of Major Stephen H. Elliott. ltr filed in depot historical files.

the Mexicans also rejected many of the staples, especially the bakery bread which they simply threw away and replaced with tortillo's cooked on their makeshift stoves. The situation became so bad that the Commanding Officer, Major Stephen H. Elliott, after trying repeatedly to get Department Headquarters to act, went out on his own and purchased a carload of corn and some hand mills to grind it. He then sent the bills to Department.

The Mexicans were delighted, but not Department. They notified Major Elliott that these bills would be paid, but in the future the Mexicans would eat what Department said they would eat, and like it!

Enraged by what he considered bureaucratic stupidity, Elliott sulked for a few days, but was not able to change the situation.

Entertainment the Mexicans had to furnish for themselves.<sup>1</sup> The band gave concerts; the circus troupe performed; they sang in groups; they brewed a potent drink out of their potato rations; when fights broke out among them and the soldiers put a stop to the use of the potatoes for brew, they used something else which the soldiers were apparently unable to identify; one little general knitted lace to keep himself busy, selling some of it to the wives of soldiers who lived on the post.

When the prisoners arrived at the post they were guarded by infantry troops from El Paso, who were to return after transferring the prisoners into the custody of a squadron of the Twelfth Cavalry under the Command of Major Elliott.<sup>2</sup>

However, while the cavalry was enroute to Fort Wingate, riots resulting from a coal strike in Colorado got out of control, and the governor of that state asked for federal intervention. Three troops of the cavalry were diverted to this duty, and so part of the infantry escort remained at the fort to assist with the guard duty. Thus, the post became at that time a mixed cavalry-infantry garrison. There was a Quartermaster and four doctors there,<sup>3</sup> one of whom was 1st. Lt. William H. Lloyd. There was a doctor Loewy from Baltimore and a Contract Surgeon named Christensen.

The troops sent to Wingate were temporarily away from their permanent stations, and because of this there were no provisions for the transfer of household goods.<sup>4</sup> Dependents were not moved at government expense in those days, so wives and families could come to Wingate or not, as the individual officers' pocketbook allowed.

From an official standpoint, almost the entire functioning of the post revolved around the Mexican camp. There was little military training. Post housekeeping and guard duty at the stockade were the primary duties.

The internal administration of the camp was a Mexican affair. The policing, feeding, camp organization and a certain amount of discipline were carried out by a Mexican organization whose leaders were responsible to Major Elliott. The guarding, inspection of camp, and more serious

1. Personal memories, Mrs. Wm. H. Lloyd
2. Personal memories, Col. R. H. Elliott
3. Personal memories, Mrs. W. H. Lloyd
4. Personal memories, Col. R. H. Elliott

disciplinary measures were functions of the troops.

On arriving at the fort, the officers found that the quarters had no plumbing, no stove, they had to use camp cots for beds, there was an outhouse in the back of each house in lieu of bathroom facilities - but the doors had been removed from most of them.

There were only two women on the post, Mrs. Lloyd and a sergeant's wife. Their food was brought to them from the cavalry mess across the parade ground, and invariably reached them cold and full of dust. Moreover, the cooks were unused to cooking at high altitude and so much of the food was not completely done.

In desperation, and to protect her baby's stomach from this diet, the young Mrs. Lloyd volunteered to cook for all the doctors if they would only manage to find her a stove. They begged an ambulance from the Quartermaster, went to Gallup, and returned in triumph with an old four-hole, wood burning cook stove. It did not draw very well and ashes fell into the oven, but it cooked. With a coffee pot, a frying pan, two five pound lard pails and all their mess kits, she set up her kitchen and cooked the G.I. rations from the troop mess - canned vegetables, canned milk, and whatever cut of beef they drew. On one occasion, pleased beyond measure to have a break in the monotony of these meals, she cooked some fresh rhubarb for dessert. Lt. Lloyd invited Dr. Cantu, the only doctor among the refugees, to have lunch with them. When told that the dessert was rhubarb, he exclaimed, "But that is a medicine!" He was finally persuaded to try it, and seemed to like it, but kept murmuring to himself, "Rhubarb for a sweet! What a barbarity!"

Just as the Lloyds and the other doctors got comfortably settled, the army replaced the Twelfth Cavalry with two companies of the Twentieth Infantry, with Major Elliott to remain in command. The first section to arrive was the Medical Detachment, with a Major Manley as head Medical Officer. They arrived on a wet, very cold and windy night, and were met at the station by Lt. Lloyd in the ambulance. In the rain and general confusion they could not find the Major's bedroll, only his golf clubs. The lieutenant slipped into his own quarters to secure blankets for the major, but unfortunately, woke his wife while removing one from over her sleeping form and was forced to stay long enough to listen to a good many vehement remarks about the general value and intelligence of an officer who would lose his bedroll and show up at a place like Fort Wingate with a set of golf clubs! It required a show of great charm the following day before the good major won forgiveness and became a close friend of the family.

After the arrival of the Twentieth, plumbing and GI ranges were installed in the quarters, the Post Exchange was opened up, and they even sold beer for the troops. There was little to do for entertainment. The troops played baseball and drilled, with the drills frequently broken up by fights between the Lloyds bulldog and the company mascots. These fights were usually broken up by dumping the contents of the nearest rain barrel over the combatants. The Lloyds' dog also had a standing feud with a bulldog belonging to Captain C. C. Smith, who lived next door. Every afternoon the Captains' orderly would knock at the Lloyds'

door to say: "The Captains' compliments to Lt. Lloyd. The Captain is walking his dog to the west of the post tonight".

Which meant that the Lloyds' dog was walked to the east of the post to avoid the inevitable fight.

Before the end of July, Major Elliotts' wife and daughter and two sons joined him. The older son had just graduated from West Point, the younger one, Robert, planned to enter there the next term. The Major met them at Wingate Station in a Daugherty Wagon<sup>1</sup> pulled by two mules anxious to get back to their warm stables. Robert herded his mother and sister past a grumbling train crew who resented the extra stop, into clear, cold midnight air. (The young West Pointer joined the family seperately). The moon was full, and to the three newcomers it seemed they were traveling at a great clip over barren ground steeped in moonlight deep as snow.

The view as seen from their front porch the following morning changed the whole complexion of the adventure, however, at least for Robert. He loved riding and the surrounding hills offered a paradise of trails and streams to be explored. Accustomed to the pallid, sandcolored buttes of Fort Robinson, Nebraska, he was much impressed with the magnificent red ones rising into the clear, bright skies of New Mexico.

The officers amused themselves by making furniture out of packing boxes for their quarters, known as "Army Chippendale". They made tables and chairs, and one officer became so enthusiastic that he made himself a bed; a remarkable piece of furniture, in that it resembled a coffin more than a bed. The rest contented themselves with camp cots, except that some of the soldiers made a crib for the Lloyds' baby so that she no longer had to sleep in the locker trunk on top of her mothers' clothes.

The troops took up a collection to buy cheap uniforms and some instruments for the Mexican Band, who then gave concerts two or three times a week, always ending with the Mexican National Anthem and the Star Spangled Banner. The circus performers also put on a show for the troops. One of the officers wives had a pet rabbit which she was asked to loan to the "Prestidigitator" for his use in the show. Thinking the term meant something similar to "Taxidermist", the poor woman kept insisting she did not want her bunny stuffed. Finally she seemed to understand and did loan the rabbit, but with grave doubts as to what might happen to it.

The Mexicans were great on fiestas. Each Mexican National holiday called for an evening of music and speeches. Everyone was invited; officers, families and guests. In the words of Robert Elliott years later, "I suppose other officers and their families went, also, but I can only recollect the five Elliotts sitting on a platform with the Mexican dignitaries, in a large tent lighted by candles and decorated with paper streamers. To me, the proceedings were downright painful; the programs were printed in Spanish, which I could not read; the fiery speeches were also in Spanish, which I could not understand; and the music was doleful and repetitious - highly objectionable to ears attuned to the latest rag-time."

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1. "A sea-going hack with no springs, of a type much used in the Army in those days" Robert Elliotts' description.

Being a disciplined military family, they bore it stoically, however, even when Major Elliott had to sit stoney-faced and impassive while candle grease dripped down on a brand new serge uniform

Both the water and sewerage systems were old and pipes were continually bursting. Water came by gravity from a small collecting basin on a hill back of the officers quarters. The small reservoir was below ground but open at the top, and was covered by a conical shingled roof. One could walk around the circular concrete tank and look down into water so clear the basin seemed to be empty and only the dropping of a pebble into the pool broke the illusion.

The water was not what one had a right to expect from it's limpiness. It was as hard as nails and even with hard-water soap a bath was not a thing of luxurious lather, but a covering of the body with a thin coat of slime to be washed away without much feeling of cleanliness.

Rainwater was at a premium. Every shower sent the ladies of the post rushing outside with every available pot and pan capable of holding water, to collect the precious stuff. Then for a day, the men wisely got out of the way while the quarters were given over to the feminine task of washing hair.

Sewer pipes were laid not more than eighteen inches below the ground and when one burst, it completely destroyed the pleasure of sitting in the moonlight on ones front porch.

Major Elliott, reared in San Antonio, Texas, had the usual border-town prejudices. He absolutely would not allow the Mexican woman who helped his wife, to either cook or use the bathroom. Consequently, she was forced to use the "Chic Sale" that stood behind the quarters - a pretty ramshackle affair by any standard - without a door, and opening out toward the back road. Neither the Majors' attitude nor the lack of privacy intimidated her, though. She would sit happily enthroned, waving gaily to the enlisted men driving escort wagons down the road and showering them with vulgarities in Spanish, to which they responded in terms that would do credit to a Jones or Mailer novel.

Mrs. Elliott, a strict moralist, was shocked to the marrow of her bones. She blamed her husband for not having a door put up, and strictly forbade Robert to go within seeing distance of the outdoor facility.<sup>1</sup>

One night about midnight, the Elliott family was awakened by guards pounding on their door. It greatly excited the two boys, because in those days a Commanding Officer's sleep was not disturbed except for mighty good cause. Their visions of a Mexican revolt, blood flowing, and sudden death about them were shattered by the news that the guards wanted to make a surprise inspection of the camp - they had suspected some of the Mexicans of attempting to tunnel out and set up permanent residence in the States. On this particular night, the guards had seen prisoners carrying what appeared to be baskets of dirt out of certain tents and spreading it on the camp streets.

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1. If he had not, this account could never have been written for the history.

Permission was granted, and by daylight a number of tunnels had been discovered. One was so far advanced that had the operations not been discovered within a week, the entire camp could have crawled to freedom. The Mexicans were put to work caving in the tunnels and filling in the trenches with crushed stone. The occupants of the tents from which the tunnels started were incarcerated in an inclosure in the stockade where obstreperous inmates were placed to cool off and meditate on their sins.

Among the prisoners was one man who had been a bullfighter in Mexico.<sup>1</sup> In the eyes of the soldier guards, he was suffering a severe case of "Delusions of Grandeur", considering himself much too important to do any of the menial tasks required of the other prisoners, refusing to wear the work clothes, strutting about and continually assuming Napoleonic poses for the benefit of other prisoners and guards. Considering him a constant threat to the peace and quiet of the place, the guards developed the habit of marching him periodically to the cemetery with work groups, pointedly taking him past the open grave that was always dug, and reminding him that there really were worse things than soiling his hand with a little honest labor.

A great treat for the ladies of the post was to beg a buckboard and two mules from the Quartermaster and drive to Gallup. It was quite a trip over the desert, but they could always get there in time to go to the little Harvey House lunch room in the railroad station, climb up on the stools and gorge themselves with the good Harvey food. How good that food did taste after weeks of boredom of GI rations! The tired occupants of the buckboard were always kept awake on the trip back to the post by the mules shying at rattlesnakes along the road.

One of the Mexican Generals, Romero, died during the summer. He was buried with full military honors in the old post cemetery. His own troops attended in the forlorn tatters of their uniforms, the United States troops furnished a firing squad, and the Mexican buglers blew Taps. Funeral wreaths made from the pine trees in the area were placed on his grave.

Among the officers stationed at the fort during this time were Captain Norton, Captain (later General) Estes, Lt. Drysdale, Lt. Guild and Lt. Underhill. Underhill was from Kentucky and craved beaten biscuits, so he taught Mrs. Lloyd to make them and would often go over to sit on the porch and help her beat them with an empty beer bottle. There were also the Early brothers, Clifford and Jubal, young lieutenants who were the grandsons of General Jubal Early of Civil War fame. Young Jubal was drowned while on a duck hunting trip with some friends at Mariano Lake near Wingate. When their boat became overturned, Jubal went down after John Young, who had sunk because he had his jacket pockets heavily loaded with ammunition. In panic, John grabbed Jubal, who was unable to rise to the surface with the weight of both John and the ammunition, and so both boys drowned.<sup>2</sup>

1. Personal memories Jack Howard, Stockton, Calif., stationed at Fort Wingate during 1914-15 with the Infantry. He passed thru the country, and stopped at the depot, in 1963 as "The Pony Express, 1963 Model", with a message from the Governor of California to the Governor of Oklahoma.
2. Personal memories Mrs. G. D. H. Lyon, Gallup, New Mexico

Negotiations between the U. S. and Mexican governments for the return of these refugees resulted in Mexico agreeing to take back the enlisted personnel and their women, but the senior officers were afraid to go back as they were sure they would be shot. They were escorted to Eagle Pass, Texas, and turned over to the Mexicans. Those who could not return to Mexico were left in El Paso.

It was during these years that a portion of the Fort Wingate reservation was made the Zuni District of the Manzano National Forest (Now Cibola) by General Orders No. 80, WD, 1911.



## CHAPTER IV

### FORT WINGATE ORDNANCE DEPOT

Toward the close of World War I, there were some very serious explosions of munitions and other war supplies in and around New York Harbor. With the close of the war an energetic movement was started by the residents of these areas to get these supplies moved from their populous and congested districts.

The War Department, recognizing this, had developed plans for several storage places throughout the country, among them Fort Wingate. The Ordnance Department took over the reserve in 1918 for the storage of high explosives and redesignated it Wingate General Ordnance Depot. At the time, the depot was handled by two non-commissioned officers, two mounted guards and 13 Indians.

Several hundred draftees of the National Army were sent from Camp Cody at Deming, New Mexico to act as a labor battalion. A Motor Transport Company was sent up from Fort Apache in Arizona, and later an Ordnance Company was sent in from Raritan Arsenal in New Jersey. The Ordnance people arrived about mid-January of 1919.

Practically all the railroad sidings east and west of the post, including the freight yards for hundreds of miles in each direction, were loaded with freight cars full of TNT awaiting the chance to be delivered to Wingate. The railroad people were frantic and citizens of various towns around the yards were in panic. Heavy pressure was being exerted to get rid of these hazards.

Members of the labor battalion and Motor Transport Company started immediately to unload what few cars they could, and a munition dump was established four miles east of Wingate Station on the north side of the railroad tracks, toward Perea. With the arrival of the Ordnance personnel and the help of a detachment of the U.S. Army Engineers, it was decided that a magazine area would be cleared west of the military road leading from Wingate Station to Fort Wingate, north of the fort and west to Rehoboth Mission (which is near the west boundary of the military reservation) and south of the railroad tracks. The engineers mapped out this magazine area and sites for the buildings.

Sgt. James Kilkenny was placed in charge of all unloading at the freight sidings; Ordnance Sgt. Marvin Jones to the magazine area in charge of the unloading and storing of powder at the magazine sites. At first, TNT was unloaded from cars at the Wingate Station Spur. Later, the Engineers cleared a dump and ran a railroad spur from McCune, just east of Rehoboth Mission, and across the Rio Puerco, extending for about 25 car lengths south. At this spur, provisions were made for unloading 15 railroad cars at one time, conveying the explosive from the car to a central dump located about 250 ft. from the railroad track. At times, there was as much as 7 to 10 million pounds of TNT stored out in the open here.

During the emergency period, a special train crew and an engine was assigned to work with the depot crew. Fifteen cars at a time were pulled from the Gallup freight yards and spotted on the spur. During one heavy day, 90 cars were unloaded. It was not long, with this concentrated effort, until the railroad was able to report that most of their freight yards were clear and the TNT had been removed from the sidings. After that, the crews were able to concentrate their efforts on moving the stuff from the dump at the spur to the magazine area, and still take care of any carloads that arrived at the spur.

The construction of magazines and buildings started approximately one mile west of the site of the present administrative area. The buildings were of a temporary nature, wooden, having been used by engineers as portable barracks during the war.

As the magazines were erected, the powder was transported from the munitions dump to the magazines by the Motor Transport Company, using Liberty-Nashquad and Jeffquad trucks to do the job. About a quarter-million pounds of powder was stored in each unit. Hazards were numerous, and during the spring thaw it was a common sight to see 50 to 60 trucks stuck in the mud between the railroad spur and the magazine area. By 1919 and 1920, a three-strand barbed-wire fence was erected around the magazines and by 1924 sufficient guards hired to patrol the fence on horseback night and day. These guards earned their money the hard way, particularly during the winter months when the temperature frequently fell to 15 or 20 degrees below zero, and at least once (in 1936-37) hit 32 degrees below zero, with snow two feet deep on level ground. Mac Carmichael, who was later elected sheriff of McKinley County and killed in a riot in 1935, was in charge of these mounted guards. Dee Roberts, who also became sheriff in McKinley County in later years, was a member of this guard force.

It was, at that time, the largest storage depot of high explosives in the world. Cattle from surrounding ranches roamed freely through the area, several ranchers having grazing leases with the government. Having very little respect for the lethal qualities of the powder, these cattle stamped through it and over it, even energetically licking at it when boxes were broken open. Records of the installation contain several letters from Depot Commanders to Washington inquiring as to their right in attempting to keep cattle away from the storage sights. One particularly plaintive letter dubbed the cows "A perfect nuisance."

A giant mustering out day was held for the draftees and other troops at the post on 30 May 1919. All the company mess funds and surplus monies were pooled to defray expenses, Gallup citizens were invited and the celebration lasted from early in the morning until late that night. Guests arrived in automobiles, in buggies, and by a special train run by the Santa Fe to Wingate Station where they were picked up by the Motor Transport Company and taken to the fort. Entertainment for the day included a Chicken Pull, Indian dances, and a baseball game between the military team and the Gibson Miners.

After mustering out, some of the Ordnance men remained in a civilian capacity. Navajos were used as laborers and cowboys and former G. I.'s were hired as guards. The Motor Company was returned to Arizona and depot transportation handled by civilians.

All of the civilians were housed and fed at the fort except the Navajo's who established their camps in the surrounding hills, trotting back to them after work.

During World War I, problems of supplying arms and ammunition to troops overseas had forced the Ordnance Department in Washington to realize that it must have a more efficient plan of action, reappraise its organization and plan for industrial mobilization in the future. Therefore, in 1919, Ordnance responsibilities were realigned on a "subjective" basis, meaning by categories of weapons, and out of this realignment came the Field Service which had charge of all storage depots, including Wingate.<sup>1</sup>

From 1918 to 1920 the depot was commanded by Major E. C. McCune, for whom the McCune Railroad Spur into the depot was named, a Major Waterbury, Captain Harvey A. Clark (1920-21), Warrant Officer John McDonald (1921-24), a Captain Lewis (1924-28).

By 1921, 163 magazines of portable wooden barracks type and one underground magazine had been constructed and the post was designated Wingate Ordnance Reserve Depot. Also in 1921, M. J. Connelly and Co. entered into a contract with the government to manufacture 9,000,000 cartridges, using picric acid from this depot. Their plant was located just outside the area fence at the McCune Spur.

In 1919, coal miners in Gallup went out on a strike. New Mexico Rangers and National Guardsmen were not able to handle the disorders between striking miners and scabs (strike-breakers) brought in by the coal companies, so troops of the 8th Cavalry at Fort Bliss were sent in to establish and maintain martial law.<sup>2</sup> These troops camped at the fair grounds in Gallup, and requisitioned their supplies from Fort Wingate.

The troops forced the company stores to remain open during the strike, but the companies would not replace stock as it was used, so mining families faced an emergency situation concerning food. Sergeant William H. Brown, of Troop A, contacted the Commanding Officer at the fort, who sent in Army rations to the soldiers to feed the entire population of Coal Basin for about three or four weeks, until the strike was settled.

As part of their efforts to maintain order, troopers in town requested that the strike-breakers leave the Gallup area. They were laughed at by the Scabs. Then, troopers contacted the mine bosses, who agreed to get rid of the troublemakers, but the bosses were a little

1. Chapter II, U.S. Army in World War II, the Ordnance Dept., Planning Munitions for War
2. Personal memories Wm. H. Brown, PO Box 117, Alpine, Texas who resigned from the Army as a Major in 1945.

slow about it, so one day Troop A took a Browning machine gun down to the mines, fired a burst of about 5 rounds into the air, and the strike breakers left in a hurry. Erupting from mine openings and even air shafts, they went running out in every direction over the country grabbing freight trains or any other type of transportation to get out of the country.

In 1925 a school for Zuni and Navajo children was established at the fort, utilizing the existing buildings for classrooms and dormitories, and reserving certain military housing for the depot personnel. Congress appropriated \$500,000.00 for the school and there were approximately 700 children placed in it by the following year. The barracks were made into dormitories and the square where soldiers once had drilled was converted into a ball field.

In 1928 about 9,000 acres of the reservation lying on the north side of the railroad tracks were turned over to the Interior Department as an addition to the Navajo Indian Reservation. Also in 1928, the depot was changed from a dead storage basis to an active status and packing and shipping of explosives began in July and is still going on as required. The magazines area where explosives were stored by the Army comprised about 5,000 acres with 163 storage buildings. Most of the TNT stored in these buildings had been shipped in prior to putting up the magazines, had been stacked in any flat spot available between the storage sites and Perea and covered with tarpaulins, or rough frame structures.

Some of it had been out in the open a full year before it was finally placed inside storage, so that it had absorbed sufficient moisture to have caked inside the boxes. In addition, rats had built nests - and many had died - inside the boxes with the explosive. It was necessary to crush the TNT, to screen out the rats and their nests, and re-pack it before it could be used. To do this, huge wooden rollers were fashioned of hardwood brought from Australia, turned by an engine set well away from the building, to prevent explosions caused by sparks and connected to the roller by long drive shafts. After being crushed, the powder was screened and tamped down into new boxes.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to the precautions taken with the engine to prevent sparks, the workshops buildings were of frame construction and the only heat available for the bitter winter weather was furnished by an old pot-bellied stove set up in the center of the room. Many a fire was kindled and fed by pieces of TNT-saturated packing crates, while powdered TNT shimmered and danced around the sides of the stove. Surveillance Inspectors had never been heard of on the depot at that time, so the only inspections were made by occasional visits of experts from Army Headquarters at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. These men usually took one horrified look and went back home shaking their heads. Somehow, in spite of these conditions, there were no blows.<sup>2</sup> There was, however, a magazine ignited by lightning in 1938, when the fire burned so hot that it melted the sand around the magazine, leaving a glazed, glass-like surface on the ground. Luckily, several men who had taken shelter from a

1. Description of procedures by F. E. Fitzpatrick, Ammo. Supply Officer, 1958, and Ted R. Switzer, Misc. Services Officer
2. Blw: explosion

thundershower in that magazine had left it when the bolt of lightning struck it, and so no one was injured.

In 1930 there was approximately 46,000,000 pounds of bulk explosives stored, which was shipped at the rate of about 3,000,000 lbs. per year to Picatinny Arsenal, for loading bombs, and to coast guard defense units in the Panama Canal Zone, Corregidor and the Philippines. At that time, explosives placards were placed low on the doors of rail cars to facilitate reading by railroad employees. Shortly after one shipment was received at Picatinny with bullet holes in the placards - showing that their bright colors had made them ideal for target practice as they rolled through the country - these placards were placed in high and conspicuous spots on the cars in the hope that the next marksman would read before shooting, and live to shoot another day, or that bullets would enter the car above the load and do no damage.

A rebuilding program was started in 1936 and the magazines were renovated and placed on concrete foundations at the rate of 15 or 20 per year. As a magazine was completed, explosives were re-worked and stored in it, until by 1940 there was some 15,000,000 pounds stored and ready for use. This comprised the first shipment to Britain and France at the beginning of World War II.

Installation Commander from 1930-32 was Master Sgt. Elmer K. Kemp, who earned the name "Malo" Kemp among the Indian workers. He could speak neither Navajo nor Spanish, but did discover that the Indians were familiar with the Spanish word "Malo" meaning bad, or sick. In an effort to communicate, he would say the weather was "Malo" - or a job of work was "Malo - Malo", meaning poorly done. So, in the inimitable way of the Navajo, he became "Malo" Kemp. It was Sgt. Kemp who was responsible for getting government pensions for the old Navajo scouts who had served with the army. The last of these old scouts, Jeff King, who served 28 years with the army, and Jake Murphy, who served one short enlistment, was still living in this area in 1960.

Following Kemp was Technical Sgt. John C. Vaughan (1935-37) (called K'ah gee-eh stii t'sol, Khaki Britches, by the Navajo), Technical Sgt. John C. Wilson (Later promoted to Lieutenant and then to Captain) under whose command the entire stock of TNT at the depot was sold to the British Purchasing Commission for export to Britain and France in 1940.

Although representatives of the Commission had been to the depot and had secured samples of the TNT for testing, this order hit the small workforce at the depot as a complete surprise. All of their equipment was obsolete, there were only three old trucks (1 Ford, 1 Dodge, and 1 Reo) available, no materials handling equipment, except a roller conveyor with steel rails and wooden rollers, and 1 telephone which was operated through the switchboard at the fort.

Navajo labor, to meet the increased workload, was recruited by the simple method of looking over available applicants, choosing the healthiest and strongest looking (often by flashlight for the early morning or 1. He worked with S. F. Stacher, Indian Agent, on this problem.

midnight shift) and putting them to work. Paper work could come later, when the shipping order had been met. The task was made even more difficult by rattlesnakes. It became standard procedure to open the magazine doors, listen for the whirring of rattles, then search through the building with flashlights before starting operations. Often four or five of the deadly reptiles were killed in one magazine.

In spite of the lack of equipment, the shipping order was filled on time, establishing a precedent which has resulted in a record for the depot of never missing a shipping deadline. Crews of six to eight men were known to load 60 one-hundred-pound boxes of powder by hand in five minutes. The first shipment of explosives was on the high seas when the Battle of Dunkirk occurred. That part consigned to France was diverted to Britain and played an important part in the grim struggle of the Isle for survival during the first months of World War II. Some of it was sunk by submarine action, but a sufficient quantity reached its destination to enable the Britishers to defend themselves until more supplies and ammunition could be furnished them.

Passage of the Lend-Lease Act in 1941 brought new problems to the Ordnance Department. Industrial Mobilization Planning in the preceding 20 years had laid the ground carefully so that Ordnance was ready to start the machinery for large scale procurement, but had not included foreign aid. Not the least of these problems was the need for depots to store materiel. Planning through 1940 had been based upon the defense of the American Continent, without regard to supplying armies overseas. When the foreign aid program was superimposed on this plan, immediate changes and expansion was necessary. Construction began on eight depots in early 1941. Umatilla, Oregon was activated first, Wingate next, then Portage, Ohio and Anniston, Alabama. While not completed, these four were ready for use by the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and Wingate had undergone such an extensive rebuilding and construction program as to be almost a new installation.

Surveys had been made for new buildings in November, 1940, after Captain Evan M. Johnson IV (1940-42) assumed command of the depot. The spring of 1941 was one of the wettest in the history of New Mexico. The surveyors, hauling their tools about with them in station wagons, soon bogged down completely after the rains started. They then took trailers, pulled by Caterpillar tractors, and buried one of the tractors so deep in the mud of Area B that it was several weeks before it could be taken out. There was no transportation left to these men - most of them city-dwellers - except horses, and their efforts to stay atop a horse, holding grimly to their surveying instruments while daylight showed between them and the saddle at every jog of the animal, was a constant source of delighted amusement to the Indians and cowboy guards at the depot.<sup>1</sup> Construction on the administrative buildings and igloos at the present site started on February 25, 1941, and was finished on December 5 of that year. The first shipment of ammunition for storage arrived at this depot from King Powder Co., Kings Mills, Ohio, on October 17, 1941, consisting of several carloads of spotting charges for practice bombs. It is interesting to

1. Personal memories, Frank N. Carmichael, employed as a guard at Fort Wingate Ord. Depot in Dec., 1933. Related in 1960. Ltr in historical files.

note that of the 128 civilians employed in November, 1941, 37% received less than \$100.00 per month, 54% less than \$200.00 per month, and 9% less than \$300.00 per month.

With US entry into World War II in 1941, the depot became highly active, with incoming and outbound shipments climbing from five cars per day in 1941 to 60 or more per day in 1943, with approximately 1,550 civilians and 13 officers assigned. Storage of ammunition other than TNT began in 1942 when Lieutenant Colonel R. S. Barr was in command (Jan. - Dec. 1942). Colonel Barr was the first commander to live in quarters furnished at the present depot headquarters.

One of the worst problems encountered during these war years was maintaining good housekeeping at the work sites as a part of the safety program. Ninety percent of the work force was made up of Navajo Indians, only five percent of whom could speak English, and to whom sweeping was squaws work. They refused to have any part of it, and the accident rates were high. The problem was finally solved by inducing a Medicine Man, in full regalia, to come out to the depot and do some sweeping. From that time on, the braves swept with a will and the depot took several coveted safety awards.

These Indians were most nonchalant in their attitude toward the ammunition and explosives with which they worked, showing no fear of it at all, and very little respect for its power to destroy. In spite of repeated warnings that they could be killed through careless handling of the stuff, one crew was discovered scattering a stack of bombs by simply pushing them off the stack with a pole - it was easier to get to them when they were scattered on the floor than when they remained in the pyramidal stack. As soon as he caught his breath after watching this procedure, their supervisor yelled at them, "What's the matter with you people? Don't you know those things will blow up and wreck this place?" The silence and expressionless faces told him his words had received no more attention this time than they had the last time, so he decided to try a new approach. "What", he asked them, "Are you going to tell your sons when they need more ammunition and you've blown it all up over here? What are they going to fight with, then?" After the remark was interpreted for the Indians and had been quietly discussed among them for a few minutes, they began restacking the bombs, handling them with great care. Many of their sons were out in the Pacific in the middle of the fighting - as was the son of the supervisor. While it had not impressed them at all when told that they might be killed themselves, they knew that a fighting man needs fighting materials. The trouble with rough handling of ammunition has never been as bad since.

Recruiting took some doing in those days, too. One labor recruiter from the depot took a trip onto the reservation hunting Navajo men to supplement the work force. Sighting a hogan, he stopped to see if there were any able-bodied men interested in a job and was told that the man could not possibly leave home. A large bear was raiding the sheep and tearing up the cornfield. Someone had to be there to protect them and

1. Personal memories, Frank N. Carmichael, employed as a guard at Fort Wingate Ord. Depot in Dec., 1933. Related in 1960. Ltr. in depot historical files.

since bears are not harmed by Navajos, he was not about to shoot this one. Two men in neighboring hogans were having the same trouble. Returning to Gallup, the recruiter acquired a gun and two helpers, tracked the bear down and shot him. As soon as that little matter was safely attended to, so the squaws could take care of the hogan and sheep, all three men signed on to work at the depot.

Many of the Indian workers had only their Navajo name. Since the Navajo language is not written and the sounds are extremely difficult to translate into English, it became customary for the people in the personnel office to give them names for payroll purposes. Hard-put to think up sufficient different names, they often jokingly named the wildest Indians after themselves or other people in the office. The first inspector from Fort Sam Houston was amazed at the practice and painted lurid verbal pictures of the prison terms awaiting the local staff, until he was quieted down by being requested to spell a couple of Navajo names so they could be entered on the payroll. He was unable even to pronounce them. When time cards were introduced to the depot, the Indians who could not read to recognize their cards marked them at the top with their cattle brand for identification.

Commanders during this period included Lt. Col. Clark C. Witman (1942-46), Lt. Col. Alfred H. Hall (1946-48), Lt. Col. Frank Eccles (1948-51) and Lt. Col. Kenneth E. Knudson (1952-53).

Staffing fell off abruptly at the end of World War II, but picked up again during the years between 1950 and 1954, when the depot was engaged in shipping ammunition for the Korean Police Action. Since then, the depot has been active in the maintenance, modification and renovation of stored ammunition, to keep it in first class shape and ready for issue and use by the armed forces at any time. The actual strength of the depot dropped to around 300 civilians and five commissioned officers by 1958. Colonel William Menoher was in command from 1953-55, followed by Colonel Martin F. Shaughnessy (1955-56) and Colonel Robert R. Judson (1956-59). Lt. Col. Ralph R. Todd assumed command in May, 1959.

Prominent among the civilian workers from the time the fort was assigned its storage mission until the 1960's was Frances E. Fitzpatrick called Be-la gaun'ah'ts'o (White Man with Big Belly) by the Navajos, who was named Ordnance Man of the Year in 1957 and was presented the Department of the Army Award for Exceptional Meritorious Civilian Service in 1958.

Ralph V. Miller, Chief of the Fire Department for many years, was named the Ordnance Corps Outstanding Civilian Employee in 1959, and was the candidate from both the Chief of Ordnance and the Chief of Logistics for the National Civil Service League Career Service in 1958.

Late in 1959, a letter was received from the Chief of Ordnance congratulating the installation on its 100th anniversary coming up in August of the next year. Plans were started for a centennial celebration to mark the hundred year existence of the post as a military establishment, beginning as Fort Fautleroy with Bear Springs as its center, and still existing as Wingate Ordnance Depot.



Business men from the town of Gallup became interested in the project and formed a non-profit corporation, with a Board of Directors composed of business men and representatives from Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Navajo and Zuni Tribes and Wingate Ordnance Depot, to plan and direct a four-day celebration.

Two Navajo Indians, former army scouts, visited the depot to assist in bringing historical data up to date. They were Jeff King and Jake Murphy. King had served some 28 years as a scout, while Mr. Murphy had served one 18-month hitch. Due to the difference in time served, Mr. King was chosen to accompany the centennial "promoter" on trips to advertise the celebration. He was taken to Washington and to California. He also made a number of television appearances.

A picturesque and dignified individual, Mr. King endeared himself to the country at large and to depot personnel in particular. On his first visit to the depot he established his birth date as "the early spring after the Long Walk of the Navajo", which made him 93 years old at that time. Somehow, possibly through difficulties in interpretation or through quick calculations of newsmen, based on a limited knowledge of history, he grew older with each feature story. He progressed rapidly from 93 to "almost a hundred", to "over a hundred", to 103, and finally to 117. With quiet dignity, King simply stopped discussing his age. Asked about it, his answer (given with a half-smile) was "I don't want to talk about that anymore."

In commemoration of this 100-year milestone in the installations progress, the Department of the Army redesignated it Fort Wingate Army Depot by General Order 13, 3 May 1960.

On the evening of August 25, 1960, the centennial program got under way with the first presentation of a pageant "The Spring Still Flows" at a site constructed on the hill near the depot water tower. Townspeople, depot employees and Indians took part in the pageant for four nights with near capacity crowds of visitors watching.

For three days after that, the town of Gallup and the depot went all-out in the celebration. Mock train robberies and hold-ups fascinated tourists and children. Stage coaches rumbled through the streets. Parade floats featured all phases of pioneer life in this area: Senorita's floated about and preened themselves for the admiration of dashing young Caballero's; pioneer women switched about in long dresses and bonnets, scolding and laughing at their bearded and boisterous men-folk; Indians decked themselves out in all their finery and laughed silently at the antics of the white man, occasionally joining in the fun in an excess of sheer good humor. Everyone had a wonderful time.

Col. Carl D. McFerren served as Commanding Officer of the depot from January 1961 to August 1963.

During 1962, the smoldering fires of racial resentments which had been breaking out over the entire nation, finally touched Wingate. Seven

depot employees of Mexican (or Spanish-American) descent presented charges of discrimination against officials of the depot. The charges listed discrimination because of race and religion, alleging that preferential treatment was given to Mormon employees, and singled out Wayne H. Banks, Civilian Executive Assistant to the Commanding Officer, as the principal offender.

Banks, who had been employed at the depot since 1942, hotly denied the charges. The Personnel Officer also denied that there was any basis for the accusations. Almost the entire civilian workforce was soon caught up in the controversy, taking sides in the arguments, and feelings ran high.

In spite of the efforts of officials to solve the problem on depot, the State Senator from McKinley County brought up the issue on the floor of the Senate, adding a charge of laxity in security measures to what by then was 21 complaints of discriminatory practices. Two full-scale investigations were conducted on post. A classified document, supposedly lost, was found misfiled in the security cabinet. The local investigations upheld the propriety of all personnel actions taken, and found no basis for the charges of discrimination.

These investigation reports, with all supporting documents, were forwarded to higher headquarters for review. In February and March, 1963, a team of investigators from higher headquarters conducted another series of hearings and investigations on the depot, and in June General August Schomburg, Commanding General of the U. S. Army Materiel Command, gave the installation a clean bill of health in the matter. His letter to the Commanding Officer read, in part -

"The investigation conducted during the period from Feb. 28 to March 14, 1963, regarding certain personnel practices at Fort Wingate, has established that the allegations were not substantiated by the facts. . . every charge made by each complainant was examined exhaustively, all personnel known to have knowledge pertaining to matters being investigated were questioned."

"All records bearing on the allegations were examined."

"In no instance did the facts support any allegation of discrimination, or preferential treatment, or of improper personnel action."

"Instead, the actions taken were found to be in accord with Department of the Army and U. S. Civil Service Commission regulations, and the rights of the individuals were protected by law and executive order."

## CHAPTER V

### FORT WINGATE ARMY DEPOT

On August 1, 1962, Fort Wingate, along with over 100 other installations and activities of the Department of the Army, became a part of the new U.S. Army Supply and Maintenance Command<sup>1</sup>, when the old technical services, including the Ordnance Corps, were discontinued.

This change resulted from the reorganization of the Department of The Army, which established the U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC)<sup>2</sup> as a major field command, with the Supply and Maintenance Command (SMC) as a subordinate class II activity under its jurisdiction.<sup>3</sup> The same order which established SMC placed Fort Wingate within its jurisdiction.

General Order 51, 21 August 1962, Department of the Army, redesignated the depot Fort Wingate Army Depot. No essential changes were made in the mission or functions of the installation as a result of this reorganization, the primary difference being that reports were made to a different headquarters.

August 1, 1963, Lt. Colonel Manley A. D'Albini assumed command of the depot.<sup>4</sup> A few weeks after his arrival, he was promoted from Lt. Colonel to Colonel.<sup>5</sup>

About midyear of 1963, plans were announced by White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, to use Fort Wingate Army Depot as a site for test firings of the Pershing Missile. This was to be a test of the mobility and accuracy of the entire system.

The Pershing, a selective range missile powered by a solid propellant<sup>6</sup>, was planned and designed to be easy to handle by a few men, to be speedily set up and fired, then moved on to a new firing site. This latter ability earned the nickname "Shoot and Scoot" for the Pershing system.<sup>7</sup> Its goal "Every Pershing in the Pickle Barrel" came from the fact that the nose of a Pershing Missile fitted nicely into a pickle barrel<sup>8</sup> - and the battalions trained to field test and operate the system

1. Letter of Welcome, 6 July 1962, from Lt. Gen. August Schomburg, filed in depot historical files.
2. GO 23, 4 May 1962, Department of the Army
3. GO 46, 25 July 1962, Department of the Army
4. GO 3, 1 August 1963, Ft Wingate Army Depot, in depot historical files.
5. SO 265, October 1963, Department of the Army
6. Mechanical fuel plus an oxidizer that allows it to burn at a fast rate and high temperature, with both ingredients mixed together in the missile motor case and allowed to harden.
7. Visitor Briefing Pamphlet, White Sands Missile Range, filed in depot historical files.
8. Every Pershing in the Pickle Barrel, Lt. Col. P.W. Power, Army information Digest, February 1964.

strove to put every missile fired into an imaginary pickle barrel hundreds of miles from the firing position.

From March to October of 1963, the test-firing units traveled a route that took them from Oklahoma to Cape Canaveral, to the wilds of Utah and the mountains of New Mexico.<sup>1</sup> Major James T. Wortham, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, visited Blanding, Utah, and Fort Wingate in June to finalize administrative and logistical support plans required for the firing phase of the Pershing Service Test. At Wingate, arrangements were made for billets, telephone service, automotive field maintenance and other administrative services. Laundry and post exchange and Commissary services to be furnished by Sandia Base, Albuquerque, was arranged by Fort Wingate Army Depot.

Other Pershing personnel visited the depot frequently after that, and White Sands people worked feverishly putting up communications, tracking devices, etc. in the McGaffey area. Finally, on October 8, shortly before 1600 hours, the first vehicles of the convoy from the 2nd Missile Battalion, 44th Artillery, Fort Sill, rolled through the depot entrance. They came from Blanding, Utah, where the first shots in this series of tests had been fired.

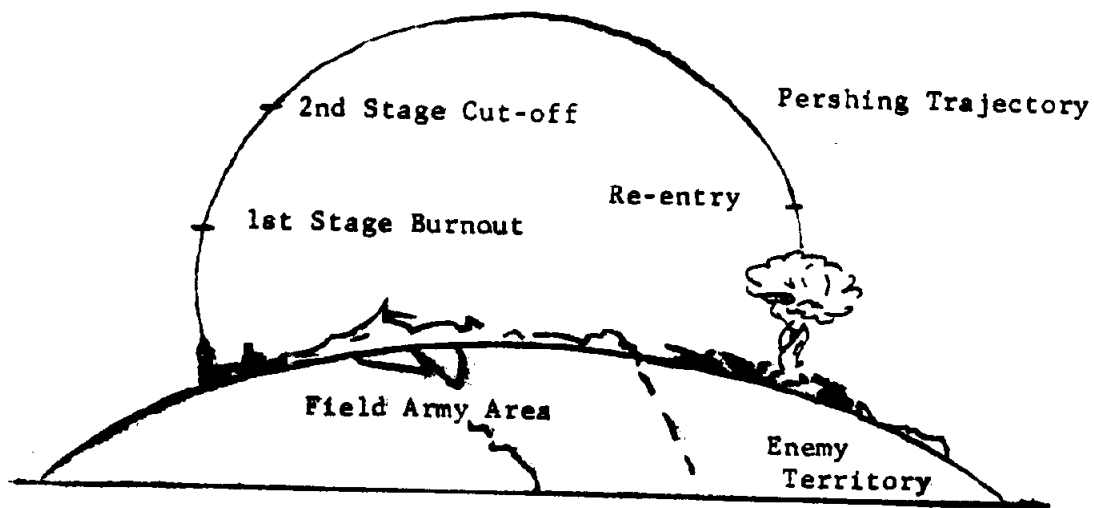
To most of the civilians on post, accustomed to the quiet routine of a primarily civilian operation on a small depot, the experience of having troops moving about all day was exciting and stimulating. Even Re-Pete,<sup>2</sup> the depot pet deer, found life more interesting and grew fat and saucy on the feeding and pampering handed out by the troops.

At one of the first briefings held on post to coordinate activities of the depot and the troops, Col. D'Albini announced, "I want it clearly understood that the deer you will see in the Administrative Area of this post is a depot resident. If she should, by some strange chance, end up in a stewpot, I guarantee there will be heads rolling around here." Thereafter, Re-Pete established her headquarters mighty close to the messing areas, and pranced gaily along behind, in front of, and among details as they went about their duties, making such a general nuisance of herself that temptation for the cooks and non-commissioned officers was great.

The Pershing shots from Fort Wingate were considered mid-range firings for the system. Long-range firings had been made from Utah.

Three missiles were fired in October, all successfully, by the 2nd and 44th, for impact at White Sands Missile Range.

1. Every Pershing in the Pickle Barrel, Army Info. Digest, Feb., 1964
2. Orphaned fawns were brought onto the depot for safe keeping during the fall of the year. The first one was named "Pete". The second one, so similar in size and markings, was jokingly dubbed "Re-Pete" by children on post, and the name stuck. Pete took to the woods when he was old enough, but Re-Pete knew a good thing when she found it and resolutely refused to leave the area.



Pershing Overland Firings  
 Army Information Digest, Feb., 1964

On November 6, a convoy from the 4th Missile Battalion, 41st Artillery, arrived at the depot. In the next few weeks, they launched five more missiles aimed at the "Pickle barrel" propped up in the desert sands to await its fate. All were successful except one, which blew up in the air just as the second stage cut in.

When the missilemen pulled out early in December, they left the depot strangely quiet and empty. The word was out, however, that Wingate was to become a permanent site for such test firings, so depot personnel settled back into their routine operations and waited for the next arrivals.

During the next three or four years, several different missiles were fired from the depot, but none that required bringing in large numbers of troops again.

Colonel Edward J. Kloos replaced Col. D'Albini as Commanding Officer in October 1965. The following June (1966) the depot began to feel the increased tempo of military operations in South Vietnam, shipping 3,200 tons of ammunition. Shipping workloads climbed steadily through the remainder of 1966, with only occasional slack periods, and reached an all-time high of 14,622 tons shipped during April, 1968. Department of Army had imposed an austerity program on all installations in an effort to control costs, so while the workload was increasing, the number of people hired to accomplish it decreased steadily.

Personnel ceilings dropped from 438 in June 1966, to 362 in July 1967 when Col. William C. Ohl assumed command of the depot. By April of

1968 there were only 335 employees to handle the record-breaking shipments.

A small herd of antelope had been transplanted to the depot for two or three years when, in 1966, ten buffalo were brought in and turned loose inside the manproof fence. Both herds were the result of cooperation between the depot and state and national conservation people. More animals were brought in and added to the buffalo herd until it numbered 53 in the early spring of 1968 when several members of the New Mexico Game and Fish Department joined depot personnel in a "buffalo round-up". The idea was to see if the animals could be herded into corrals, like cattle, for branding and immunization shots. There were 10 or 12 members of the round-up crew when they all mounted their horses and took to the back country. By noon, it had become apparent that buffalo differ from cattle - the only herding done was by the buffalo, who knew where they didn't want to go, if nothing else, and simply crowded the horsemen out of their way. A tired and hungry bunch of "Buffalo-Boys" gathered in the post restaurant at noon, and amid gusts of laughter at their own predicament, admitted to the world that the mangy-looking critters had them beat to a standstill. Nothing else was heard about corralling the beasts, especially after the cows began calving and regarded all curious humans with jaundiced eyes.

Shipments of ammunition to Vietnam continue while plans are being made to receive and store new issue material in the igloos emptied by the demands of combat units.



JEFF KING  
"Nat-eh-Ash-Tshalyee"  
(Chief Big Man)

Jeff King, Army Scout, who served his country more than 30 years and contributed much to the compilation of this history, died 17 January 1964 at the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital in Gallup.

He was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, D.C., January 24, 1964. The services were attended by Wilson Halona and Leo Haven, Navajo Tribal Councilmen, Mr. & Mrs. Leon Curley of Pindale, New Mexico (Mrs. Curley is Kings' granddaughter), New Mexico's Senator, Edwin L. Mechem, Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Emmons, (Ex Commissioner of Indian Affairs), the Deputy Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Major Gen. Kyser, Twelve Army Colonels and Lt. Colonels, and by Wayne H. Banks, former Executive Assistant of Fort Wingate Army Depot.

