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A HISTORY OF FORT BASCOM IN THE CANADIAN RIVER VALLEY

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In 1863 the Union Army in New Mexico Territory, prompted by fears of a second Rebel invasion from Texas and its desire to check incursions by southern Plains Indians, built Fort Bascom on the south bank of the Canadian River. The U.S. Army placed the fort about eleven miles north of present-day Tucumcari, New Mexico, a day's ride from the western edge of the Llano Estacado (see map 1). Fort Bascom operated as a permanent post from 1863 to 1870. From late 1870 through most of 1874, it functioned as an extension of Fort Union, and served as a base of operations for patrols in New Mexico and expeditions into Texas. Fort Bascom has garnered little scholarly interest despite its historical significance. This investigation attempts to broaden the scholarly understanding of the role Fort Bascom played in extending federal power over the Southwest.[1]

Such a study involves examining the mid-nineteenth-century economic relationships between southern Plains Indians and the mountain people of New Mexico, the environment of the Canadian River Valley, and the

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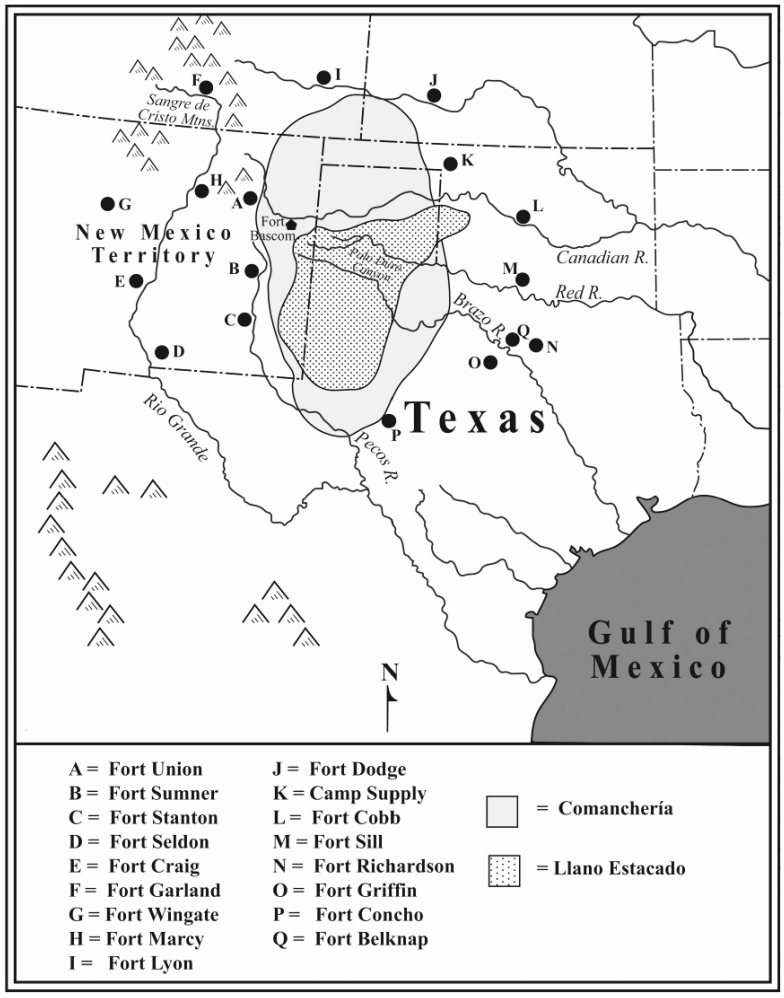
James Blackshear is a history PhD candidate at the University of North Texas in Denton. This article is part of his dissertation research on Fort Bascom. He wishes to thank his wife Barbara for her tireless support, encouragement, and companionship during this endeavor. The suggestions of University of North Texas professors Richard B. McCaslin, F. Todd Smith, Duke Richey, and G. L. Seligmann Jr. were all incorporated within the work. Durwood Ball's encouragement and insightful comments were incalculable. The author also acknowledges the important contributions of his two referees and wants to express what a pleasure it was to work with the *New Mexico Historical Review*'s professional editorial staff. A special thanks also goes to Alexander Mendoza of the University of North Texas for his spectacular maps.



MAP 1. THE SOUTHWESTERN MILITARY FRONTIER
(Map courtesy Alexander Mendoza)

experiences of Fort Bascom's soldiers. Spanish explorers, American merchants, and the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers left the first written descriptions of this region and its people. Nuevomexicanos from the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, Navajos from Bosque Redondo, Comanches from the Llano Estacado, Americans from east of the Mississippi River, and European transplants all crossed paths in the Canadian River Valley. Fort Bascom's location within this "cultural shatter zone," situated in *comanchería* and along ancient comanchero trade routes, offers compelling reasons to reexamine its historical relevance to the Southwest.[2]

For most of the twentieth century, studies of western forts justified Manifest Destiny as a legitimate cause for westward expansion and substantiated

Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis, which verified the sequence of events that led to the arrival of civilization and the closing of the frontier. Other than J. Evetts Haley's work, "The Comanchero Trade," published in 1935, few historians focused on the Canadian River Valley's history until the latter part of the twentieth century. After Haley's study, which noted Anglo perceptions of a deeply rooted and troubled relationship that existed between mountain and plains cultures, seventy years passed before another scholar produced a significant study of this region. Franciscan priest and historian Fr. Stanley Louis Crocchiola, writing under the pseudonym F. Stanley, and scholar James A. Foster both wrote about Fort Bascom in the early 1960s, but did not explore the entire region as Haley had done. Precious little on the fort has been published since Stanley's and Foster's studies. Chris Emmett's and Leo E. Oliva's examinations of Fort Union occasionally reference Fort Bascom, as do Darlis A. Miller's and Robert C. Carriker's works on frontier garrisons. Charles L. Kenner became the only historian in the twentieth century to devote more than a few pages to Fort Bascom's role in gaining control of the southern Plains Indians. Forty years have passed since its first publication.[3]

Inspired by David J. Weber, western historians in the last twenty years have refocused on the Southwest. William deBuys, Dan Flores, and Andrés Reséndez followed Weber's lead and revealed a world of cultural and economic vitality. Additionally, Pekka Hämäläinen and Brian DeLay have recently argued that the Native Americans and Hispanos who lived in this region shaped southwestern history, not just as mere participants, but as active agents. Such examinations highlight that there is still much that can be discovered by circling back to those places, such as Fort Bascom, that were previously considered not worth the time for western historians.[4]

Although the Canadian River Valley's latitude is about the same as central Tennessee's, the region is locked into an ecological zone similar to northern Mexico's.[5] Moving west from the Texas Panhandle, this Lower Sonoran life zone cuts through the Upper Sonoran grasslands of the upland plateaus before turning northwest and beginning an ascent into the pine-forested and snow-covered peaks of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The Canadian River drainage system covers 11,237 square miles, of which 34 percent are mountains, 41 percent are plateaus, and 24 percent are lower-level canyons and mesa lands that cut through the Southern Plains.[6]

Moving from west to east, the Canadian River begins 7,834 feet above sea level in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains near Raton Pass. For approximately one hundred miles, the river runs through the high llano before reaching the edge of the Canadian Escarpment. From this juncture, the river quickly

descends approximately two thousand feet to the valley floor, where it meanders for about forty miles to the Fort Bascom site. Farther east, near where the Oklahoma and Texas panhandles meet, this once full-bodied river becomes a sluggish stream that ambles along about 2,505 feet above sea level. The journey from Raton Pass to the Texas border encompasses about 240 miles of the river.[7]

Although many of the first Americans to cross into New Mexico left journals of their exploits, few, if any, were as talented in this endeavor as diarist Josiah Gregg. During a year-long trip that took him into the Canadian River Valley in 1839, he traveled along old Indian and contemporary comanchero trade routes that ran along the Canadian River. These same trails later evolved into the Fort Smith route that led back to Arkansas, where a portion of old Route 66 and current Interstate 40 run from Amarillo to Albuquerque.[8] On the westward trek, Gregg followed the river as far as Tucumcari Peak near where the Canadian River turns north. Eventually, the U.S. Army constructed Fort Bascom at this river bend.

Gregg encountered "large parties of New Mexicans" traveling east and recorded that they hunted game and searched out Comanches to trade hard breads and produce for robes and other bison products.[9] He also came in contact with Native Americans along the route. In the early part of his journey in 1839, where the Little River joined the Canadian, a small group of Comanche and Kiowa warriors and their families joined Gregg's caravan to barter a few mules. About to embark into an unfamiliar region, Gregg asked Chief Tábba-quena to describe the area. After giving the chief "paper and pencil . . . he promptly executed . . . to our astonishment, quite a map-like appearance, with far more accurate delineation of all the principle [*sic*] rivers of the plains . . . than is to be found in many of the engraved maps of those regions."[10]

In 1839 Gregg learned something that mystified Americans for the next forty years: Comanches and Kiowas did not need maps. Like other American Indians, their homeland's topography was imprinted in their minds. Regardless of distance, or the seemingly monotonous nature of the landscape, each brook held special meaning. Cliffs and mesas were more than rocks and dirt, more than the remnants of another geological world. Whether Jicarilla, Comanche, or Pueblo, the land appeared to be saying something different to the Indians of the Southwest than it did to Gregg and many others who followed. Historian William H. Goetzmann notes that nineteenth-century Americans brought preconceptions of the western landscape with them, notions colored with romanticism that seldom fit reality. Such disconnects often distorted both their interpretation of the land and the people residing there.[11]

Annexation of half of Mexico after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 prompted the United States to connect the existing nation with the new territories. Congress approved several surveys by the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers and charged them with determining and mapping the best route for the transcontinental railroad. In 1853 Lt. Amiel Weeks Whipple led a team of surveyors, scientists, and engineers along the same Canadian River route Gregg had taken fourteen years earlier.[12]

With an engineer's eye for detail, Whipple recorded more than just data pertinent to constructing a railroad. Just north of present-day Amarillo, Texas, Whipple met a group of Indians from Santo Domingo Pueblo. Draped in Mexican blankets and wearing Indian headdresses and beads, they were on their way to trade with the southern Plains tribes. These Puebloans rode mules and packed hard breads and flour to trade with the "k'ai-ó-wás." Whipple had stumbled onto one of the permanent comanchero rendezvous sites.[13]

From the Texas Caprock to the Tucumcari outliers, Whipple wrote about a variety of subjects unrelated to railroad topography. On both 18 and 21 September, his party met several Mexican traders heading east: "We had no idea of the extent of this Indian trade, or the impunity with which defenseless traders could mingle with these savages and treacherous tribes upon their own soil." Ten years later, the economic and social relationships that existed between the Plains Indians and Nuevomexicanos still thrived, albeit under the surveillance of the U.S. Army. Fort Bascom was placed at the epicenter of the routes that connected these two cultures.[14]

During the early part of the nineteenth century, hundreds of thousands of bison flowed through the prairies that followed the Canadian River, drawing many cultures to the escarpments and high plains that surrounded it. By 1840 a reduction in the herd populations impacted the region's trade dynamics. Successive Indian and comanchero harvests of furs and meats, as well as a major drought, contributed to the bison's decline. Current scholarship indicates that by the time American surveyors entered the area to find the best transcontinental railroad route, the bison had already reached an ecological tipping point. The final blow for the bison came with the arrival of commercial hunters from the east.[15] The results impacted every culture in the region. The theft of livestock and humans always played a role in the region's barter economy, but the elimination of bison from within this exchange required a replacement. Comanches adapted by extracting more livestock out of Texas and Mexico. Cattle and horses, as well as humans, were funneled north to meet market demands. The raiders' trading partners, Nuevomexicanos and Pueblo Indians, facilitated the movement of contraband eastward toward European Americans and other Indians who lived along and beyond the Arkansas River.[16]

In the 1850s, U.S. government officials ordered soldiers stationed at Fort Union, twenty-six miles north of Las Vegas, New Mexico, to stop this illegal trade. Until the early 1860s, this post, originally charged with providing protection for merchants and other travelers venturing along the Santa Fe Trail, remained the closest outpost to the Llano Estacado—the home of the Comanches. Federal authorities were forced to reevaluate their military position in New Mexico after the outbreak of the Civil War. They closed many posts out of financial duress. At the same time, strategic necessity caused Pres. Abraham Lincoln's administration to approve a few new posts, including Fort Bascom.[17]

In March 1862, Confederate Brig. Gen. Henry H. Sibley's Army of the West invaded territorial New Mexico. Sibley's men, mostly Texans, made great progress until they ventured into the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, where they were repulsed at Glorieta Pass. Despite the Confederate defeat, New Mexicans remained wary, fearing they had not seen the last of the Texans. At the time of the invasion, territorial delegate John S. Watts wrote to Union major general Henry W. Halleck, commander of the Department of the Missouri, stating that if Halleck would only "look at the map," he would see that once the Confederates sacked Santa Fe, they would have a clear path down the Canadian River to "threaten Missouri." Like many Union officers stationed in the region, Watts believed the Canadian River warranted military attention. Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton, commander of Union forces in New Mexico Territory, issued a series of warnings to his field officers that echoed Watt's concern. It was also rumored that John R. Baylor, by then the ousted governor of Confederate Arizona, had raised six thousand Texas volunteers in preparation for launching another invasion. Union officers possessed information that led them to believe Baylor would lead a force up through the Texas Panhandle and down the Canadian toward Fort Union. Documents clearly illustrate that the early impetus for creating Fort Bascom originated from the Union's fear of this second invasion.[18]

On 26 October 1862, Carleton ordered Capt. William H. Backus to lead the Second Colorado Volunteer Infantry, Company C, out of Fort Union to a point on the Canadian River northeast of Tucumcari Peak, to establish a base camp that could sound the alarm if Baylor attacked. Carleton was specific in his instructions: He ordered Backus to shoot any rebel scouts his men spotted. He also instructed them to stampede the livestock and burn the prairie grass in front of any opposing force. Calling this position Camp Easton, Company C kept their eyes on the Fort Smith road, a major trail that connected the Texas Panhandle to the high plains of New Mexico. This camp remained an extension of Fort Union until the following August.

Soldiers used available logs, rocks, and branches, as well as dug cavities into the hillsides to create temporary living quarters. Besides watching for Confederates, these soldiers also protected the region's travelers, the U.S. mail, and supply trains. Although Indian attacks had increased after 1861, Captain Backus was ordered to use nearby Comanches as scouts along this trail, in an effort to build an alliance with them. During this same period, Carleton ordered Backus's troops to shoot any Mescalero Apache or Navajo man that they came into contact with in an attempt to force others to remain on the nearby Bosque Redondo Reservation. In addition he ordered the arrest of any Anglos or Mexicans who were not carrying proper passes.[19]

Camp Easton proved its value early in its existence. Only six days after the camp was established, on 1 November, a group of Comanches approached Backus's patrol with information about a large wagon train traveling on the Fort Smith road into Texas. The next day, along with the Comanches, Backus and his troops sought out and apprehended eighteen Confederate sympathizers and their families near the confluence of the Canadian River and "Utah" Creek. After the Union patrol surrounded and captured this caravan, which had just left Las Vegas, New Mexico, and was on its way to Texas, the Comanches demanded at least one of the travelers and half the party's possessions as reward for their assistance. Backus explained to a growing group of agitated southern Plains Indians, including a Chief "Mowa," that he was willing to pay them for their services, but the "prisoners" would remain under his protection. Company C escorted the entire party to Fort Union.[20] Over the next several months, similar patrols set out from Camp Easton in search of rebel invaders. The soldiers' reports were peppered with incidents related to encountering "Mexicans" making their way onto the Llano Estacado with carts and wagons loaded with goods to trade with Comanches. Sorting out who these people were and what to do about them took up much of the army's time after the war ended. Such travelers and traders with whom the army dealt were not new to the area.[21]

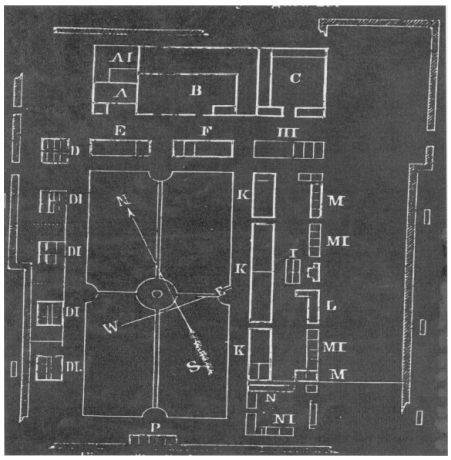
Both volunteer and regular army units were cognizant of the dangers found in the Canadian River Valley. Just a few weeks before Camp Easton was dissolved, Sgt. Jose Lucero and privates Juan F. Ortiz and Jose Barreras of Company I, First New Mexico Volunteer Cavalry, were attacked by a band of Navajos while herding cattle near Conchas Springs. The ensuing gun battle lasted until sundown. The Indians left the area with all the livestock, certain that the three soldiers were dead. Private Barreras survived the attack despite being hit on the head with a rock by an Indian. Once he regained consciousness, he dumped his deceased compatriots' guns in Conchas Creek and walked back to the camp with eight arrows protruding from his body. Capt.

Edward H. Bergmann and several horsemen from the regiment's Company I were soon on the Navajos' trail, killing two and wounding several others. They were only able to recover three beeves.[22]

On 15 August 1863, three weeks after the attack on Lucero, Ortiz, and Barreras, Capt. Peter W. L. Plympton led the Seventh U.S. Infantry, Company F, and Bergmann's Company I out of Fort Union to replace Camp Easton with Fort Bascom, a permanent outpost on the Canadian River. Prior to this move, Captain Plympton had served as commander of Fort Union. Watts, who a year earlier had urged Major General Halleck to remember the strategic importance of the region, leased two square miles of his property to the government for the new fort. Plympton located Fort Bascom on the south side of the river, about fifty miles from the Texas border. While the first Union patrols stationed at Camp Easton used Comanches to scout the Fort Smith road, officers began to back away from this strategy as early as December 1863. In General Orders No. 20, Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Ben C. Cutler noted that Fort Bascom would "be an outpost to New Mexico during the present rebellion, its advanced pickets watching the roads from Arkansas and Texas, it will be of great importance in preventing the predatory incursion of the Comanche and Kiowa Indians."[23]

The approval of another fort, Fort Butler, three years earlier indicates that army officials were aware of this region's strategic significance. Formally approved on 12 March 1860, the original plans for Fort Butler called for its construction along the Gallinas River near the Fort Smith road crossing. In the latter part of the 1850s, depredations along the Santa Fe Trail had decreased. This was largely due to Fort Union's success in protecting this road. By 1860 such success had nearly rendered the building of Fort Butler unnecessary. By the turn of the decade, and before the Confederacy was a certainty, the army's greatest regional concern had become the southern Plains Indians who controlled much of eastern New Mexico. Many officers in the Department of New Mexico lobbied to have their main supply depot pushed further south to better address this problem. Fort Butler was to serve this purpose. Cost and logistical considerations, however, prevented its construction.[24]

Three years later, the U.S. Army built Fort Bascom. They named the fort for twenty-six-year-old Capt. George N. Bascom of the Sixteenth U.S. Infantry, who was killed at the Battle of Valverde on 21 February 1862. Bascom was already a well-known officer in the region before he died fighting the Confederacy. In October 1860, while a lieutenant stationed at Fort Buchanan, Bascom was ordered to search for a boy believed to have been stolen by a band of Chiricahua Apaches led by Cochise. The meeting quickly degenerated into violence. As a result, Bascom and his men killed some of Cochise's relatives,



ILL. 1. GOVERNMENT SKETCH OF FORT BASCOM
The letters on the diagram represent the following: A and AI, cavalry stables; B, cavalry corral; C, quartermaster's corral; D and DI, officers' quarters; E, quartermaster's storehouse; F, commissary's storehouse; III, storehouse; K, barracks; L, mess hall; M and MI, laundresses' quarters; N, old hospital; NI, new hospital; P, guard house.
(Illustration from "Description of Military Posts," p. 1, vol. 49, James W. Arrott Collection, University Archives, Thomas C. Donnelly Library, New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico)

sparking a series of Chiricahuan raids and reprisals across the Southwest. A few months later, these same Chiricahuas trapped a contingent of the Seventh U.S. Infantry under Bascom's command at Apache Pass in present-day Arizona. Army surgeon Bernard J. D. Irwin led a group of volunteers to these soldiers' rescue, which resulted in Irwin receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor, the earliest action to achieve this honor. Bascom died in the heat of battle in 1862. In August 1863, the newly constructed fort was named in honor of the Seventh Infantry's fallen leader.[25]

Unlike the soldiers at Camp Easton, who were left to create their own temporary dwellings, the Department of New Mexico's quartermaster hired twenty civilians to construct Fort Bascom. The post was built "on a plateau about 20 feet above the river bottom, and 500 yards from the bed of the river, which, [at that time was] . . . about 25 feet wide and 2 or 3 feet in depth. . . . On the opposite side of the stream is a bluff from 50 to 60 feet in height, beyond which the country is rolling and broken." The water was noted to be best from November to March, before the spring snow melted. As levels rose, the river became "muddy and loaded with organic matter." It became the eastern-most garrison facing both Confederate Texas and the homeland of numerous bands of Comanche and Kiowa Indians. Fort Union sat about 115 miles to the northwest, a good three-day ride. Fort Sumner lay ninety miles to the south (see map 1).[26]

Constructed in November 1862, Fort Sumner rested along the Pecos River in the midst of another significant comanchero trade route. After subduing the Mescalero Apaches, Carleton directed that they be moved to the area

known as Bosque Redondo, just outside the fort, to start life anew as agriculturalists. Carleton was convinced that the southern Plains Indians needed to adapt to European American farming techniques in order to survive. In early 1864, Col. Christopher "Kit" Carson initiated operations that drove Navajos out of their Cañon de Chelly homeland and toward Bosque Redondo. The forced migration of the Navajos to this reservation eventually created many problems for the soldiers stationed along the Canadian River.[27]

Fort Bascom consisted of five officers' quarters, commissary storehouses, a mess hall, a blockhouse, barracks large enough to house two full companies, a kitchen, laundry area, and stables. Even before hiring civilian laborers, Carleton ordered adobe molds built and delivered to Camp Easton for use at the new location. From the beginning, there appears to have been a problem with the adobe bricks used on the fort. The absence of organic materials in the soil led to leaching, erosion, and a sort of melting of the soil when it became wet, which contributed to the adobe's deterioration over time. Before construction, Carleton approved Captain Plympton's written request to have at least some of the structures built of cottonwood logs. The roofs for the buildings were made of rows of logs covered with dirt. The outpost was protected by a perimeter wall of the same materials. Both the walls and an accompanying trench one thousand feet long and fifty feet wide surrounded the garrison. Gregg did not exaggerate when he observed that the soils around the Canadian seemed to "melt" when touched by water. For the duration of its existence, the fort's walls and roof proved to be a major inconvenience to the posts' residences. Such problems influenced its eventual closure as a full-time base in 1870.[28]

The diversity of traffic flow along the Fort Smith road posed several problems for patrols that originated out of Fort Bascom. A great percentage of regular army officers and privates from the East Coast or Europe found it almost impossible to distinguish between comancheros and Native Americans, or between legal and illegal Hispano entrepreneurs. Upon arriving to take command of the post, Maj. Andrew J. Alexander wrote: "I find no orders or instructions here in regard to Indian traders. Pueblo Indians are constantly passing here with permits signed by some Indian Agent. Will you please give me any instructions the General Commanding may have in reference to the matter?" Additionally, the environment generally demanded a style of dress that led many travelers to wear similar garb, regardless of their background, adding to a soldier's general confusion. Attire alone was not the only source of confusion for the soldiers. On one scout out of Fort Bascom, Bergmann, now a lieutenant colonel, estimated that "one half of the Comanche warriors, which I have seen, were either Mexican Captives or such Mexicans who go

among the Indians voluntarily, preferring this style of life." Coupled with the difficulty in distinguishing friend from foe, western expansion beyond the Mississippi River exacerbated the volatile relationship between the soldiers and the people who already lived in the new territories. Animosity between the U.S. Army and southern Plains Indians grew throughout the 1860s.[29]

Like most frontier posts, soldiers found little to like about Fort Bascom. The original design for the post was never completed. This design included barracks that could hold four companies yet it never adequately housed more than two. Despite their structural drawbacks, the barracks, consisting of four one-hundred-by-twenty-foot, hard-packed-dirt-floor rooms, were designed to account for the valley's harsh winters. Each room housed three fireplaces. The five officers' quarters were built on the other side of the plaza. Although officers' rooms were small, fifteen by nine feet, leaky roofs were the largest issue with these buildings. Only a few years after being built, Major Alexander complained that only two of the five rooms were habitable because of the leaks. Another problem concerned access to the river. The Canadian ran below ground level, which prevented the soldiers from digging an acequia that could water their gardens. This task, as well as others, required daily water-wagon details that included filling several large casks and hauling them back to the fort. Capt. John Dubois, like most frontier soldiers, tried to make the best of a bad situation, commenting in a letter to his mother on how he was able to make a "great show" of his quarters while stationed at Fort Bascom with just a few books, pictures, and "scant" furniture.[30]

In the fall of 1864, eight thousand Navajos and a few hundred Mescaleros were living at Bosque Redondo, ninety miles south of Fort Bascom. By then General Carleton's grand plan of converting these Indians into southwestern agriculturalists was already unraveling. The Navajos had cultivated 2,367 acres, but the crops the soil produced were not enough to sustain the amount of people living on the reservation. As the commissary general of subsistence explained to the secretary of war, however, something in the soil was also proving to be insidiously problematic. Brig. Gen. Amos B. Eaton wrote, "Some portions of the farms [the land] exhibit on the surface a white efflorescence of an alkaline character, which in contribution with river water, contains a principle highly destructive to cereal forms of vegetative life." An absence of organic materials within the soils led to further leaching of nutrients and erosion. Hail storms, insects, and a resistance among some Navajos to farming also impacted production.[31]

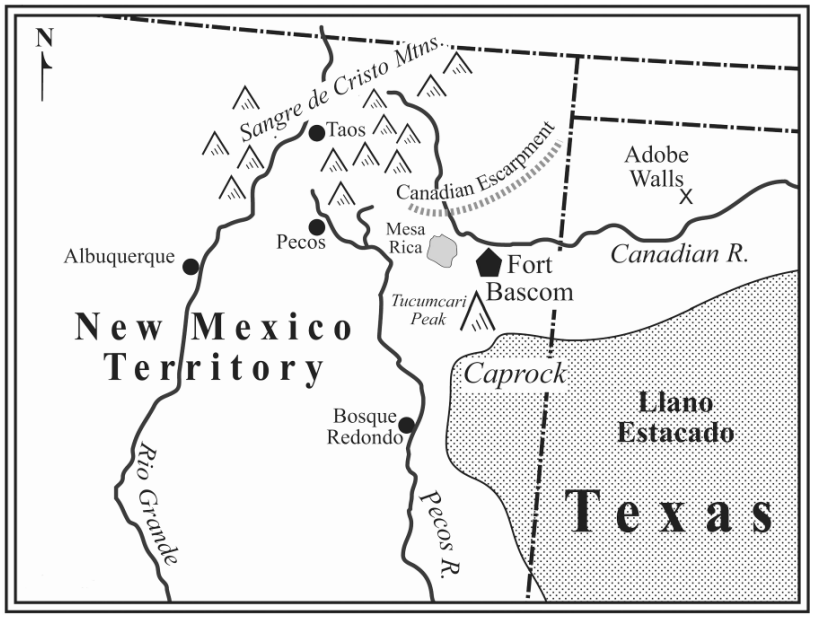
The inability of the Navajos to farm at Bosque Redondo impacted military operations within the region. On 18 November 1866, Capt. William Hawley of the Third U.S. Cavalry stationed at Fort Bascom reported: "Straggling bands of

Indians (Navajoes) from the Reservation . . . [were] roaming over the country, killing and stealing citizen stock in the vicinity of the post. Scouts, which have been sent from this post have been fired upon by them, but were unable to capture them owing to the impassable character of the 'Mesa Rica,' which seems to be the General Rendezvous." In the same report, Captain Hawley asked his superiors for clarification regarding the escapees: "I am informed of the issue of the Order to shoot them. . . . I would respectfully request, that I may be furnished with Instructions in this case." On 30 May 1866, 2nd Lt. Thomas Smith, post adjutant in Santa Fe, passed along orders to Capt. Patrick H. Healy of the First New Mexico Volunteer Infantry, commanding a picket post near the fort, to "kill all Navajo men that you should be able to catch (Pass or no pass)." On the one hand, Carleton begged Comm. of Ind. Aff. William P. Dole to furnish adequate food and clothing for the Navajos and Mescaleros placed at Bosque Redondo. On the other, however, Carleton demanded the ultimate punishment for any male Indian caught elsewhere.[32]

The situation grew worse. By 1868 incarcerated residents of the Fort Sumner Indian Reservation died almost daily from starvation, disease, and the elements. Bands of escapees roamed the region between the Pecos and Canadian rivers, looking for food and routes that led away from the Bosque Redondo. Comm. of Ind. Aff. Nathaniel G. Taylor warned government officials, "If allowed to go where they choose, we may expect to hear of murders, robberies, and depredations committed by them without number. They would in time, struggle back to their old homes and renew stealing expeditions." The regulars and volunteers posted at Fort Bascom spent the majority of their time dealing with these Navajos.[33]

Mesa Rica was the geologic bridge that connected the Canadian and Pecos river valleys. This four-mile-long formation, located west of Fort Bascom, was given constant attention by pickets and patrols, yet soldiers seldom caught anyone. Part of the problem was Anglos from back East had a hard time remaining oriented in a land of few trees and horizons broken only by the mesas and mirages of the eroded plains. Captain Dubois, however, understood the need for help and requested seventy-five dollars to secure a "Mexican" scout, noting, "I can do nothing without a good guide." Dubois explained to his superiors that 2nd Lt. Lambert L. Mulford of the Third U.S. Cavalry, Company D, could attest that a poor guide was just as dangerous as any wayward Indian. Dubois wrote: "The man who acted as a guide for him [Mulford's patrol] knows nothing of the country and got lost. He [Mulford] was 52 hours without water and his men and animals suffered seriously."[34]

Although these patrols seldom engaged in major battles with the Native Americans, the valley remained a dangerous place. In one instance, one



MAP 2. FORT BASCOM AND THE LLANO ESTACADO
Positioned in the eroded plains of New Mexico, Fort Bascom was also perched on the doorstep of the Llano Estacado.
(Map courtesy Alexander Mendoza)

American and four Nuevomexicanos were attacked by comancheros while extracting salt from a nearby dry lake bed. Each was shot through the head and "the fingers and thumb of the right hands were cut off." On a patrol that apprehended a large party of Nuevomexicanos moving southeast along the Pecos River, one of these men related to Captain Backus that more comancheros were expected. Once these traders arrived, they planned to continue the journey toward the Llano Estacado, even "if they had to cut the soldiers' throats."[35]

Fort Bascom constantly received reports from local Nuevomexicanos of Indians raiding nearby ranches for livestock. After such reports, a patrol would mount up and give chase. On 4 May 1866, 2nd Lt. Cornelius Daley, First New Mexico Volunteer Cavalry, led a typical response to Mesa Rica, a common escape route due to its "impassable nature." Ten infantrymen and seven cavalrymen followed Daley west to seek out and "destroy all Navajoe and Apache Indians (*men*) coming to that neighborhood without passports." Taking only one blanket and their greatcoats, they were supplied with forty days' rations and one hundred rounds of ammunition.[36] The soldiers approached Mesa Rica from the southeast and rode to the top, 5,407 feet above sea level. For three days they patrolled the mesa, searching the arroyos and ridges for

Indians who had escaped the Bosque Redondo. On the third day, the patrol descended from the mesa's sandstone and caliche-capped peak, following the river north up the valley until they reached the mouth of Canyon Largo, about fifty miles away. Here the valley ended, the face of the Canadian escarpment rising up to meet the Las Vegas plateau. Lieutenant Colonel Bergmann joined 1st Lieutenant Daley on this search and reported, "I beg leave here to state that the rumors of pretended 'Navajoe outrages' committed in the Conchas Valley near the mountain 'Corazon,' 'Mesa Rica' . . . and 'Canon Largo,' etc. etc. are almost daily brought in here by Mexicans." Bergmann explained that he believed the locals sent soldiers on wild goose chases so illegal contraband could flow through the valley without being detected, allowing trade along the ancient routes that connected the mountains to the plains to continue.[37]

The environment surrounding Mesa Rica was hard on the soldiers and their animals. Evaporation rates strong enough to eliminate fifty inches of ground moisture prevailed in a region that only averaged twenty inches of rainfall annually.[38] For most Anglos, the land around Fort Bascom was never much more than a dry, rocky, windy hell-hole of sand and lizards where they never quite got their bearings. Gregg's "sublimity of desolation" was more desolate than sublime for the troops forced to exist with one blanket, a greatcoat, and their wits. On 10 May 1867, a letter by Dubois summarized the way most soldiers felt about the region: "This post is very insecure. The water is carried from the river to the post in water wagons, a distance of half a mile. If any of the prarie [*sic*] tribes should be hostile this summer this post is exposed to . . . danger."[39] Such places could be just as unforgiving to the Jicarilla Apaches or Nuevomexicanos that traversed the region, but they did not consider the eroded plains or the Llano Estacado an alien landscape. Place was woven into the greater fabric of their lives, as were the animals, the weather, and the rocks.[40] The Canadian River Valley provided Nuevomexicanos, Puebloans, Comanches, and Jicarilla Indians with a vibrant, multi-faceted ecosystem on which to survive. The mountains, ravines, and grasslands helped shape their culture. For some, it was a holy land, for others, just home. Only after Anglo soldiers began to attain a similar view did military momentum in the valley shift. And with each desolate day, the soldiers and officers acquired more information on their surroundings and their adversaries.[41]

In the process of adapting to the Canadian River Valley bioregion, the soldiers and their animals suffered from lack of supplies. As mentioned above, prior to the Civil War, the army canceled a plan to move its main supply center away from Fort Union to Fort Butler along the Canadian River due to cost and logistical considerations. Many patrols that originated out of

Fort Bascom failed to achieve their goals because the soldiers ran out of supplies and forage before apprehending the escaping Navajos or elusive comancheros. If Fort Butler had replaced Fort Union as the main supply depot in New Mexico, perhaps many of the patrols could have been more successful in tracking down the Navajos and comancheros. For most of the 1860s, insufficient supplies, a lack of guides, and general ignorance of the land contributed to Fort Bascom's soldiers' inability to control either the southern Plains Indians or their trading partners. Despite these difficulties, Capt. Louis Morris reported in 1866, "The troops at this post have been doing the usual fatigue, garrison, and scouting duties." These scouts contributed to an ever-growing accumulation of information on the region and its people. Such intelligence was disseminated throughout the Department of New Mexico and later the Department of Missouri, which included Texas in the 1870s.[42]

An event in 1864 illustrates how past experiences impacted future strategies. Carson learned a valuable lesson at the Battle of Adobe Walls.[43] In May 1864, Comanche and Kiowa raiding along the Santa Fe Trail was already escalating when several white American teamsters were attacked and gruesomely murdered at the Lower Cimarron Springs. Three Hispanos who were part of this supply train were allowed to go free, which galled Commander Carleton. He was already convinced that many of the Nuevomexicanos who traded with the Indians also scouted and occasionally raided with them, underscoring why they often escaped harm during such attacks. The teamsters' deaths spurred Carleton to launch an expedition against Comanche and Kiowa villages located about two hundred miles to the east in the Texas Panhandle. Colonel Carson, fresh from ushering the Navajos to Fort Sumner, led 14 officers, 321 enlisted men, 75 Ute and Jicarilla auxiliaries, and 100 pack mules on a two-hundred-mile march out of Fort Bascom and down the Canadian River to kill the Comanche and Kiowa warriors, and to destroy their villages. The famous Indian fighter and his soldiers failed in this endeavor, lucky to get out of Texas with their lives.[44]

The battle took place just east of the crumbling ruins of an old outpost known as Adobe Walls. Soon after Carson's forces reached their target, thousands of Kiowas and Comanches surrounded them and unleashed their full force on Carson's men. If not for two wagon-mounted howitzers, it is doubtful the Union soldiers and their auxiliaries would have been able to escape. Carleton blamed the comancheros, suspecting that they had warned the Indians of the coming attack. In their reports, Carson and his men marveled at their adversaries' adroit combat skills and strategic wherewithal. Forced to acknowledge the deadly ramifications of blindly assuming the triumphant

ILL. 2. NEW MEXICAN MASONIC LODGE LEADERS IN THE 1860S
In this photo, by Nicholas Brown, Lt. Col. Edward H. Bergmann of Fort Bascom is standing on the far left. Col. Christopher "Kit" Carson is seated in the center. Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton is seated on the far right. *(Photograph courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives [NMHM/DCA], neg. no. 009826)*

inevitability of the U.S. Army's mission to control the southern Plains Indians, the sixty-nine Fort Bascom soldiers attached to this expedition, if not everyone within the Military Department of New Mexico, learned from the excursion's failure.[45]

Although the results of Carson's mission were spun in a manner that protected reputations and honor, this battle indicated just how difficult gaining control of this borderland region would be for the U.S. Army. Officers and soldiers alike, especially those posted along the Canadian River, which remained the forward edge of the battlefront for the next ten years, painfully realized that conquest over the southern Plains Indians would take more than technological superiority or presupposed ideological notions of national grandeur. Army officers understood they had to reshape their strategy into one that incorporated information regarding the environment and new tactics before significant progress could take place in the Southwest. In the meantime, the Comanches and Kiowas of the Canadian River Valley demonstrated that they were equal to any force the U.S. Army could put in the field, exhibiting no fear of their Anglo adversaries.

On 25 July 1866, Lieutenant Colonel Bergmann experienced the southern Plains Indians' confidence in their ability to defend themselves firsthand.

Sent to find the "principal Chiefs" of the warring tribes and conduct a council, after traveling 250 miles to the southeast, Bergmann and his small party were eventually allowed to ride into the heart of the main village. He counted 160 lodges on the journey into their camp. During his meeting with "Sher-qui-na-Kwagh," "Pi-ti-tes-whe," and many other chiefs, he noted in his report: "All of these Indians are splendidly mounted and well provided (by the traders) with arms. I have seen not one Indian without revolver, great many were even armed with two of them . . . It is astonishing what a great number of mexicans there are living with these Indians." He estimated that at least half the warriors they encountered were of Nuevomexicano or Mexican descent. Like Carleton, Bergmann believed they were being used as spies and decoys along the Fort Smith road and elsewhere.[46]

Everyone within the Comanche village treated the Americans with undisguised scorn. As to the nature of his visit, and whether some future truce between their peoples might be possible, Bergmann informed Maj. Cyrus de Forrest, the acting assistant adjutant general, that the Comanches and Kiowas did not appear to care one way or the other. He wrote, "I heard them say it will not pay to go any longer to Texas for those people have already been robbed poor and it is there-fore apparent that these Indians are now hunting for an excuse . . . to rob and murder in New Mexico." Such a report makes clear what a complicated, dangerous, and difficult mission the men of Fort Bascom and other frontier outposts faced in the first years after the Civil War. Writing history requires that scholars detail what the men on the ground knew of events as they transpired, but it is just as important to communicate what the subject did not know. It is doubtful Bergmann spent much time in 1866 contemplating the inevitable decline and destruction of the southern Plains Indians.[47]

The following year, Capt. George W. Letterman, who now commanded Fort Bascom, reported the results of 1st Sgt. Charles Brown's scout of 23 August 1867. This patrol consisted of men from the 125th U.S. Colored Infantry, Company K. Sergeant Brown and his soldiers captured six comancheros near the New Mexico–Texas border. They were herding eleven pack mules loaded with trade merchandise. These Hispanos did not have licenses to trade with the Indians, but claimed their papers were just to the east, having left them with traders that were "up ahead." The pack mules were carrying "200 pounds of corn meal, 500 of Mexican hard bread, 35 or 40 butcher knives . . . tea, sugar, flour . . . one box of Army caps (100) about (400) percussion caps (small)-several pounds of lead, about 5 pounds of Powder and 16 Enongated [*sic*] Balls Cav. Cal. 58."[48] Captain Letterman's report illustrates how vibrant this market remained. Letterman also noted

that his men constantly stopped "several parties with trains on their way to the Comanche Country to trade." Within this same report he revealed that in one ten-day span of scouts, his soldiers had appropriated over eight hundred stolen cattle from Comanches and comancheros.[49]

In December 1868, Col. Andrew W. Evans and six troops of the Third U.S. Cavalry, a company of the Thirty-Seventh U.S. Infantry, a battery of mountain howitzers, and a large contingent of Ute auxiliaries moved east out of Fort Bascom. They headed down the Canadian River toward Antelope Hills, the same destination of Carson's failed expedition of 1864, on a similar mission. This time, however, Colonel Evans's troops were accompanied by Capt. Eugene A. Carr's men from Fort Lyon to stop the theft of cattle and horses in Texas. Evans kept a copy of Carson's report with him on this march, proving the value of the earlier expedition despite Carson's failure. Evans's men made contact with and skirmished against the Kwahada Comanches in Texas, chasing them in a running gun battle across the panhandle to a point twenty miles above Fort Cobb, in Oklahoma. In the process, Evans's soldiers destroyed Nokoni Chief Horseback's village. After the skirmish, many of the southern Plains Indians surrendered at Fort Bascom. A greater majority slipped away to fight another day. The U.S. Army achieved final victory only after military officials organized several columns to converge on the Natives from multiple directions.[50]

Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie's victory at Palo Duro Canyon on 28 September 1874 was the fruition of Lt. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan's new strategy to penetrate comanchería from different directions and to eliminate avenues of escape. Only three Comanches were killed in the attack. Casualty wise, this was typical of most battles fought in the region. The destruction of over one thousand Indian horses, however, was atypical. The elimination of the Comanches' horse population diminished their remaining wealth and their ability to evade their enemy or hunt for food. While Mackenzie approached the Llano Estacado from Fort Concho, Maj. William R. Price led about two hundred and twenty-five troopers from Fort Bascom toward the same location. Like Major Evans, Price left this post with Carson's report of his "scout" down the Canadian River to Adobe Walls in 1864. While Price's men failed to engage the southern Plains Indians in a crucial battle, they did skirmish against Comanches and Kiowas near the Dry Fork of the Wichita River. Their presence, along with the other columns, reduced the space in which the Indians could operate. In the end, occupying space, removing resources, and converging on the Indians from different directions proved to be the winning strategy. The accolades Mackenzie and the Fourth U.S. Cavalry acquired for their actions were legitimate. This acclaim, however,

often failed to recognize the contributions of soldiers who helped set the stage for this climatic battle.[51]

* * *

The tropes of the U.S. Army's superiority and American ingenuity do not explain how the Comanches and Kiowas were finally forced onto their reservations. If superior firepower and intellect were not the main arbiters of western expansion, what was, and what role does Fort Bascom play in the answer? Current scholarship keenly illustrates how adept and adaptive Native Americans were to their changing geopolitical environment. Historians such as Gary Clayton Anderson, Todd F. Smith, Juliana Barr, Hämäläinen, and DeLay have all demonstrated that Native Americans were certainly equal to the French, Spanish, and U.S. settlers and soldiers who desired their land. Although Fort Bascom failed to continue as a full-time military base after 1870, it continued to house cavalrymen as a temporary base, used for patrols, picket details, and a staging area for military expeditions into the Texas Panhandle.[52]

The evolution of the American soldier from an easterner out of his element into an adaptable frontier fighter began with long-distance excursions such as those experienced by the infantry and cavalry posted at Fort Bascom. Experience gained from prior expeditions and mundane "fatigue, garrison duty, and scouts" was incorporated into future strategies more suited to the existing environment. The U.S. Army only gained the knowledge required to defeat the Comanches after soldiers were inserted into comanchería. No post was closer to this homeland than Fort Bascom. When searching for either the comancheros or the Indians, it was common for cavalry stationed there to ride for hundreds of miles in all directions, journeys that encompassed much of northern and central New Mexico and a great deal of the Texas Panhandle. Second Lt. Harrison S. Weeks led twenty-four enlisted men of the Eighth U.S. Cavalry "on a scout towards the Llano Estacado" of 409 miles. Col. Ranald Mackenzie's Fourth U.S. Cavalry was posted to Fort Richardson, considered Texas's northernmost frontier fort in the 1870s. Fort Richardson was three hundred miles from Palo Duro Canyon, whereas Fort Bascom was located only one hundred and fifty miles to the west. Prior to 1874, soldiers stationed along the Canadian River in New Mexico scouted this region many times and participated in two major expeditions onto the Llano Estacado. In early 1863, army officers already knew that many of their problems with Indians were related to the comancheros. Nuevomexicano and Puebloan traders supplied Indians with gunpowder, rifles, and food products in exchange for Mexican and Texan cattle. Fort Bascom soldiers spent a great deal of time on their horses chasing the comancheros and their trading partners, in the process learning where the best rendezvous sites and water holes were located.[53]

An examination of the patrols illustrates how these men were required to overcome a talented adversary on their own turf. Such missions required finding a way to shorten both time and distance in a land that seemed to stretch forever. The solution was riding out of the fort at midnight and not stopping until noon the next day. These patrols highlight an emerging strategy that acknowledged overwhelming force was not the critical factor in gaining control of the southern Plains; acclimating to the environment was just as crucial. Cavalry crisscrossing known Indian and comanchero trails at night details how familiar soldiers were becoming with the landscape, implementing tactics that they ultimately used to gain control of the southern Plains Indians who refused to go to reservations. On 2 November 1862, Captain Backus led a patrol out of Camp Easton in search of a band of comancheros reported to be traveling down the Fort Smith road to Texas. Leaving at midnight with twenty men, Backus and his troops traveled twenty-five miles by sunrise, and continued another twenty before realizing the traders had turned around. Backus returned to Camp Easton. On 6 November he and his men again left camp at midnight but this time caught up with one hundred Nuevomexicanos, thirty empty wagons, and one hundred and fifty head of "fat cattle," on the way to the Llano Estacado. In his report, Backus noted that he was familiar with two hundred and fifty miles of the surrounding area.[54]

From the beginning, soldiers from Fort Bascom swept for hundreds of miles in all directions, assimilating topographical, environmental, and demographic information into their memories, which made them better soldiers. For instance, in August 1863, Lt. William Brady and twenty-five privates of the First New Mexico Volunteer Cavalry, Company I, spent thirty days on the move, ordered to "hunt up and destroy Parties of Navajoes [*sic*] or Apaches." They traveled sixty miles up the Canadian River, paying particular attention to the mouth of the Conchas and the deep, red-walled canyon from which it emerged. Carrying anywhere from fifteen to thirty days' rations and hundreds of rounds of ammunition on pack mules, these scouts followed ancient footpaths and cart trails that wound around, through, and over Canyon Largo, "Corazon" Mountain, atop the Caprock, and across the llano. They followed signs of men and women on foot, horses, wagon-tracks, and freshly made cattle trails. Water was never plentiful and when found, its salinity made it undrinkable. Forage was sparse to nonexistent.

On another extended journey, about 250 miles to the southeast of Fort Bascom, Lieutenant Colonel Bergmann found a large Comanche village "very close to the Texas settlements." On 8 September 1867, Captain Letterman, leading Company K of the 125th U.S. Colored Infantry, chased a group of mule thieves "90 to 100" miles before capturing them.[55] Certainly

few Americans ever became as familiar with the region as the Indians they eventually conquered. They did, however, make substantial progress after coming to accept the land as it was, discounting any preconceived notions of what it was supposed to be or what it might become. Such adaptation allowed the U.S. Army to develop an effective southwestern Indian policy, which relied more on economic warfare and maintaining key positions along the old trade routes than bloody battlefield victories.

Aside from Carson's, Evans's, and Price's military penetrations into Texas, patrols originating from Fort Bascom routinely cut across the Llano Estacado in search of illegal traders and Comanches. On 26 August 1870, 1st Lt. Robert Carrick led nine Eighth U.S. Cavalry troopers down a "recently discovered trail" that led into Texas to break up "illicit traffic." In 1872 an unnamed soldier identified only as "bugler" of the same outfit published a report in the *Freeport (Ill.) Journal* describing his experiences as a trooper under Capt. James F. Randlett, Eighth U.S. Cavalry, Company D. Captain Randlett established his base at Fort Bascom after it no longer served as a full-time post. Christening himself a "horse marine," the unknown "bugler" noted his company had been patrolling the region since 1869. In mid-1871, the *Daily New Mexican* corroborated Company D's impact: "The vigorous campaign opened by the military authorities [out of Fort Bascom] upon the Comanche traders, is already showing its affect [sic]." Captain Randlett and other soldiers of the Eighth Cavalry would later use techniques learned in New Mexico assisting the Texas Rangers in their efforts to halt cattle theft along the southern Rio Grande.[56]

Colonel Mackenzie made his first patrol of the Llano Estacado in 1871, three years prior to the Fourth's victory at Palo Duro Canyon. On a much larger scale, this earlier mission resembled Lieutenant Carrick's scout in 1870. Carrick was ordered to bring a halt to the comanchero trade and eliminate warring Indians wherever he found them. Mackenzie's expedition took him all the way to Fort Bascom before he turned south to scout out Quitaque and Tule Canyon. While few comancheros or Indians were apprehended on that patrol, Maj. Gen. Christopher C. Augur, commander of the Department of Texas, believed such efforts boded well for the army, noting any information gained regarding the region's topography or resources could be incorporated into future strategies. In the decade prior to Mackenzie's foray into northwest Texas, similar expeditions and numerous scouts to the same area originated out of Fort Bascom. Captains Backus and Letterman, Lieutenant Colonel Bergmann, and the many regular and volunteer infantry and cavalry officers routinely posted their observations and experiences to the army's headquarters, which also boded well for the army's future in the Southwest.[57]

Isolated from its historical context, Fort Bascom does not appear to warrant much attention. The Canadian River, however, runs through the heart of southwestern history, and Fort Bascom was strategically placed along this stream. Situated in the eroded plains of New Mexico, facing the Llano Estacado, amid comanchería and astride ancient comanchero trails, soldiers who served there did important duty. Gaining control of the frontier was hard, dirty work accomplished more by the soldiers' and officers' experiences than by any grand and glamorous bugle-led charge. Fort Bascom's soldiers, whether lost in the shadow of Mesa Rica or hauling water from the Canadian River, were involved in the process of learning how to exist in this hard country. Goetzmann, in his study of the U.S. Army's topographical engineers wrote about the "importance of viewing exploration as activity rather than sequence." Fort Bascom supports this idea. By merely existing, this post disrupted the economic lifeline that tethered the mountain and plains people together despite being unable to sever this thriving trade.[58]

Victory in occupied territory is often acquired only through a war of attrition—a slow, debilitating process where neither side can rely on body counts to determine the winner. Such a war gave the U.S. soldiers time to learn about the environment and the foe. Prior to 1874, the activity of doing so was more important for the troops than any single battle they fought. Carson's defeat at Adobe Walls in 1864 informed everyone within the Department of New Mexico and the U.S. Army of their weaknesses and the Natives' strengths. A decade passed after Carson's foray into the Texas Panhandle before the army fully controlled the region. Fort Bascom remained active until this occurred.

In the latter part of the 1860s, the word that best characterized the people of the Canadian River Valley was displacement. Forts built between long-established trade routes disrupted and altered generational relationships that had developed between the Puebloans, Nuevomexicanos, and Plains Indians. Not surprisingly, this trade, woven into the fabric of the region's economy, was difficult for the U.S. Army to eliminate. Additionally, Carleton's plans to create an agricultural oasis at the Bosque Redondo exacerbated problems between soldiers and southern Plains Indians. An ill-conceived disaster, its failure injected thousands of Navajos and a few hundred Mescaleros among the comancheros and U.S. soldiers, creating a cross-cultural nightmare of displacement. The American notion that landscape, like the indigenous cultures found west of the Mississippi River, could be mastered with the right dose of ingenuity and power largely caused this social tragedy. Since this was what many of the officers residing in Santa Fe believed, they tried to implement the policy across the New Mexican frontier. Upon arrival at Fort Bascom, soldiers were not so sure, but quickly

realized their surroundings would be no easier to conquer than the people they found there.

Over time, they endured the harsh landscape, which bled into their character. Fort Bascom soldiers came to know the great comanchero rendezvous sites and could even pinpoint where the Comanches liked to winter their horses. They knew the location of the streams that cut across the Llano Estacado and spring-fed creeks that bubbled out of the eroded plains of eastern New Mexico. Both cavalry and infantry, regular army and volunteers, operated out of this post for twelve years, accumulating little notice, but maintaining, at the very least, key positions along heavily traveled conduits that funneled powder, weaponry, and food to the Comanches and comancheros. The impact of disrupting this trade is hard to gauge, yet must be acknowledged. The mundane routine of continual cavalry patrols along the many paths that cut across the Canadian River altered the Indians' ability to acquire military goods and foodstuffs.

Boots on the ground mattered. The information Fort Bascom soldiers accumulated on the environment and their worthy adversaries was transferred throughout the military districts. The Fourth Cavalry and many other units were able to draw on the experiences and subsequent reports written by the soldiers of Fort Bascom. Regardless of whether they were gained from a defeat, victory, or just getting lost, such experiences helped the U.S. Army gain control of the Southwest in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[59]

Notes

1. See Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Ben C. Cutler, 11 August 1863, General Orders no. 20, Headquarters, pp. 264–65, vol. 10, James W. Arrott Collection, Thomas C. Donnelly Library, New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico [hereafter p. (no.), vol. (no.), Arrott Collection]; and Asst. Adj. Gen. William A. Kobbe, Special Orders no. 105, 20 October 1870, Headquarters, p. 191, vol. 24, Arrott Collection. The James W. Arrott Collection has copies of the Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817–1947. For the original records, see National Archives, Record Group 393, Records of U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1817–1947, Part 1, Geographical Divisions and Departments and Military (Reconstruction) Districts, Entry No. 3149, Letters Sent by the Ninth Military Department, Department of New Mexico, and District of New Mexico, 1849–1890. For details on several of the volunteer soldiers who served in New Mexico, see George H. Pettis, *The Californian Column: Its Campaigns and Services in New Mexico, Arizona and Texas, during the Civil War, with Sketches of Brigadier General James H. Carleton, its Commander, and other Officers and Soldiers*, Historical Society of New Mexico, no. 11 (Santa Fe: New Mexico Printing Co., 1908), 37.
2. For early descriptions of the Canadian River Valley, see Don Juan de Oñate, *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595–1628*, ed. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, Historical Series no.5, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press,

1953), 401, 402; and Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, ed. Max L. Moorehead (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), 349, 363, 379. The phrase "cultural shatter zone" comes from Benjamin Nathans's "ethnic shatter zone" found in his *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 380.

3. J. Evetts Haley, "The Comanchero Trade," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 38 (January 1935): 157–76; Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *Frontier and Section: Selected Essays of Frederick Jackson Turner* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentiss-Hall, 1961), 37–62; F. Stanley, *Fort Bascom: Comanche-Kiowa Barrier* (Pampa, Tex.: Pampa Print Shop, 1961); and James Monroe Foster, "History of Fort Bascom, New Mexico" (master's thesis, Eastern New Mexico University, 1955). On Fort Union, see Chris Emmet, *Fort Union and the Winning of the Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965); and Leo E. Oliva, *Fort Union and the Frontier Army in the Southwest* (Santa Fe, N.Mex.: Division of History, National Park Service, 1993). Oliva's extensive use of primary source material in his examination makes his study more useful than Emmet's. Darlis A. Miller, *Soldiers and Settlers: Military Supply in the Southwest, 1861–1885* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989); Robert C. Carricker, *Fort Supply Indian Territory: Frontier Outpost on the Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970); and Charles L. Kenner, *The Comanchero Frontier: A History of New Mexican-Plains Indian Relations* (1969; repr., Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).
4. David J. Weber created a southwestern historiography all his own. See David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821–1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982). For works that follow Weber's model, see William deBuys, *Land of Enchantment and Exploitation: The Life and Hard Times of a New Mexico Mountain Range* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995); Dan Flores, *Horizontal Yellow: Nature and History in the Near Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999); Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800–1850* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008); and Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.–Mexican War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008). Other works that have advanced this historiography include John Miller Morris, *El Llano Estacado: Explorations and Imagination in the High Plains of Texas and New Mexico, 1536–1860* (Austin: Texas State Historical Society, 1997); and James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
5. Henry Gassett, *List of Elevations: Principally in That Portion of the United States West of the Mississippi River* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1877), 99.
6. Lauren C. Hammack, *Archaeology of the Ute Dam and Reservoir of Northeastern New Mexico*, Papers in Anthropology, no. 14 (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1965), 4.
7. Ibid.
8. Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 260, 349.
9. Ibid., 67.

10. Ibid., 233. Chief Tábba-quena was an important Comanche chief affiliated with the Tenewas. See DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*, 370; and Thomas W. Kavanagh, *The Comanches: A History, 1706–1875* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 484.
11. See William H. Goetzmann, *Explorations and Empire: The Explorer and Scientist in the Winning of the American West* (1966; repr., Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1993), ix, xi.
12. Morris, *El Llano Estacado*, 280.
13. See Hammack, *Archaeology of the Ute Dam and Reservoir of Northeastern New Mexico*, 4; Dan Flores, *Caprock Canyons: Journeys Into the Heart of the Southern Plains* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 2; and Amiel W. Whipple, *A Pathfinder in the Southwest: The Itinerary of Lieutenant A. W. Whipple During His Explorations For A Railway Route From Fort Smith To Los Angeles In the Years 1853 and 1854*, ed. Grant Foreman (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), 86. This rendezvous site was called *La Tecovas*, found in Kavanagh, *The Comanches*, 179.
14. Whipple, *A Pathfinder in the Southwest*, 89, 93, 94.
15. Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850," *Journal of American History* 70 (September 1991): 465–85; and Whipple, *A Pathfinder in the Southwest*, 86.
16. James E. Sherow, "Workings of the Geodialectic," in *A Sense of the American West: An Environmental History Anthology*, ed. James E. Sherow (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 93. Sherow's article details the adaptive methods Plains Indians employed to survive. Kavanagh, *The Comanches*, 328–43.
17. Robert M. Utley, *Fort Union National Monument* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1962), 9. For an excellent contemporary analysis of the Union's outposts in New Mexico, see Jerry D. Thompson, ed., *New Mexico Territory During the Civil War: Wallen and Evans Inspection Reports, 1862–1863* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008). Particularly helpful is Thompson's introduction, the best overview of the territory's frontier military posts.
18. Donald Frazier, *Blood and Treasure: Confederate Empire in the Southwest* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995), 208–30; Watts to Halleck, 23 March 1862, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 4 series, 128 vols. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1888–1901), ser. 1, vol. 15, pp. 650, 651 [hereafter OR]. For general paranoia on a second invasion, see Maj. William Chapman to Headquarters, October 1861, Santa Fe, N.Mex., p. 107, vol. 8, Arrott Collection. For specifics on a John R. Baylor–led invasion, see Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Ben C. Cutler to Capt. Joseph Updegraff, 15 November 1862, p. 348, vol. 10, Arrott Collection; and Carleton to Capt. P. W. L. Plympton, 16 November 1862, Headquarters, p. 351, vol. 10, Arrott Collection.
19. Thompson, ed., *New Mexico Territory During the Civil War*, 224; Miller, *Soldiers and Settlers*, 224; and Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton to Backus, 12 October 1862, pp. 264–65, vol. 10, Arrott Collection.
20. Capt. William H. Backus to Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton, 1 December 1862, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 15, pp. 153–58. Chief "Mowa" was more than likely Chief Mowway of the Kotsoteka Comanches. See Kavanagh, *The Comanches*, 5, 383.
21. Such reports include Capt. Nicholas S. Davis to Headquarters, 30 October 1864, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 15, p. 212. Davis led Company B, First New Mexico Volunteers. Pettis, *The Californian Column*, 8; 2nd Lt. Thomas, First Cavalry New Mexico Volunteers, to

Headquarters, Fort Bascom, p. 33, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; and Capt. George W. Letterman to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Maj. Cyrus de Forrest, 31 August 1867, p. 131, vol. 49, Arrott Collection. Letterman was captain of the 125th U.S. Colored Infantry. During this period he was also Fort Bascom's post commander. Company K of the 125th U.S. Colored Infantry was stationed at Fort Bascom in portions of 1866 and 1867. See "Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Volunteer Union Organizations," Kentucky 125th Regiment, microfilm 594, r. 217, at http://www.archive.org/details/compiledrecordss0217unit (accessed 21 August 2011). Originally a member of the First Colorado Volunteers, Major de Forrest served as Carleton's aide-de-camp and assistant adjutant general. See Pettis, *The California Column*, 35.

22. "Synopsis of Operations in the Department of New Mexico, May 16–December 28, 1863," 24 February 1864, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 26, pt. 1, pp. 23, 26.
23. John S. Watts acquired the land after serving as the previous owner's lawyer. This land was later developed into the Bell Ranch, one of the largest cattle enterprises in the United States. See U.S. Congress, Senate, the Miscellaneous Documents of the Senate of the United States, *Private Land Claims* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1879), 1405. Cutler, General Orders No. 20, 11 August 1863, p. 1, vol. 49, Arrott Collection. In November and December of 1863, thirty officers and soldiers of the Seventh U.S. Infantry and seventy-five men of Company I of the First New Mexico Volunteer Cavalry called Fort Bascom home. See 1st Lt. Charles C. Brown to Headquarters, Fort Bascom, 21 December 1863, Fort Bascom Council of Administration, p. 11, vol. 49, Arrott Collection.
24. See Fort Butler, Records of the War Department, Office of the Adjutant General, p. 408, vol. 56, Arrott Collection; and Robert W. Frazer, "Fort Bulter: The Fort that Almost Was," *New Mexico Historical Review* 43 (October 1968): 258–63.
25. Historians have disagreed on who was responsible for starting the Apache Wars. For a negative view of Captain Bascom's role, see LeRoy R. Hafen and Carl Coke Rister, *Western America: The Exploration, Settlement, and Development of the Region Beyond the Mississippi* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950), 500; and Foster, "History of Fort Bascom, New Mexico," 11, 12. For an opposing view, see Robert M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue: The United States Army and the Indian, 1848–1865* (1967; repr., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), 161–63; and Dan Thrapp, *The Conquest of Apacheria* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 16–19. Although Irwin performed his actions on 13 and 14 February 1861, he did not receive the Medal of Honor until 24 January 1894. See http://ameddregiment.amedd.army.mil/moh/bios/irwin.html (accessed 21 August 2011). In General Orders No. 20, Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Ben C. Cutler noted the fort was named for Bascom, "to perpetuate the memory of the gallant Captain George N. Bascom . . . who fell in the defense of our colors," p. 1, vol. 49, Arrott Collection.
26. Miller, *Soldiers and Settlers*, 224. Quotes are taken from Description of Military Posts, pp. 1–3, vol. 49, Arrott Collection. The twenty civilians hired to construct Fort Bascom were not identified, but it is probable that they were local Nuevomexicanos since they would be working with adobe.
27. Lynn R. Bailey, *Bosque Redondo: An American Concentration Camp* (Pasadena, Calif.: Socio-Technical Books, 1970), 27, 47; and Thomas W. Dunlay, *Kit Carson and the Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 247, 309, 317.

28. Description of Military Posts, Fort Bascom, 11 August 1863, Circular 4, Surgeon General's Office, 1870, pp. 1–3, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton to Camp Easton, 21 June 1863, p. 291, vol. 11, Arrott Collection; Carleton to Peter W. L. Plympton, 14 November 1863, p. 293, vol. 12, Arrott Collection; and Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 349.
29. Lt. Col. Edward H. Bergmann, First Cavalry, New Mexico Volunteers, to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Cyrus de Forrest, 11 August 1866, p. 72, vol. 49, Arrott Collection. Bergmann held the rank of major after being promoted commander of the post, with a brevet rank of lieutenant colonel. Maj. Andrew J. Alexander to Acting Assistant Adjutant General de Forrest, 26 January 1867, p. 106, vol. 49, Arrott Collection. Relationships between Hispanos and Comanches were often kin based, and sometimes political. For kin-based alliances in the New Mexico borderlands, see Brooks, *Captives and Cousins*; and Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire*, 177. Wars on the southern Plains in the 1860s are detailed in William H. Leckie, *The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963); Dunlay, *Kit Carson and the Indians*; Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866–1891* (1973; repr., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984); and Durwood Ball, "Fort Craig, New Mexico, and the Southwestern Indian Wars, 1854–1884," *New Mexico Historical Review* 73 (April 1998): 153–73.
30. General Order No. 20, 11 August 1863, pp. 1–3, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; Maj. Andrew J. Alexander to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Cyrus de Forrest, Headquarters, pp. 107–108, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; and Capt. John Dubois to Mother, 5 April 1867, pp. 209–10, vol. 62, Arrott Collection. Captain Dubois was in the Third U.S. Cavalry, brevetted to lieutenant colonel while commanding at Fort Bascom for portions of 1867.
31. Eaton to Sec. of War Edwin M. Stanton, 10 April 1868, U.S. Congress, House, *Unsuitableness of the Bosque Redondo Reservation in New Mexico*, 40th Cong., 2d sess., 1867–1868, H. Ex. Doc. No. 248, ser. no. 1341.
32. Hawley to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Cyrus de Forrest, 18 November 1866, p. 86, vol. 49, Arrott Collection. Hawley joined the post in September 1866. See U.S. Returns from Military Posts, U.S. Army, September 1866, r. 81, M617A, Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C. [hereafter Returns, U.S. Army, (month year), r. 81, M617A, RG 94, NA]. Smith to Healy, 30 May 1866, p. 55, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; Returns, U.S. Army, August 1866, r. 81, M617A, RG 94, NA; and Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton to Dole, 16 September 1864, U.S. Senate, *Condition of the Indian Tribes*, Report to the Special Committee, Appendix, 39th Cong., 2d sess., 3 March 1865, Report No. 156 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1867), 197.
33. Taylor to Sec. of Interior Orville H. Browning, 21 February 1868, U.S. Congress, House, *Appropriations for Navajo Indians*, 40th Cong., 2d sess., 1867–1868, H. Ex. Doc. No. 185, ser. no. 1341. While not excusing Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton or Christopher "Kit" Carson for what happened at Bosque Redondo, historian Thomas Dunlay offers a counter to the argument that they were simply blood-thirsty racists. See Dunlay, *Kit Carson and the Indians*, 250.
34. Capt. John Dubois to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Cyrus de Forrest, 10 May 1867, p. 113, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; Maj. Andrew J. Alexander to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Cyrus de Forrest, 12 January 1867, pp. 103–5, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; and Returns, U.S. Army, December 1867, r. 81, M617A, RG 94, NA.

35. 1st Lt. William J. Cain to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Lt. Edward Hunter, 11 March 1869, pp. 200–201, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; and "Expedition from Fort Union to the Canadian River and Utah Creek, N.Mex.," William H. Backus to Headquarters, 1 December 1862, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 15, 153.
36. "Impassable nature" quoted in Capt. William Hawley to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Cyrus de Forrest, 15 November 1866, p. 86, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; and Special Orders No. 25, 2nd Lt. Thomas W. Smith to Headquarters, 4 May 1866, p. 41, vol. 49, Arrott Collection.
37. Edward H. Bergmann to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Cyrus de Forrest, 12 May 1866, p. 42, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; and Returns, U.S. Army, March 1866, r. 81, M617A, RG 94, NA.
38. Jerry L. Williams, ed., *New Mexico in Maps* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 56.
39. Capt. John Dubois to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Cyrus de Forrest, 10 May 1867, p. 113, vol. 49, Arrott Collection.
40. Ball, "Fort Craig, New Mexico, and the Southwest Indian Wars," 165.
41. Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 2. On the frontier soldiers' struggle to adapt to the western environment and the subsequent learning curve military personnel experienced during the adaption process, see Ball, "Fort Craig, New Mexico, and the Southwest Indian Wars," 157–159; and Durwood Ball, "Ranald Mackenzie: War on the Plains Indians," in *Chiefs and Generals: Nine Men Who Shaped the American West*, ed. Richard W. Etulain and Glenda Riley (Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum, 2004), 165–67.
42. Returns, U.S. Army, July 1868, r. 81, M617A, RG 94, NA.
43. This engagement has been thoroughly covered. See Harvey Lewis Carter, *Dear Old Kit: The Historical Kit Carson, with a New Edition of the Carson Memoirs* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966); Marc Simmons and R. C. Gordon-McCutchan, *The Short Truth About Kit Carson and the Indians* (Taos, N.Mex.: Columbine Printing, 1993); Kenner, *The Comanchero Frontier*; and Dunlay, *Kit Carson and the Indians*.
44. Kenner, *The Comanchero Frontier*, 145; and Christopher "Kit" Carson to James H. Carleton, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 41, pt. 1, pp. 940–42.
45. Col. Christopher "Kit" Carson to Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 41, pt. 1, p. 943.
46. Edward H. Bergmann to Headquarters, Fort Bascom, pp. 70–73, vol. 49, Arrott Collection.
47. Ibid. My idea concerning how scholars must not forget what their subject did not know comes from Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 14.
48. Letterman to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Cyrus de Forrest, 31 August 1867, p. 132, vol. 49, Arrott Collection.
49. George W. Letterman to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Cyrus de Forrest, 31 August and 7 September 1867, pp. 132, 135, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; and Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire*, 318.
50. Leckie, *The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains*, 117.
51. Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire*, 339, 340; Kenner, *The Comanchero Frontier*, 206; Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 219–33; Rathgen, *The Texas Panhandle Frontier*, 207; Price to Headquarters, Santa Fe, 20 August 1874, Telegrams Sent and Received, p. 141, vol. 29,

Arrott Collection; and Thomas T. Smith, *The Old Army in Texas: A Research Guide to the U.S. Army in the Nineteenth-Century Texas* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2000), 158.

52. Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest, 1580–1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); Todd F. Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance: The Indians of Texas and the Near Southwest, 1786–1859* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire*; and DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts*. A post-triumphalist portrayal of a soldier's life on the frontier can be found in Thomas T. Smith, *Fort Inge: Sharps, Spurs, and Sabers on the Texas Frontier, 1849–1869* (Austin, Tex.: Eakin Press, 1993).
53. Returns, U.S. Army, August 1870, r. 81, M617A, RG 94, NA. For information on Fort Richardson, see "Fort Richardson," http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us (accessed 30 June 2011). For Col. Ranald Mackenzie and the Fourth Cavalry's defeat of the Kwahadas at Palo Duro Canyon, see Robert G. Carter, *On the Border with Mackenzie, or Winning West Texas from the Comanches* (New York: Antiquarian, 1961), 487–95. An example of how previous historiography has elevated Colonel Mackenzie and the Fourth Cavalry at the expense of other frontier soldiers can be found in Frederick W. Rathgen, *The Texas Panhandle Frontier* (1973; repr., Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1998). In this history of the "Staked Plains," Rathgen hails Mackenzie as the first officer to lead the U.S. Army on an expedition into the Texas Panhandle, noting this was a historically significant feat. Yet, Mackenzie's expedition of 1872 came after Fort Bascom soldiers had already thoroughly scoured this region with patrols and expeditions since 1864. Rathgen notes Mackenzie had the "personal distinction of having led the first United States military force across the Staked Plains! [exclamation point is Rathgen's]" See Rathgen, *The Texas Panhandle Frontier*, 202, 203.
54. "Expedition from Fort Union to the Canadian River and Utah Creek, N. Mex.," Capt. William H. Backus, 1 December 1862, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 15, pp. 153–58.
55. Capt. Peter W. L. Plympton to Headquarters, Fort Bascom, 29 August 1863, p. 8, vol. 49, Arrott Collection. William Brady later became sheriff of Lincoln County, only to be killed by William H. Bonney aka Billy the Kid. See Alan J. Holmes, *Fort Selden, 1865–1891: The Birth, Life, and Death of a Frontier Fort in New Mexico* (Santa Fe, N.Mex.: Sunstone Press, 2010), 135n6. On rations and ammunition, see Plympton to Headquarters, Fort Bascom, 9 December 1863, p. 10, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; Capt. Edward H. Bergmann to Headquarters, Fort Bascom, 12 January 1864, p. 12, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; Bergmann to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Cyrus de Forrest, 11 August 1866, p. 70, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; and Capt. George W. Letterman to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Cyrus de Forrest, 7 September 1867, p. 135, vol. 49, Arrott Collection.
56. Capt. Horace Jewett, Special Order No. 87, Fort Bascom, 26 August 1870, General Orders, p. 250, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; "Camp on the Canadian River, N.M.," *Freeport (Ill.) Journal*, 16 October 1872; and *Daily New Mexican*, 6 June 1871. Randlett of Company D, Maj. Andrew J. Alexander, and 2nd Lt. Harrison S. Weeks, to name just a few, were Fort Bascom veterans who were transferred to Fort Brown with the Eighth U.S. Cavalry in 1875. Alexander was post commander of Bascom for a portion of 1867. For Randlett's and other soldiers' experiences in South Texas, see House

Committee on the Texas Frontier Troubles, *Report on Texas Frontier Troubles*, 44th Cong., 1st sess., 1876, H. Rep. 343, ser. no. 1709, pp. 93, 94. Randlett was stationed at Fort Union in 1871, being detached to Fort Bascom with Company D of the Eighth Cavalry to eliminate hostile Indians and apprehend comancheros. Robert M. Utley, *Lone Star Justice: The First Century of the Texas Rangers* (New York: Berkley Books, 2002), 164, 165. Randlett served the majority of his time in New Mexico at Fort Stanton. Returns, U.S. Army, January 1871, November 1871, and November 1875, r. 81, M617A, RG 94, NA.

57. Kenner, *The Comanchero Frontier*, 193; and Smith, *The Old Army in Texas*, 153.
58. Goetzmann, *Explorations and Empire*, xi.
59. Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 2; and Carter, *On the Border with Mackenzie*, 487–95. Notations regarding water sources are scattered throughout the archival documents. Two examples are 1st Lt. William J. Cain to Lt. Edward Hunter, 11 March 1869, pp. 200–201, vol. 49, Arrott Collection; and Capt. John Dubois to Acting Asst. Adj. Gen. Cyrus de Forrest, 10 May 1867, p. 113, vol. 49, Arrott Collection. The counterpoint to this argument could be that Fort Bascom was irrelevant because its soldiers did not single-handedly eliminate the comanchero trade. Scholars could point to the band of Texas cattlemen John Hittson led into New Mexico to retrieve their property, and might also try to substantiate Fort Bascom's irrelevancy by revealing how some of its officers were involved in this illegal trade. For more on the officers' involvement, see Kenner, *The Comanchero Frontier*. Although such incidents warrant a place in this outpost's history, they do not detract from, nor erase, this post's cumulative contributions in helping to shape the U.S. Army's military policies on the southwestern frontier, the focus of this study.