

We all like people who do things, even if we only see their faces on a cigar-box lid.
Willa Sibert Cather

Summer Nebraskan



Few, save the poor, feel for the poor.
Letitia Elizabeth Landon

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Young Eager To Serve

Cavalry Didn't Just Fight

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the last in a series of four stories written by students in the Depth Reporting Class of the School of Journalism. This series represents an experiment at using the information in a new book to write a news story.

By Tim Gartner

Soldiering today seems not to have changed too much from what it was 100 years ago.

Marches, nights off-duty, drilling, and tedious detail outweighed the fighting and excitement of the U.S. cavalry officer of 1864.

Capt. Eugene F. Ware was a cavalry officer of 100 years ago. He tells in "The Indian War of 1864", published by the University of Nebraska Press, of the tedium and tribulations of soldiering—and the modern advances of man notwithstanding—it seems not to have changed much.

It was not particularly difficult in this war along the frontier to keep the ranks filled; then as now some young men were eager to get into the service. The question in the minds of these young men was not whether they should go, but rather where they should go, as each lad wanted to serve with friends or relatives.

Inasmuch as newspapers recounted "exploits of the regiments at the front", it often happened that some exploit would determine the recruit to go to that regiment. The men were brought together and drilled for two, three or four months, after which they were forwarded in squads to the regiment.

At one time, Ware was ordered to pick up a detachment of 116 recruits which "I was told to drill . . . to the point of exhaustion . . . When I found what I was detailed to do, I did not like the job."

Glorious Indian Campaign

However, Ware, fully aware of his responsibility as an officer, told the enlistees, ". . . they had come just in time to get in a glorious Indian campaign, an I wanted them to be drilled in shape before they went . . . I then went and telegraphed my arrival and suggested that someone be sent to relieve me . . . My telegram received no response."

The consumption of alcohol was a continual problem for the frontier cavalry officer. Passing wagon trains provided a never ceasing source with the result that frequent drunkenness by many soldiers was not uncommon. Ware sums it up like this: "The troubles we had with the men came largely from whisky . . . They thought that if they wanted to drink and raise Cain it was all right providing they were ready to fight when the emergencies of the service demanded it."

Once, during a camp crisis, Ware notes, ". . . Capt. O'Brien . . . told me to go and put on my saber, and both revolvers loaded, right quick, and join him. He said the whole camp was drunk . . . Some of the men were ugly . . . He (O'Brien) tied up 16 of them to the wheels of six loaded wagons . . . The captain's prompt and decided vigor had a good effect on the company and enabled us afterwards to command the attention of the men and keep them fully in line of duty."

The camps at which the men were stationed were in various stages of development and repair, but none were particularly plush.

One of Ware's early duties was to help establish a post at Cottonwood Springs, "a seep in a gully which had been an old bed of the river." Here, they pitched their tents, marked out the areas to be used as the different sections of the post, unloaded supplies, and started from scratch to construct a post. They cut logs, erected the buildings and eventually built a fort in desolate and arid Western Nebraska.

Meanest Whisky On Earth

On the other hand, Fort Kearny was an old frontier fort, said to be established in 1848. At this fort, a vast warehouse stored great quantities of supplies. Not only were these supplies used as army rations, but they were also sold to travelers at the low army price. Ware calls Fort Kearny "a little old rusty frontier cantonment." She also notes, "Large quantities of the meanest whisky on earth were consumed here, but, strange as it may appear, there were also quantities of champagne sold and drunk here." He adds that the cemetery was larger than the town.

About the only form of recreation was listening to stories told by scouts, chief among them Jim Bridger, and watching amateur theatricals. "There were always some soldiers who were good at private theatricals, and occasionally there was one who had been an actor. They (the entertainments) were generally of some light, witty, flashy kind with an occasional heavy piece from Shakespeare." On one occasion, John Dillon, the actor, who was passing through, put on a performance.

But the lighter side was usually subordinated to the dreary and monotonous. Even nature posed problems. Wind storms of tremendous scope brought discomfort, stampeded horses, and scattered supplies. Surgery was performed without the benefit of anesthetics. Rations ran short. Men were forced to supplement their food supplies by hunting wild game. Desertion was frequent, and deaths and disappearances through non-military skirmishes were all too common.

Indians Smoked Peace Pipe

Ware also describes how a group of

Indians would come to the post for a parley. They actually did smoke a peace pipe prior to talks. The cordiality of one conference was highlighted by one army man who, after receiving the pipe from the Indians, drew the pipe under his sleeve. His reason: "I don't believe I wanted to swap saliva with that crowd." Fortunately, the Indians did not speak white man's tongue.

The quality of the officers varied greatly. One General Robert B. Mitchell, an exceedingly handsome man, in a powwow with the Indians, was the only man seated in a camp chair. "He looked like a king," but his speech seemed to nettles the Indians because he laid down provisions and issued ultimatums that they resented.

General Mitchell was later to reveal his solution to the Indian problem: "I would put these Indians on reservations, dress them up in broadcloth, feed them on fried oysters, and furnish them money to play poker with, and all the tobacco and whisky they wanted, and then I will be a million dollars ahead of the game in my little district every year."

During a skirmish with the Indians, in which the army could neither catch nor locate them, General Mitchell hit upon an idea, "I will give them ten thousand square miles of prairie fire." He did. By setting fire to grasses and instructing other camps to do the same while the wind was right, the prairie burned from Fort Kearny to Denver. Ware wrote, "The country was fired for 300 miles."

Bullet Whizzes Over Head

Tomfoolery also accompanied the exploits of the western cavalryman. One day while Indians surrounded the post, Ware spotted a lone buck in the distance. As he walked out of the fort, the Indian dismounted and started toward him. While still some distance apart, Ware fired his rifle at the Indian, but the shot fell short. The Indian reciprocated "and a bullet when whizzing over my head." Apparently the Indian had a more powerful rifle and Ware "began to march obliquely back to the post," somewhat subdued by the Indian's effrontery to have a longer range rifle.

But the men in the west did not lack courage and the acumen for surprising tactics. Once Ware and 14 of his men were cut off from their post by a band of Indians who were burning and plundering a near-by stage station. As Ware puts it: "What could 15 men do with a thousand Indians on the war-path in front, with no outlet for retreat and no place for defense?"

With bugle blaring, Ware and his 14 men galloped and shouted their way past the startled Indians. The Indians apparently thought a whole regiment was coming, because the men passed through them without incident and safely reached the post.



DRAWING BY GUNARS STRAZDINS

"I will give them ten thousand square miles of prairie fire."

World Affairs Preview

Orton Here Thursday

A nationally-known educational consultant, Dwayne Orton of New York City, will speak at the second World Affairs Preview at the University Thursday afternoon.

Orton, who is editor of "THINK" magazine published by the International Business Machines Corporation, will speak on "Education-Technology Interface"



Dwayne Orton

at 1:30 p.m. in the Nebraska Union ballroom.

A native of Port Hope, Canada, Orton holds degrees from the University of Redlands and the College of Pacific. Prior to joining IBM in 1942, he was president of Stockton College. He also served on the staff of the Union Tool Company and Baylor College.

He holds six honorary degrees and is a member of the Society for the Advancement of Management.

Be Sure To Read

Grade Inconsistencies Exist At NU

Dr. Floyd Hoover, registrar, writes that grade distributions ought never be looked upon as absolute measures. He says that if grades fail to reflect honest judgments of learnings, they become completely meaningless.

"Drop outs reflect a variety of things: inability of the student to keep up with the class, the course content is not what was expected, dissatisfaction with the presentation, personality conflict, and sometimes, discovery that the course had been completed satisfactorily previously. This last may seem incredible, but it happens, nevertheless," Hoover writes.

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This Week

Manley Speaks On NU Tonight

"Culture on the Frontier, the Role of a University" will be the subject of a lecture by Dr. Robert Manley at 8 p.m. tonight in the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery.

Manley, assistant professor of history, is preparing a history of the University. He will discuss the early development of the University and the culture of Nebraska.

The Union's Cinema International series will feature "Viridiana" this Thursday.

This Spanish film is described by Union Program Director John C. Carlisle as "being the most shocking film showing all summer."

The film was banned in Spain because it was considered anti-government.

The film starts at 8:00 p.m. in the Union Ballroom.

"Flower Drum Song," a musical, with its setting in China Town, San Francisco will be shown by the Union's Cinema '64 Series.

The plot is based on the conflict between the modern Chinese-American and the ancient Chinese tradition.



PICTURE BY JUDY KOEPEKE

THE BELL TOWER — Brian "Skip" Soiref shows freshmen and their parents one of the campus landmarks.

Summer Freshmen Orientation Gives Answers To Over 1000

By Evelyn Rust
What are the teachers like? How are the classrooms conducted? What do students wear? How is the studying?

These questions of major concern to freshmen students are being answered this year at the first formal summer freshmen orientation program.

Small groups of 75 to 100 students with their parents are invited to this day-and-a-half program which began June 22 and is expected to continue through August 7.

Already invitations have been mailed to 2,400 pre-registered freshmen students, according to Curt Siemers, coordinator of student activities, and many have yet to return their cards.

To date 529 students and 532 parents have attended the program. Families are coming from as far away as Wisconsin, Minnesota, Missouri, Colorado, Ohio and New York. It is estimated that half of the entering freshmen will participate in this program.

The curriculum is designed to give

students and parents an opportunity to get acquainted with the campus and to learn about the social, cultural, religious and extracurricular activities available to entering freshmen. Students and parents are also able to meet and talk informally with faculty, advisors and upper classmen.

During the first day students participate in the orientation program for the college which they will enter this fall.

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