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Fort Verde, November 1880, as painted by Wade Cox. COURTESY FORT VERDE STATE HISTORIC PARK

TERRITORIAL VERDE VALLEY



by Robert W. Munson



*Fort Verde's most illustrious men:
(left) Dr. Edgar A. Mearns, post surgeon in
the 1880s and an eminent Southwestern
naturalist.*

MEARNS COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
*(right) General George Crook, commander
of Arizona troops in the Apache wars.*
MUSEUM OF NORTHERN ARIZONA



SOMETIME IN MAY 1583 a group of five Spanish conquistadores became the first Europeans to see the Verde Valley. This small group was led by Antonio de Espejo and included some Pueblo Indians as guides. The men were prospecting for silver and so paid little attention to the few Indians they encountered, the copper mines they were shown, or the abandoned cliff dwellings and pueblos they saw.

Being so unimpressed, they spent only a few days in the valley.

Fifteen years later, in November 1598, the Spanish again visited the valley. This group of nine men was under the command of the "Captain of the Guard and of Horses," Marcos Farfán de los Godos, and also included a number of Hopi Indian guides. Farfán again encountered scattered groups of Indians living in simple camps or rancherías, but he was more impressed by the mines. He staked a number of claims for himself and the governor, but no Spaniards ever returned to work them.

Except for the explorer Don Juan de Oñate, who crossed the Verde River in 1604 en route to the Colorado, for the next two hundred years the Verde Valley remained forgotten by all except the Indians who hunted and gathered there.

The next Euro-American contact came in the form of mountain men and trappers, who first penetrated what would become Arizona in 1825. The next year, Ewing Young reached the Verde Valley and in 1829, returned with a group of forty men including a teenager named Kit Carson. Pauline Weaver, the famed scout with the feminine name, first visited the Verde Valley in 1829-30. From then on the Valley was visited occasionally by Anglos who left little in the way

of records. During the great exploring period in Arizona in the 1850s the Valley was largely ignored.

Not until the establishment of the new territorial capital at Prescott did the Verde become important to any Euro-Americans. With its fertile land, permanent water and long frost-free growing season, it was a natural for farmers who had a ready market for produce in Prescott and the Lynx Creek mines. Grass cutters had begun harvesting wild forage in the Valley in 1864, but it wasn't until 1865, nearly three centuries after the first Europeans arrived that a permanent settlement was established.

In January 1865 a group of nine men led by James Parrish left Prescott on foot to scout the Verde Valley with an eye to forming a farming settlement. Favorably impressed, the men returned to Prescott. A month later the group, now consisting of nineteen men and accompanied by six wagonloads of supplies, made the four-day journey from Prescott to the Verde. On arriving, the group split in half, nine men soon returning to Prescott. The remaining ten constructed a stone fort sixty by forty feet in a Sinagua ruin near the confluence of the Verde River and Clear Creek. Crops were planted and an irrigation ditch dug. From this simple structure and beginning sprang permanent settlement in the Valley.

By May the outpost had grown to seventeen men, three women, and three or four children. It was early in that month that they first were attacked by Indians. While casualties were light and no one died, the loss of desperately needed crops and stock threatened their survival. In July the settlers requested

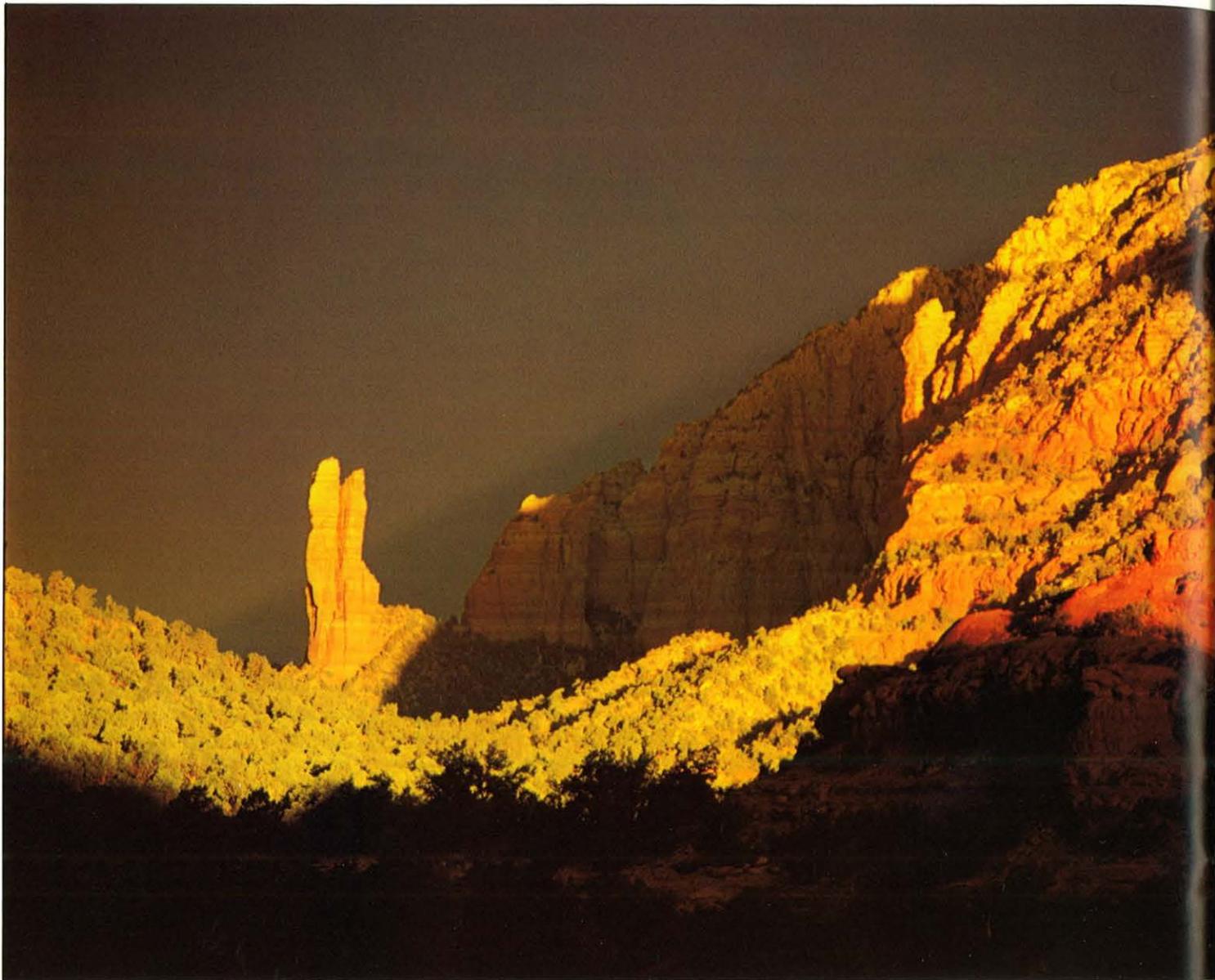
protection from the military.

With most of the regular Army troops still in the East at the end of the Civil War and volunteer units spread desperately thin, the Army was both reluctant and hard-pressed to provide a garrison for the Verde Valley. Finally, on 27 August 1865 the first troops arrived: Lieutenant Antonio Abeytia, one sergeant, and seventeen privates of the 1st Cavalry, New Mexico Volunteers. Owing to the scarcity of horses, the unit was on foot. They had been attacked en route and their equipment wagon burned. Thus the troops, though they tried, did not inspire much confidence in the settlers.

In December 1865, for some unknown reason, the tent camp at the Clear Creek settlers fort was moved upriver some three miles. At the confluence of Beaver Creek and the Verde a permanent post was established, the beginning of Camp Lincoln. The farmers did not abandon their fort on Clear Creek, however.

On 4 January 1866 the garrison was considerably bolstered by the arrival of 123 men of the 1st Arizona Volunteer Infantry. Nearly all the officers and men of these two companies of the U.S. Army were from Mexico. Considering their almost total lack of pay, equipment, or supplies, they served well and loyally. They had to make their own shoes, frequently had to purchase additional rations, and on one occasion found that food captured from the Indians was superior to that provided by the government.

With so little incentive for the men to re-enlist, by the end of August 1866 the garrison at Camp Lincoln consisted of two officers and four privates who even then continued to actively engage the Yavapai and Apache. Fortunately on

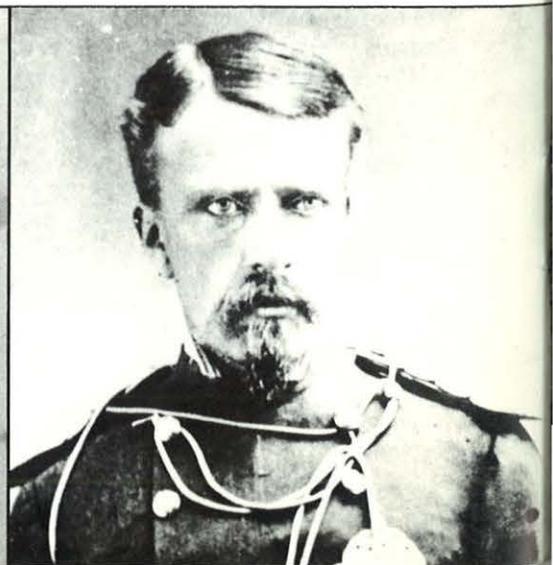
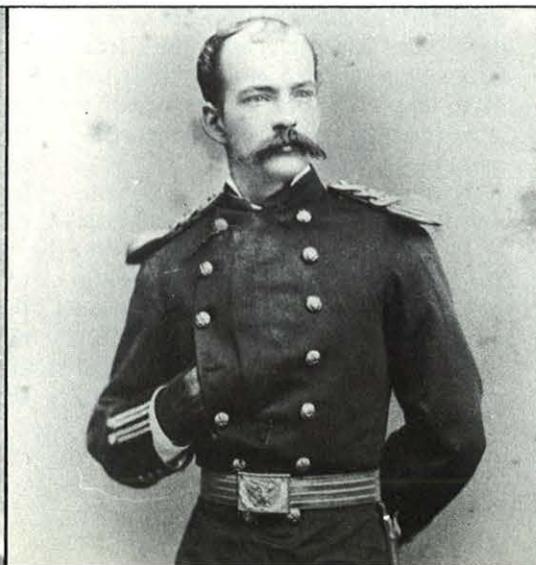
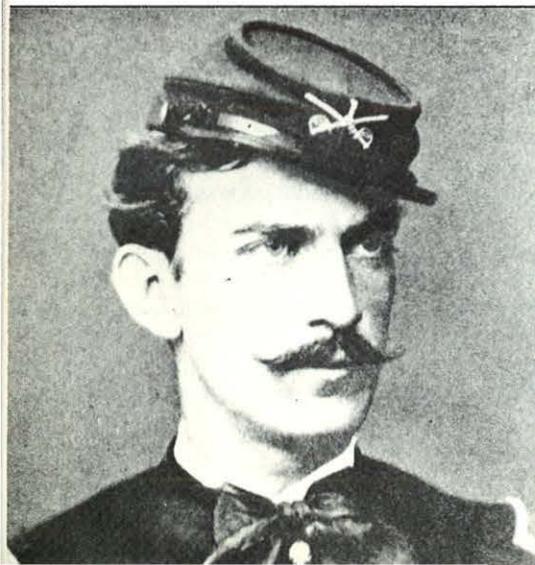


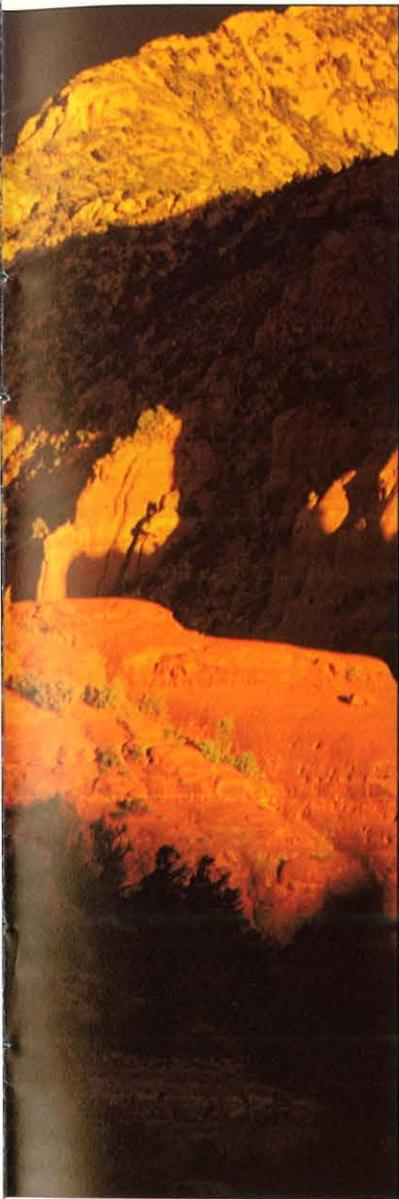
Sunset at Lee Mountain near Sedona, the kind of rugged country that challenged Fort Verde's troops.

Otto Louis Hein
FROM HEIN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

William Wallace Witherspoon
U.S. ARMY MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE

Emmett Crawford
NATIONAL ARCHIVES





STEPHEN TRIMBLE

29 September 1866 the first regular Army troops in the form of thirty-nine men of the 14th Infantry, arrived at Camp Lincoln.

Their arrival had underscored the Army's commitment to the Verde Valley and the following April, in 1867, a second company arrived, officially establishing Lincoln's garrison as two companies of infantry. An inadequate supply of horses for cavalry pitted infantry against a highly mobile enemy.

After the Civil War the Army was reduced to a force of less than 30,000 men. The need to garrison coastal forts and the reconstruction of the South left only about 16,000 men available west of the Mississippi. The problem was further compounded by low pay and frontier hardships which did little to attract enlistments or re-enlistments. As a result, immigrants made up a large part of the force, and used it to learn to speak, read, and write English and so qualify for citizenship. The Army also took them west where the jobs and opportunities were, and provided a home for persons, mostly Southerners, displaced by the destruction of the Civil War.

The Army was chronically understrength; commands of only twenty men were not unknown. Spread so thin, it could not afford the luxury of large garrisons except in the most troublesome areas. In 1866 there were only four cavalry and eight infantry companies in all of Arizona.

Officers fresh from the Civil War had to learn to fight a new kind of war, a guerilla war. Initially the infantry campaigned only in the summer. When win-

ter weather made campaigning difficult, they turned to road building, escorting wagon trains, and building their own posts. Money was so scarce that soldiers not only had to chase Indians, but build all the fort buildings as well; some of them complained they had a shovel in their hands more often than a gun.

At Camp Lincoln a unique circumstance led to an interesting relief of the chronic winter garrison boredom at an isolated station. Many of the men were out-of-work New York City actors who had, on their own initiative, built a theater before they had even finished their own barracks. Their opening night play on 9 November 1867 was attended not only by the whole garrison, but by visitors who had made the sixty-mile trek from Prescott.

A young officer's wife from Camp Lincoln once rode sidesaddle to Prescott in one day to attend a dance. In an era when even cavalry was expected to do only forty miles a day, a sixty-mile one-day's ride sidesaddle was extraordinary.

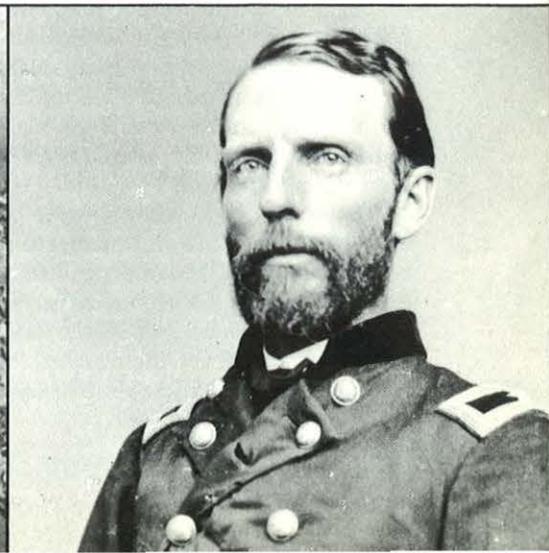
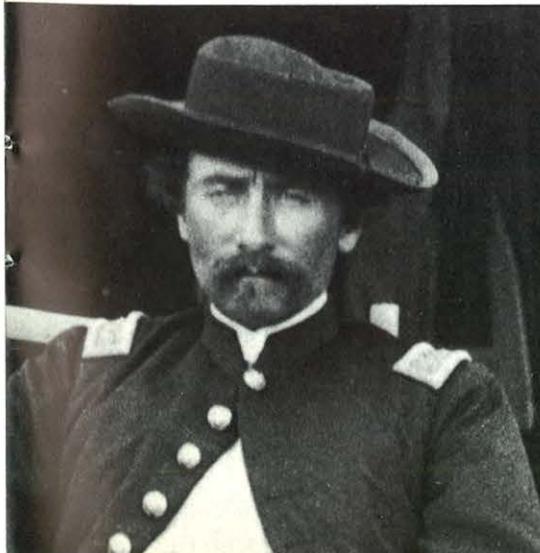
In November 1868, because of the confusion with all the other posts named to honor the assassinated President, Camp Lincoln was renamed Camp Verde.

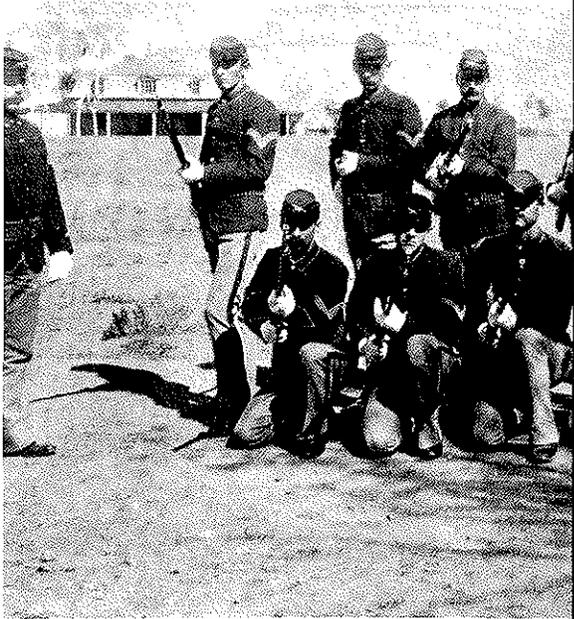
By 1870 the civilian populace of the Verde Valley consisted of 172 men, 2 women, and no children. Because the Yavapai and Apache had more potential targets, depredations had become more noticeable. Despite their best efforts, the infantry was not able to cope with the Indian problem. Since more cavalry had become available, three companies of the 3rd Cavalry were assigned to the Verde Valley on 29 August 1870.

Julius Wilmot Mason
U.S. ARMY MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE

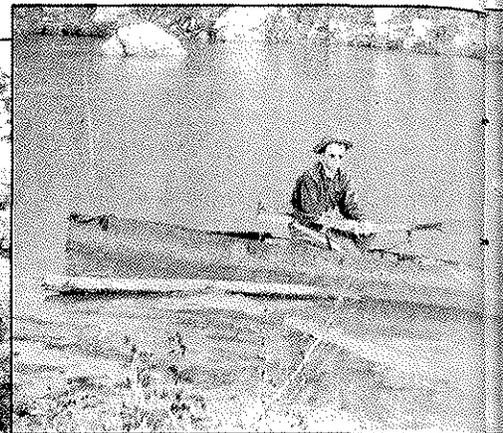
Mrs. Helen Marie McNutt
COURTESY ALEXANDRA USHER

Cuvier Grover
NATIONAL ARCHIVES





(left) Infantry, Fort Verde. SHARLOT HALL MUSEUM
(below) Picnic at Montezuma Well, 1876. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Boating the Verde River, about 1887. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Besides having been plagued by malaria in the wet river bottomlands, the post's site at the confluence of the Verde and Beaver Creek was too small to accommodate this mass of men and horses. A cavalry camp was established on a bluff across the river. By the spring of 1872, the new post had been completed, the old one abandoned, and the name Camp Verde transferred to the new camp. It was this new post, built in 1871-73, which is now Fort Verde State Historic Park.

In June 1871, Lieutenant Colonel (Brevet Major General) George Crook became Commanding Officer of the Department of Arizona. Crook was an energetic officer who believed the Army could never permanently defeat the Indians in battle but rather must force them into an economic submission. After giving peace efforts every chance to succeed, he launched a winter campaign in September 1872. With Camp Verde one of his main bases, his tactics were simple and new.

First, operating in winter hit the Yavapai and Apache at an unusual time, when they found movement difficult. Second, even if his troops never saw action, by constantly keeping the enemy moving, he destroyed their cached food and denied them the opportunity to

hunt or raid for more. Third, he gave his troops the mobility they needed by freeing them from slow, awkward supply wagons through the use of fast-moving mule supply trains. He eased travel by building during this campaign the road from Fort Verde to Fort Apache now known as the Crook Government Road.

It was a tough, grueling winter, tough on Indians starved into submission and on the troops who had to maintain relentless pursuit in a highland Arizona winter.

On 23 April 1873, when the Indians should have been readying to go raiding, they surrendered to General Crook on the porch of the CO's house at Camp Verde. Having once gained his military objective, submission of the local tribes, Crook's humanity came to the fore and he became a staunch supporter of a self-sufficient reservation in the Verde Valley.

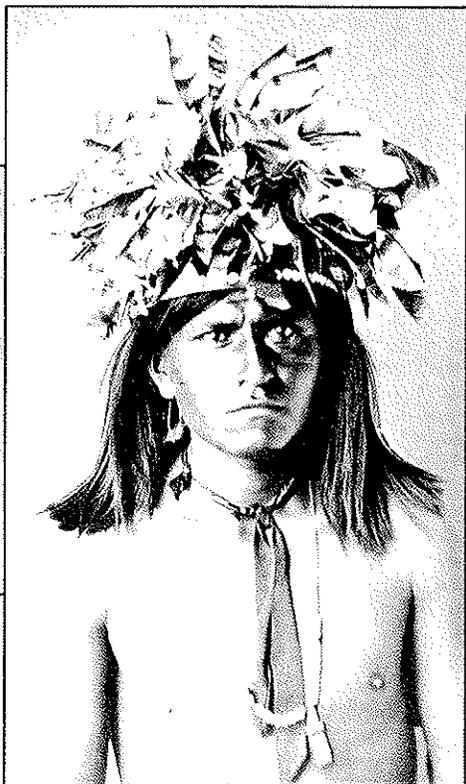
The Yavapai bore the brunt of the 1872-73 winter campaign, and most of the remaining free bands were Tonto Apache. Crook had another innovation to handle both these local Indians and others elsewhere in the territory. He recognized the fragmented nature of Apache society, that there was no true tribe but rather autonomous bands and clans with merely a common culture

and language. Thus he was able to enlist Yavapai and Apaches into the U.S. Army to fight others of their culture.

To the pragmatic Apache it was merely a very profitable way to get from the white man what he wanted and needed in a way consistent with accepted practice. For the Army it provided a body of tough, loyal, fighting men who knew the land and how the enemy thought and operated. Thus in August 1874, Company B, Apache Indian Scouts, was formed and stationed at Camp Verde. In 1874-75, fourteen campaign patrols from Fort Verde against the Tonto Apache virtually ended hostilities in that area.

In February 1875, the Indian Bureau ordered the Yavapai reservation closed and the Indians sent to San Carlos. This violated the treaty and forced them from an area of self-sufficiency to a land of traditional enemies where farming was next to impossible. Pressure from settlers and those interested in reservation and Army supply contracts forced removal of the tribes from the Verde despite Army protests.

With the removal of the Yavapai and the focus of the Apache Wars shifting south and east, Camp Verde's operations gradually came to an end. Only fourteen patrols were sent out between 1876 and 1879.



(left) Apache warrior wearing owl feather medicine hat.

CARTER COLLECTION, NATIONAL ARCHIVES

(below) Ranch on Beaver Creek, as photographed by Mearns in the 1880s. MEARN'S COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



On 5 April 1879, Camp Verde was officially redesignated Fort Verde. The term "fort" is a bit of a misnomer: neither Fort Verde nor virtually any of the other military posts in Arizona ever had a wall or fortifications. The Apache, being practical, realized it was more profitable to attack civilians; targets were smaller and more lightly defended and had a greater wealth of goods.

Ironically, the implied permanence of the title "fort" came at a time when the Army was considering abandoning the post. Fort Verde had virtually ceased operations, the surrounding area was largely at peace, and the undermanned Army could ill afford to leave needed manpower in an idle garrison.

In December 1880, when the Army made known its plans to abandon Fort Verde, the civilians raised a great cry of protest on the grounds they still needed protection; they also still wanted the lucrative market for produce and cattle. The military point of view prevailed, and from 17 July to 26 October 1881, the post was officially abandoned with only a tiny caretaker detachment present wrapping up final details.

On 30 August 1881, however, came the tragic fiasco of the Cibicue Fight, a misguided attempt to arrest a prominent medicine man resulting in an outbreak;

Verde Valley citizens had a case for reactivating the fort. Troops came back, but by March 1882 the Army felt the situation again dictated abandonment. Then on 17 July 1882, the Battle of Big Dry Wash was fought only thirty-five miles east of the Valley. Nine days later the Army, reading the handwriting on the wall, regarrisoned the post.

At this time, Fort Verde was a typical post-Civil War frontier military establishment. Many of the Indian Wars operating bases were mere tent camps, reflecting the fluid nature of demands on the Army of the time; Verde is typical of the more permanent bases.

Instead of four companies totaling around 300 men, 12 officers and a post surgeon, the average garrison was two or three understrength companies averaging a total of 110 enlisted men, 6 line officers, and a post surgeon.

With fewer soldiers, living quarters usually were not as cramped as regulations required. For example, a lieutenant was authorized one room and a kitchen; a captain was authorized two rooms and a kitchen whether married or not. The official attitude was, "if the Army had wanted you to have a wife it would have issued you one."

In keeping with this, the pay of enlisted men and junior officers was so

low it was next to impossible to support a family. A private earned only thirteen dollars a month and even a lieutenant, with all his responsibilities, earned the same wage as a store clerk. Nonetheless, roughly 60 percent of Verde's officers, including many junior officers, and 10 percent of the enlisted men were married.

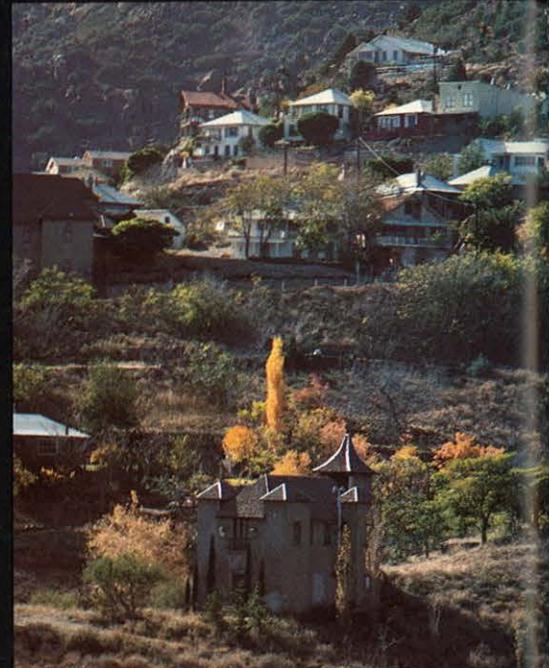
For wives of enlisted men, the position of company laundress carried not only pay but rations and quarters, thus making it possible for a soldier to support a wife and fulfilling a need at the forts. The officers' wives organized necessary social life and recreation: dances, picnics, religious services, musicales, and the like.

It is a commentary on the closely knit nature of Indian Wars Army families that, despite the hardships of the frontier, only one of the 108 officers who served at Verde was divorced.

Still, the frontier life must have had some advantage; the average life span of these officers was sixty-four, well above the national mean of forty-two for males of the period. The appeal was strong enough to even attract a man who had been knighted for gallantry on the field of battle and was serving as a captain in the Vatican's Army of Rome when he joined the U.S. Army.



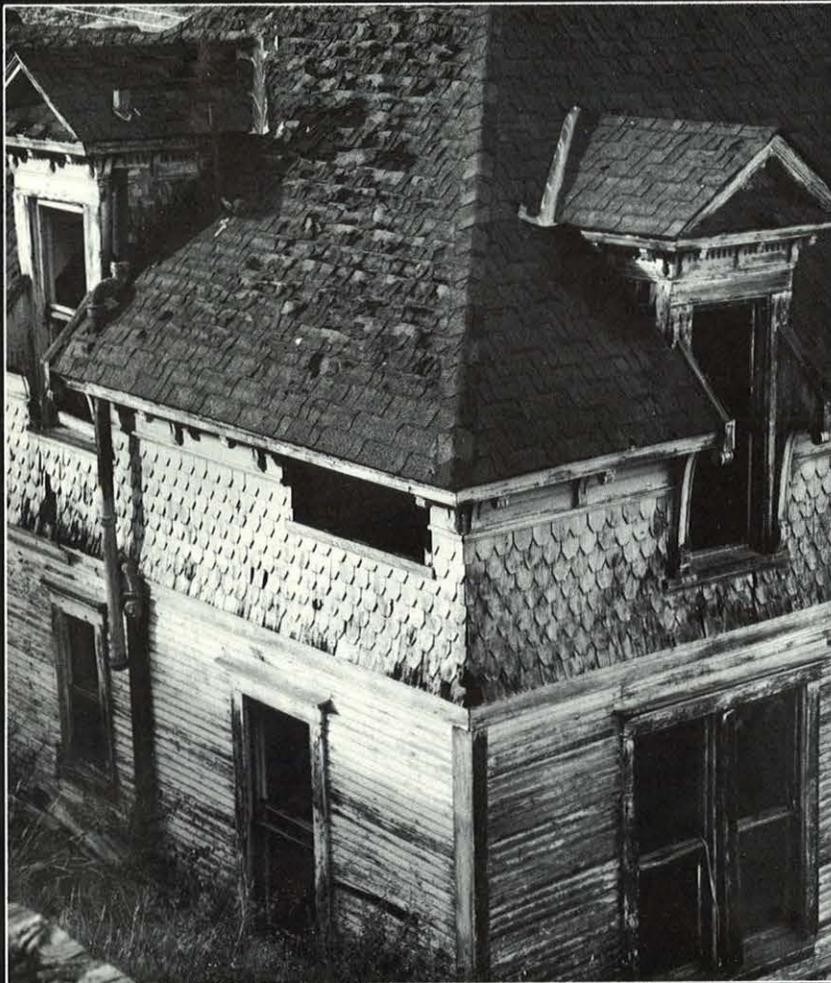
Jerome in its heyday. HISTORIC PHOTOS COURTESY JEROME STATE HISTORIC PARK



DICK CANBY

Jerome today.

LAURA BREMNER



JEROME



The Verde acquired a mining camp in 1876, with the establishment of copper claims in the Black Hills. At first these claims were no more successful than the Spaniards'; they were still too isolated. By 1882, however, the establishment of railroads in Arizona had made mining more feasible. Coke for the local smelter still had to move the last sixty miles from the railhead by wagon, and the finished product returned the same way.

High finance, provided in part by Sir Winston Churchill's grandfather, Eugene Jerome, enabled the camp to prosper, and incidentally provided its name. The founding in 1883 of the United Verde Copper Company got Jerome started in a big way, and the availability of New Mexico coal considerably simplified the expensive fuel problem. Plunging copper prices in 1884 closed the mine, but in the New Orleans Exposition of 1885 William A. Clark from Montana noticed Verde ore and gambled on buying into the United Verde.

In March 1888, about the time Fort Verde was declining, Clark moved his operations into Jerome. By 1894 an ever-increasing market made a narrow-gauge railroad possible. Although it only ran to the Santa Fe line between Ash Fork and Prescott, this railway touted the grandiose title of "United Verde and Pacific Railroad." It did serve to keep Jerome in business even after fire leveled the town three times between 1897 and 1899. By the end of the century, Camp Verde still may have been only a wide spot in the road, but Jerome was the fifth largest city in Arizona.

From that point on, it had the ups and downs of any mining camp. The town grew rapidly and by statehood in 1912, the smelter had to be moved down to the flats where the town of Clarkdale sprang up. The removal of the smelter made room for an open pit.

The Great Crash of 1929 had closed the mines and smelter by 1932, and dropped the population of Jerome from 15,000 to 4,748. However, the activities of the Phelps Dodge Corporation in 1935, followed by World War II, brought boom times again. But mining towns are born to die and this was Jerome's last gasp.

In 1950 the smelter closed and in 1953 the mines shut down. The town now stands as a reminder of a roaring past, a symbol of the Old West.



William A. Clark, Jerome financier and namesake of Clarkdale.



In the smelter.

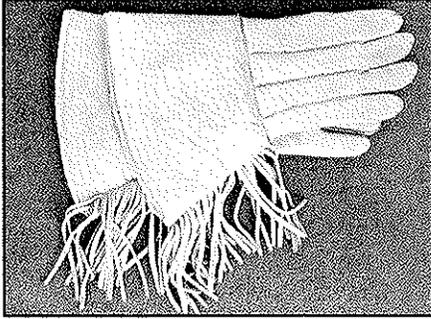
Reflections, Main Street.

LAURA BREMNER



Although regarrisoned in 1882, Fort Verde's operational life was effectively over; its troops performed no further field service although units were siphoned off to fight Geronimo in the south during the last Indian Wars campaign in Arizona in 1885-86.

The reduced garrison was bolstered by the arrival on 20 May 1885 of two troops of the Negro 10th Cavalry, the so-called "Buffalo Soldiers" who served



LAURA BREMNER

at Verde until December 1888.

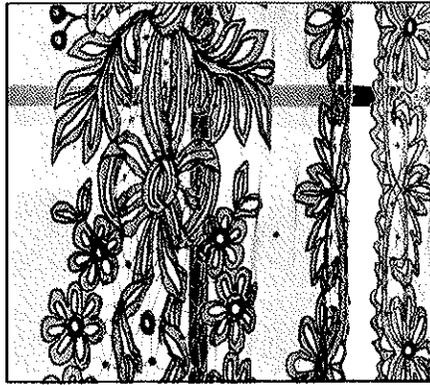
By 1890, the civilian population of the Valley had reached seven hundred and the market provided by the military was no longer needed. Instead the settlers hungrily eyed the land the post occupied and requested the Army to leave. The soldiers were only too glad to comply and on 10 April 1890 Fort Verde was ordered abandoned.

The military had one parting shot for the fickle settlers; it was suggested that rather than abandon the post, it be garrisoned by a company of Apache Indian Scouts. The civilian populace was horrified at the thought of armed Apaches placed alone in their midst and the idea was dropped.

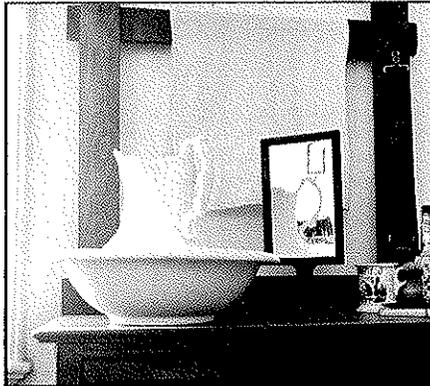
Stripping the post of its equipment and making arrangements to turn it over to the Department of the Interior took time, so it wasn't until 25 April 1891 that the last soldiers to serve at the post closed the doors on an era and marched away.

At this time, the town that was to become Camp Verde consisted of nothing but a general store, the former Post Trader or Sutler's Store, and a stage stop. Despite local pressures to open the land so a town could grow, the Department of the Interior waited until February 1895 to open the military lands to homesteading. Then on 3 August 1899 the fort buildings were sold at public auction. By the end of the century most had been torn down for their materials, and the modern town of Camp Verde was rapidly beginning to grow in their place.

STEPHEN TRIMBLE



Officer's quarters, Fort Verde.



STEPHEN TRIMBLE

Today only four of the original twenty-two major buildings of the post remain. These three officers quarters and the old administration center now form Fort Verde State Historic Park.

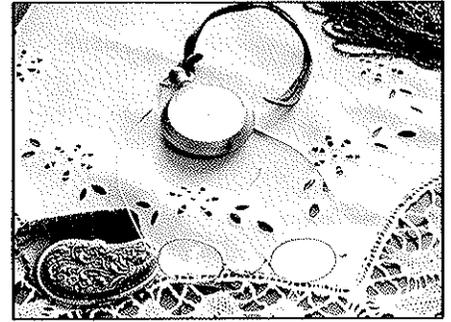
The history of the Verde Valley and its fort was a microcosmic example of the macrocosm of the westward movement. Even if no soldiers had fought in Arizona, the Indians' lifestyle was still doomed under the impact of masses of settlers who took land for farming and ranching while holding out the irresistible lure of material goods and services. The military merely hastened the process of takeover.

With few exceptions, neither settler nor Indian tried to understand the opposite side. For the Yavapai and Apache survival was a primary ethic and whatever aided that process was good.

Conversely, the settlers often came from countries where heavy population density dictated utilization of the land to its fullest capacity. By doing the same thing here they not only severely hampered the native subsistence pattern, but also provided a tempting source of materials which would eventually undermine the entire Yavapai/Apache cultural fabric.

Massive population pressure from the East ultimately determined the fate of

the West, but the destiny of vast tracts of land was often determined by incredibly small numbers of men. From the close of the Civil War in 1865 to the last true Indian campaign in 1891, only 932 soldiers fell in battle. But this creates a false image of the character of the Indian Wars. The warfare was always economic and thus the brunt of it fell on civilian settlers; the Indian was ultimately defeated more by economic attri-



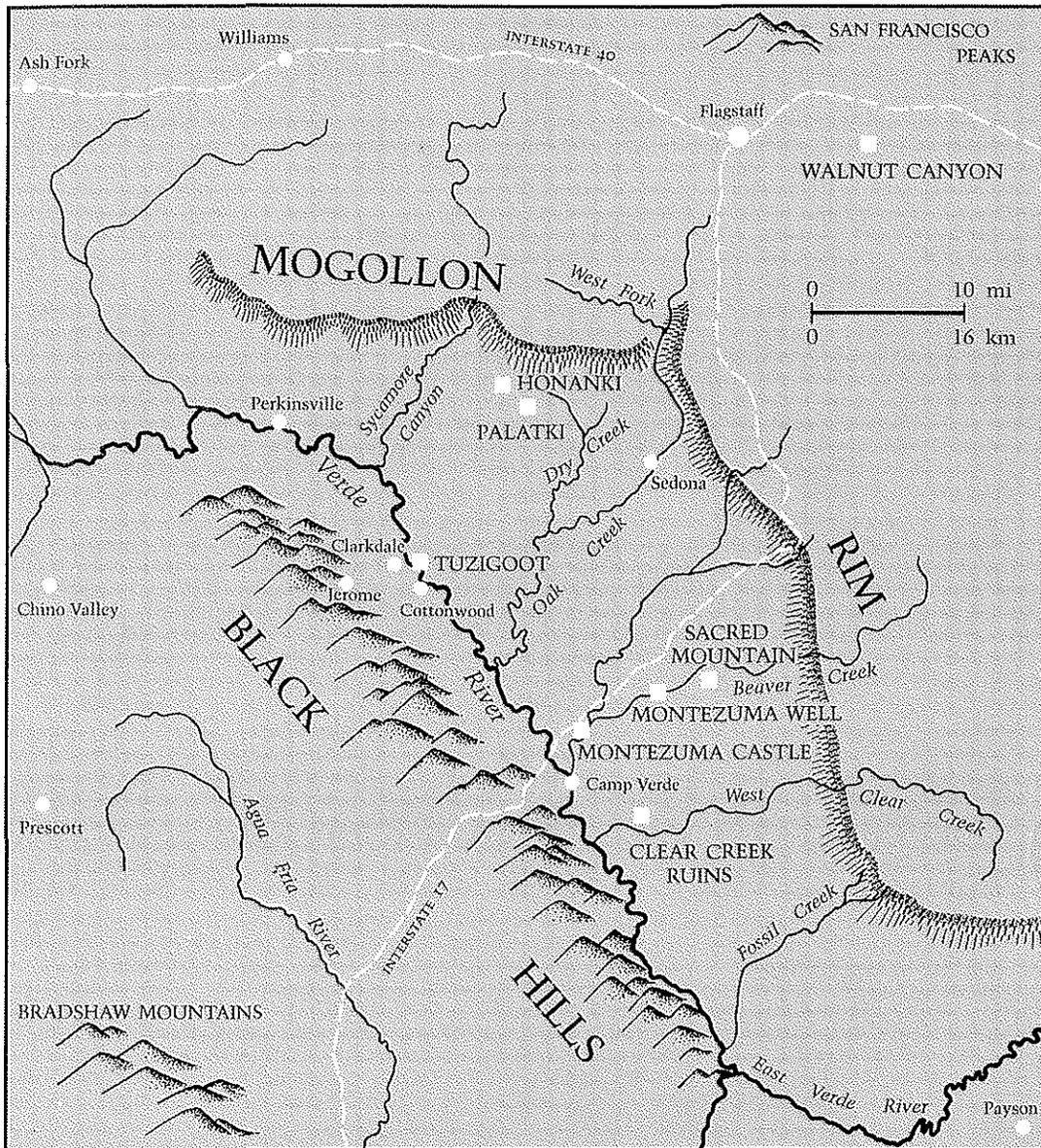
LAURA BREMNER

tion than battle.

Both sides probably lost more men to disease than combat. Fights were often sharp and desperate, but both sides were rotten shots because ammunition was too precious to waste on target practice. Still, when enough lead is flying someone is going to get killed and when your force is only thirty men, as was often the case, three or four men constituted heavy casualties. In this day of massive military units and wholesale destruction such battles seem almost ludicrous, yet to the men involved they were very real. Though only six of the fifty-one graves in Fort Verde's post cemetery are known combat deaths, this does not convey the months and years of arduous campaigning, with or without battles, or the lives ruined by disease and disabling wounds.

By shortly after the turn of the century, the Verde Valley was beginning to look much as we know it now. Jerome was well established and Cottonwood was prospering. The small farming community of Sedona was established as a post office in 1902, barely escaping the name of Schnebly Station because the name was one letter too long for the postal cancellation stamp. The much prettier name of Schnebly's wife was substituted.

The domination of the Yavapai and Apache had passed, the Anglos' foothold had taken over, the Army had come and gone. Territorial Verde Valley was ready for the 1912 arrival of statehood in Arizona.



Here the mountains have married the desert . . . At one moment you are among the firs and the ice-cold waterfalls, and the next moment you are looking down again on sand and cactus. . . . Around the floor of the canyons, very sharp and bright in the sunlight, were great twisted shapes of red sandstone . . . It was all strangely beautiful, very remote but very friendly, like some place not quite in this world.

J. B. PRIESTLEY
Midnight on the Desert, 1937

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