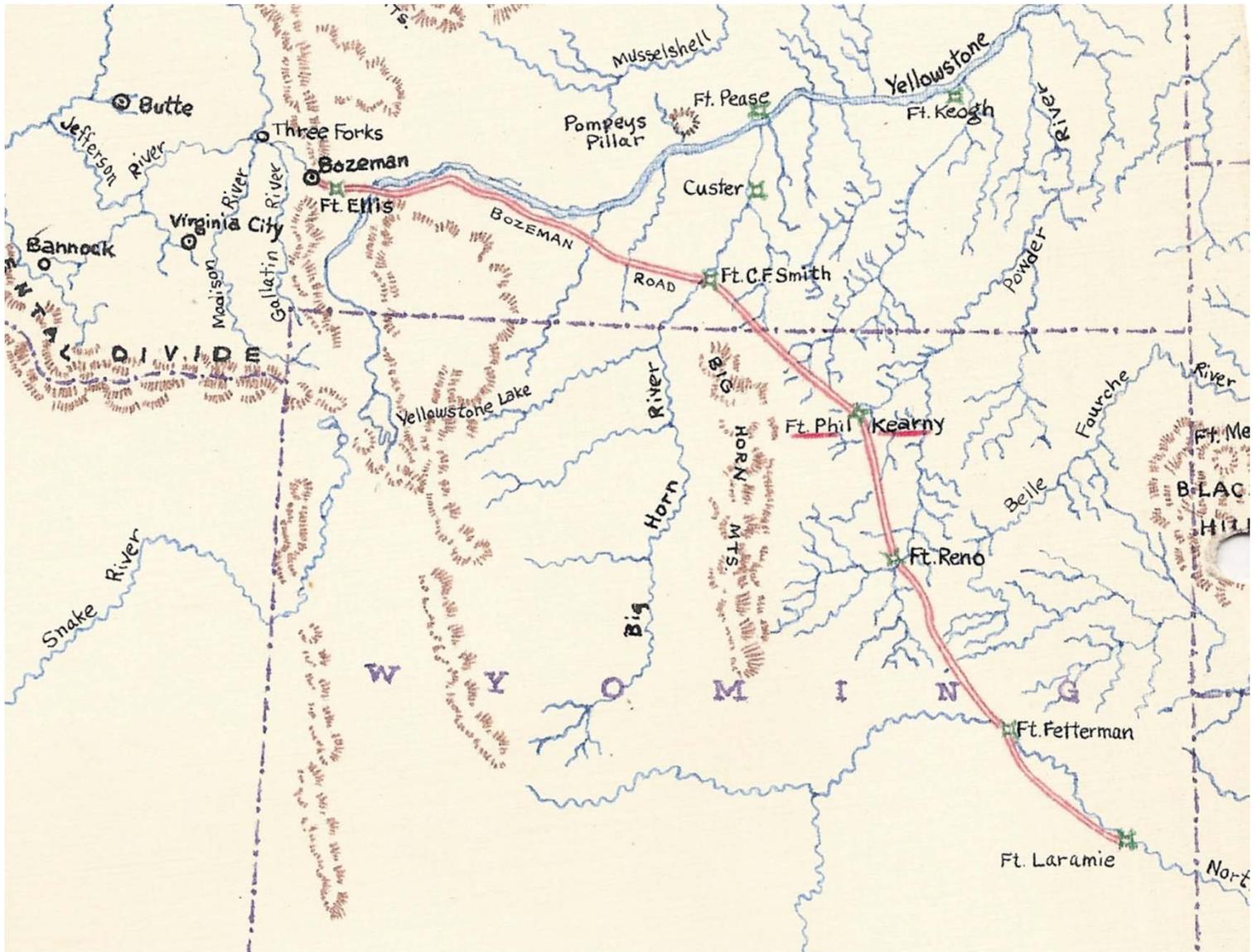


Red Cloud's War (Power River War), 1866-1868. The U.S. Government organized a great peace conference with the Sioux and Cheyenne at Fort Laramie in June of 1866. Civil War hero William T. Sherman headed the council, with great chiefs like Dull Knife, Spotted Tail and Red Cloud brought in to talk. Sherman wanted permission for white emigrants to cross the Indian lands and for permission to build three forts on the Bozeman trail, which connected the Platte River with the gold mines of Montana. Red Cloud spoke for the Indians and announced that no such concessions would be made. When he saw soldiers marching off to build the forts before the council was even finished. He angrily broke off the talks and stormed out when he saw soldiers marching off to build forts even before the council was finished, warning them to watch out for their scalps.

The task of fort building proceeded regardless. The first taste of Red Cloud's fury came at newly built Fort Phil Kearny, when brash Captain William Fetterman – who claimed that with 80 men he could subjugate the entire Sioux nation – was wiped out along with the 79 men under his command on Dec 21, 1866. Reinforcements were rushed to Fort Phil Kearny from Fort Laramie, but Red Cloud's warriors had long since dispersed.

Red Cloud attacked Fort C.F. Smith on Aug 1, 1867 when about 500 Cheyenne warriors came across 30 civilian hay cutters about two miles from the fort. After a stand off, the Indians retreated, having lost 20 of their number. The next day an attack came against Fort Phil Kearny on Aug 2, 1867. Among the warrior band were the greatest of their warrior chiefs, Red Cloud, Crazy Horse and American Horse. Again the Indians managed to cut off the wood cutting crew outside of the fort. Despite the fact that they had lost these two encounters, which became known as the Hayfield Fight and the Wagon Box Fight, the Indians were still causing havoc on the Bozeman Trail.

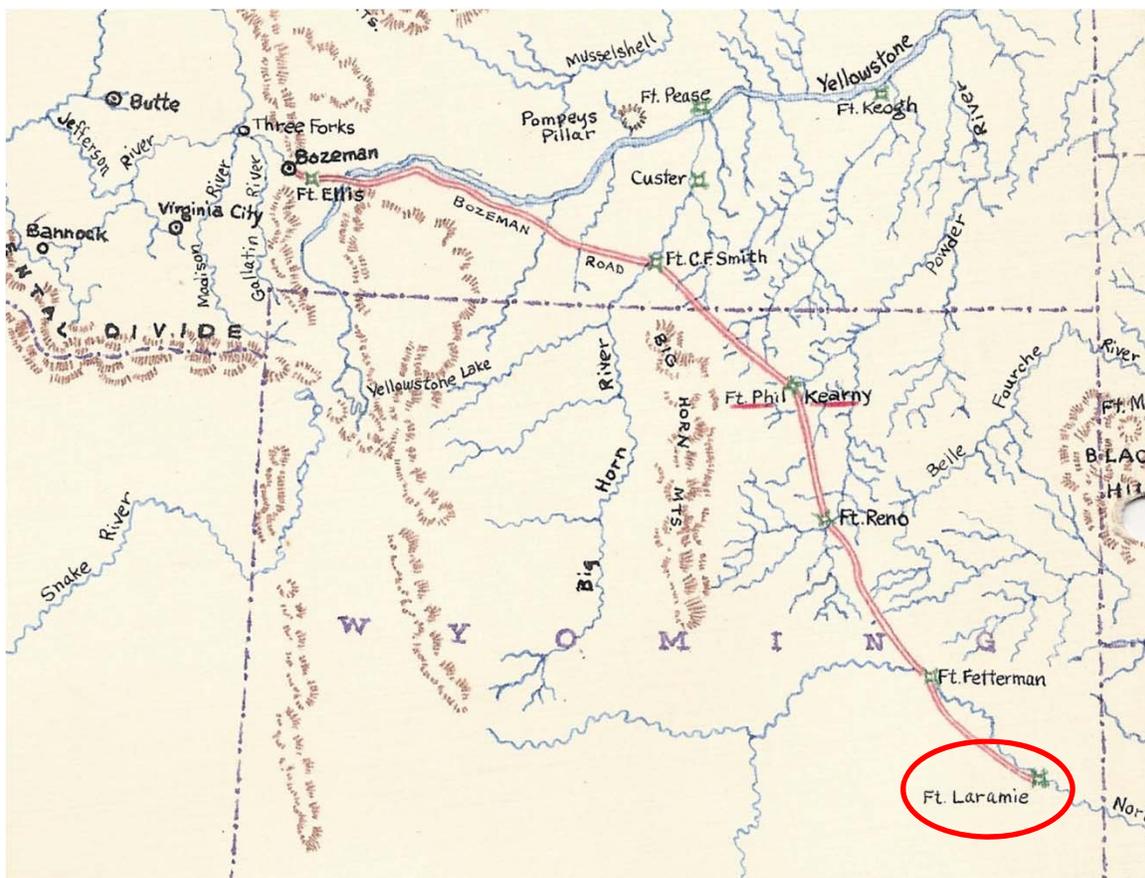
In April, 1868, General Sherman called for another meeting to try to talk peace with Red Cloud. In the face of the deaths that had littered the landscape since the last talks, they took Red Cloud a little more seriously. The Bozeman Trail was closed and the three forts along it were abandoned. Red Cloud in turn promised to try to keep his young warriors from going on the warpath. The soldiers whom had fought so bitterly to keep the road open felt betrayed by this “surrender” from higher up. As they rode out of the Powder River, they could see the smoke rising from the torching of the forts they had built.



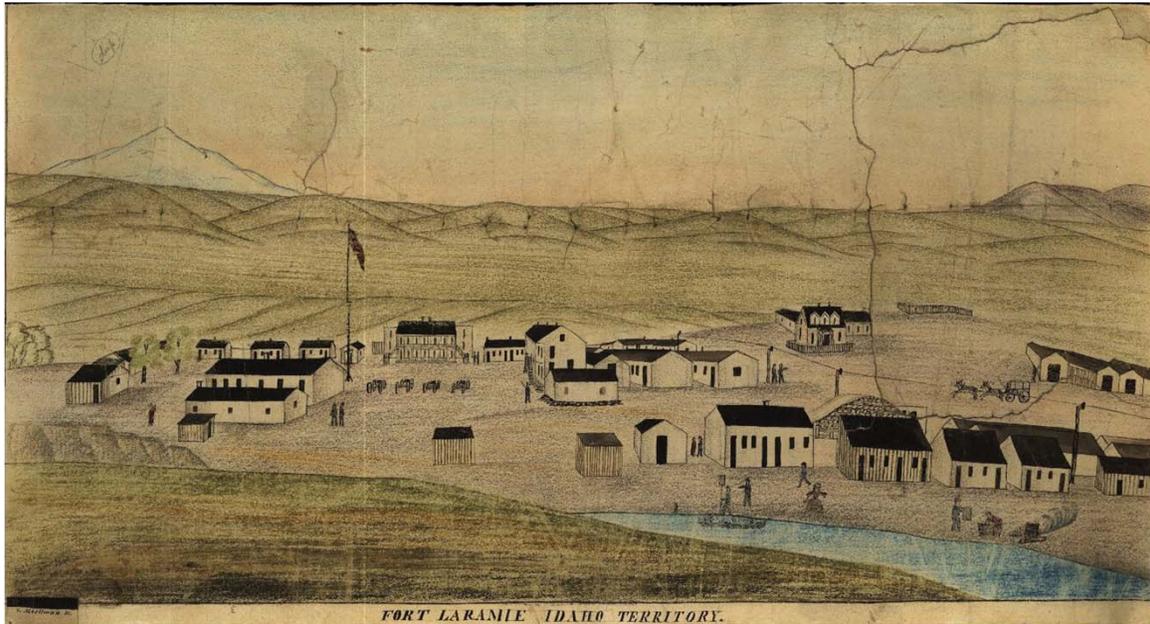
The Bozeman Trail started at Fort Laramie, on the Oregon Trail, and led north and west to Bozeman, Montana, near the recently discovered gold fields. The U.S. government established Fort Fetterman, Fort Reno, Fort Phil Kearny, and Fort C.F. Smith along the route for protection of the gold seekers and settlers headed to Montana.



Fort Laramie, Daka Dec 1, 67 to Pottsville, Pennsylvania.



Fort Laramie was the southern terminus and jumping off point for the so-called Bozeman Trail, leading to the recently discovered gold fields in Montana from the Overland Trail, which ran east-west through Fort Laramie.



Fort Laramie was founded in about 1833–34 as Fort William, after founder William Sublette, and was a significant 19th century trading post and diplomatic site located at the confluence of the Laramie River and the North Platte River in the upper Platte River Valley in the eastern part of the of Wyoming. Founded in the 1830s to service the overland fur trade during the middle 19th century, it sat at the bottom of the long climb leading to the best and lowest crossing point at South Pass into western descending valleys and so was a primary stopping point on the Oregon Trail. Along with Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River, the trading post and its supporting industries and businesses were the most significant economic hub of commerce in the region. It became known as Fort John around 1844 when it was sold.

In 1849 it was purchased and its operations were taken over by the US Army to protect the many wagon trains of migrant travelers on the Oregon Trail. The middle reaches of the Mormon trail stayed on the north banks of the Platte and North Platte River and merged with the other Emigrant trails heading west over the continental divide from Fort John-Laramie. The name Fort Laramie came into gradual use, likely as a convenient shortening of "Fort John at the Laramie River".

After the completion of the transcontinental railroad, the fort's importance gradually decreased as fewer wagon trains were formed to take the various trails west and the regional Indians were pacified; it was decommissioned in 1890. The last soldiers left Fort Laramie on April 20, 1890. All but one of the structures were sold at auction to private citizens, and the entire military reservation, which was nine miles long and six miles wide, was opened up to homesteaders for settlement on October 5, 1891.



Letter enclosed headed **Fort Casper, D. T. October 25, 1865**; carried privately to Fort Laramie where it entered the mails with their **Fort Laramie Daka Nov 1 (1865)** postmark for delivery to Berryville, Ohio.

...I have been commissioned surgeon in the 11th Ohio Cav, now in service here, but do not think I will accept. I dislike to be compelled to do anything, and just now I am footloose or, can become so in a very short time. I have seen a good deal of what might be called rough soldiering, but none of the dangers encountered by those at the front. I am now in charge of the Post Hospital at this post. I have but little to do and enjoy myself very well. ...Please direct as follows: A. S. Dryden, A.A. Surgeon U.S.A., Fort Casper, D.T. via Fort Laramie.

Fort Caspar was located on the south side of the North Platte River, near the western edge of present-day Casper, Wyoming, at one several local points where the Emigrant Trail crossed from the south side to the north side of the river. The government established a small military encampment at the place, known as Platte Bridge Station.

In July 1865, accompanied by survivors of the Sand Creek Massacre which occurred the previous November in Colorado, a party of several thousand Cheyenne and Sioux approached Platte Bridge Station from the north intending to attack the soldiers camped there. In a battle with soldiers nearby, Lieutenant Caspar Collins of the 11th Ohio Cavalry was shot in the forehead with an arrow and killed. The Army officially renamed the post Fort Casper to honor Collins, using his first name of Caspar since an existing post in Colorado was already called Fort Collins, after Collins' father. In response to the attacks, the Army established a permanent garrison of 100 troops at the site.

Fort Casper was abandoned when Fort Fetterman was completed and its garrison moved into the new fort in Aug 1867. Fort Fetterman was excluded from the provisions of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie, which resulted in the abandonment of all forts further to the north (Fort Reno, Fort Phil Kearny, and Fort C.F. Smith). It became the northernmost military post in eastern Wyoming, and important in protecting the Bozeman Trail and other routes for settlers.

After the onset of the Black Hills War with the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho tribes, several major military expeditions passed through Fort Fetterman, including Maj. Gen. George Crook's Powder River Expeditions and Col. Ranald S. Mackenzie's 1876 campaign against Dull Knife. The military abandoned Fort Fetterman in 1882.

Fort Casper, D.T.
October 25 1865.

Fort Casper, D.T.
October 25th, 1865

Dear Cousin Sam'l

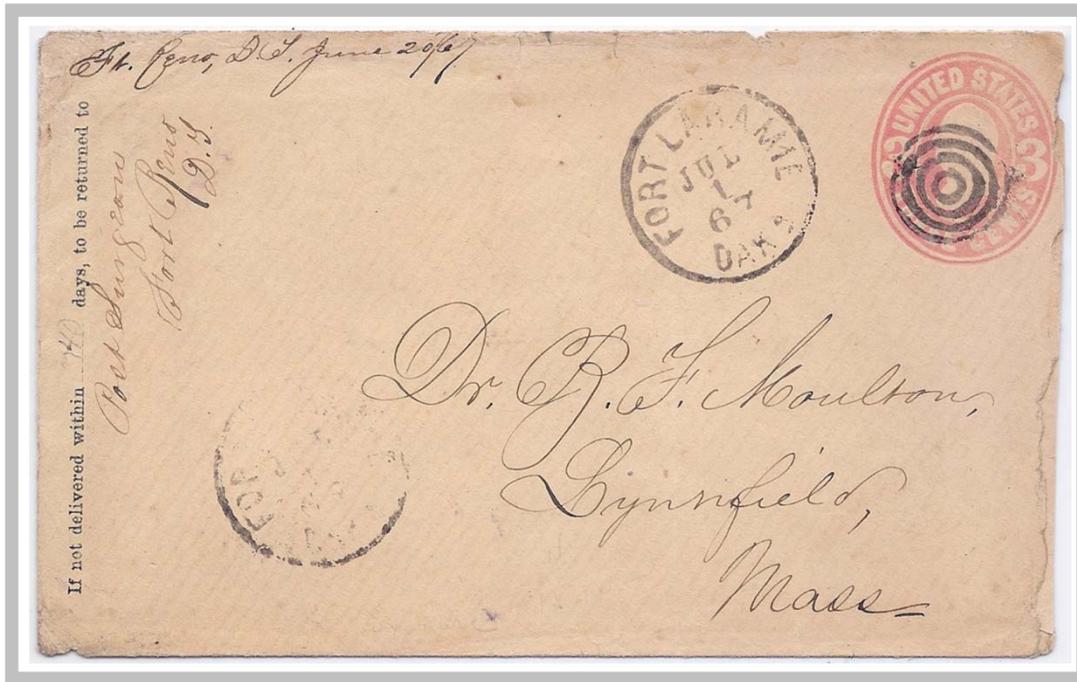
Thinking that you would not dislike a letter from this far off land, I address you. I entered the army as a private soldier in December, 1861. I was initially ordered to take charge of the sick there in the regiment. This was at Hillsboro O. I remain(ed) in charge of the hospital until we joined the remainder of the regiment at Camp Davidson, in February, of the following year. After remaining there some weeks we were ordered to St. Louis, I should mention that at Camp Davidson I found two surgeons. They were ordered with our battalion, the remaining two did not proceed in company with us. After remaining some weeks, we again proceed to Fort Leavenworth Kan by boat. Here we went into camp and on the 28th April took up the line of march for Fort Laramie. Here we arrived on the 1st June 1862. After resting a few days, proceeded to South Pass. Here, a general halt was made, for some months, where a portion of the command proceeded to Fort Bridger.

After the return of the part to Bridger, an expedition was made in the Wind River valley. In September of that year the General commanding ordered our battalion to be stationed on the new late Overland Stage Line. I was ordered to Sweet Water Bridge, and remained until the 1st November 1863, when I was ordered to Fort Laramie. Here I remained for some time in January 1864 when I went to Sweet Water Bridge. I was made sequicental(?) hospital steward in June '63. This position I held until I was mustered out of the service. In June of '64 I went to Laramie, remaining some two months when I went (to) Fort Mitchell. On the 1st September, I was again in Laramie. I did not again leave it until January 1865 when I bid Fort Laramie, as I thought adieu forever. I proceeded to Omaha N.T. on the Missouri River. Here I arrived on the 8th Jan and left it on the 14th Marsh for Fort Kearney. I remained at Kearney for some days when I proceeded west, stopping at Plum Creek. In latter portion of May I was ordered to Alkali. On the 12th July, I was ordered to Fort Laramie. I should have mentioned I was mustered out of the service as a Hospital Steward and mustered in Contract Surgeon. This position is of the rank and pay of a staff captain in the regular army. With the privilege of quitting the service when I choose. I have had a pleasant time since I have been in the army, and have no reason to complain. I have been commissioned surgeon in the 11th Ohio Cav, now in service here, but do not think I will accept. I dislike to be compelled to do anything, and just now I am footloose or, can become so in a very short time. I have seen a good deal of what might be called rough soldiering, but none of the dangers encountered by those at the front. I am now in charge of the Post Hospital at this post. I have but little to do and enjoy myself very well. I think some of going home (?). I may go to California before my return to Ohio. Harry is a member of Co P 11th O C C is in good health. Present my kindest regards to your family. Hoping soon to hear from you.

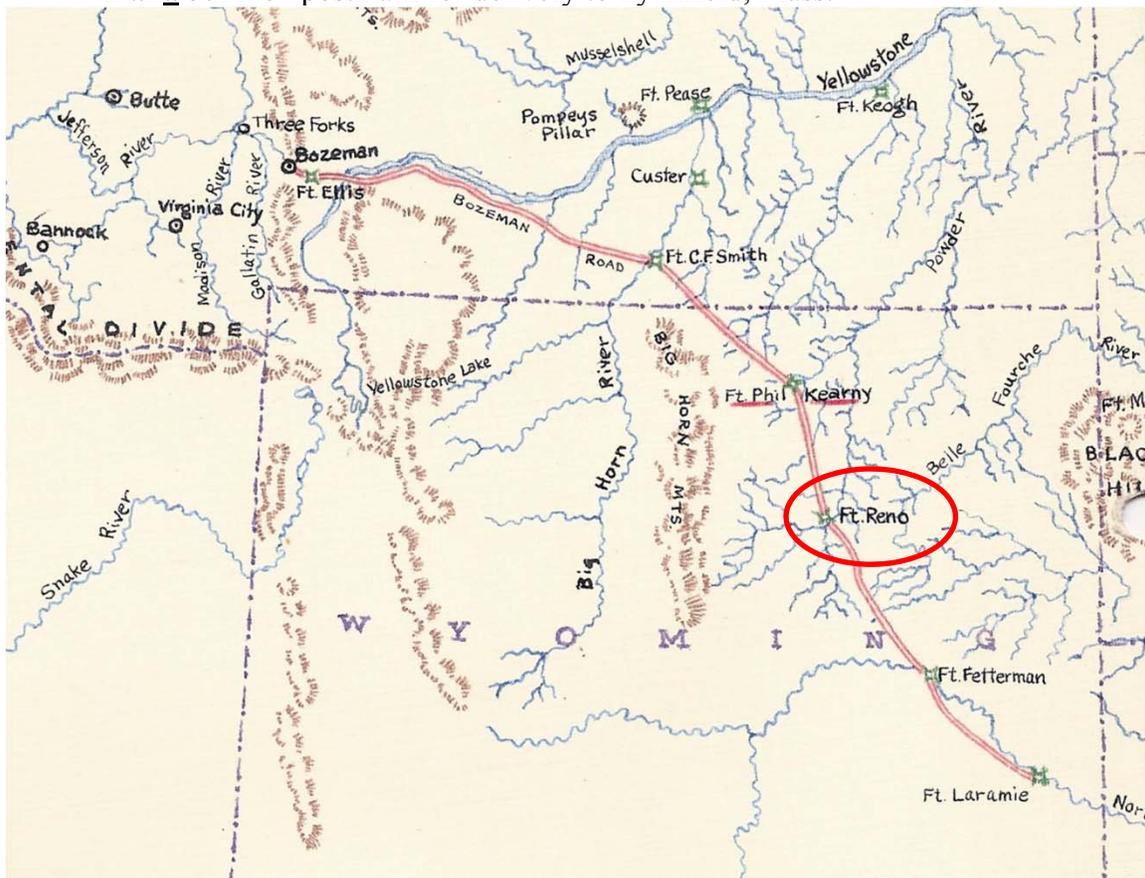
I am yours sincerely.

Please direct as follows:

A. S. Dryden, A.A. Surgeon U.S.A., Fort Casper, D.T. via Fort Laramie.



Military manuscript **Ft. Reno, D.T. June 20/67** carried by private military courier to Fort Laramie where it entered the mails with their **Fort Laramie Daka Jul 1 67** postmark for delivery to Lynnfield, Mass.



Fort Reno was the southern-most of the three new forts established by General Sheridan during Red Cloud's War (1866-1868) to protect settlers and miners headed to the gold fields of Montana via the Bozeman Trail.



Fort Reno was established on August 14, 1865, on a high plateau on the banks of the Powder River near the mouth of Dry Fork. It was originally named "Fort Connor" for Brig. Gen. Patrick Connor, whose men of the 6th Michigan Cavalry constructed the fort as a supply depot during the Powder River Expeditions of that summer. On November 11, 1865, the post was renamed "Fort Reno" in honor of Maj. Gen. Jesse L. Reno, who had been killed in the American Civil War at the Battle of South Mountain.

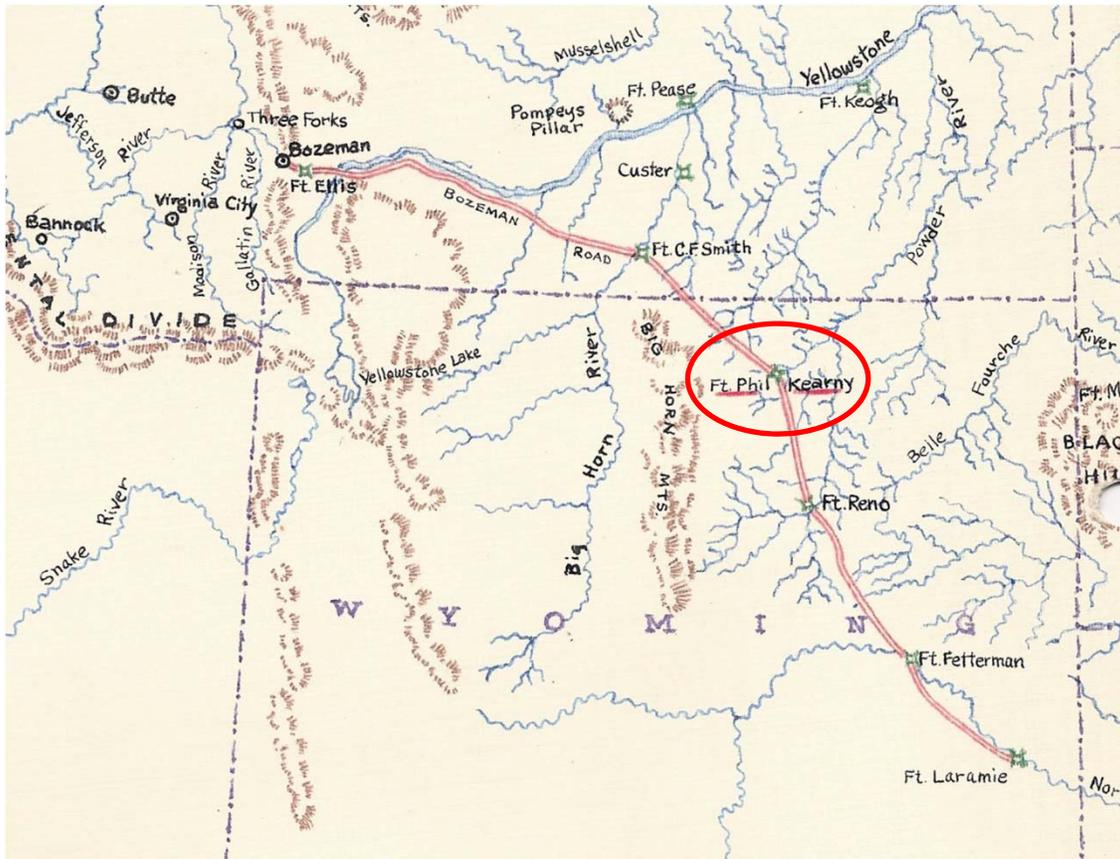
Fort Reno was crudely built with a quartermaster's and commissary warehouse and stables surrounded by a 120-square-foot stockade of 8-10" diameter cottonwood logs. The rough logs were set four feet deep in a trench, leaving a wall about eight feet high. During the fall of 1865, workers constructed other buildings outside of the stockade, including two barracks, two officers' quarters, hospital, shops, teamsters' quarters, and two sutler's buildings. All of the buildings had sod-covered roofs and dirt floors. In August, Companies C and D of the 5th U. S. Volunteers (a command of former Confederate prisoners of war who had taken the oath of allegiance), and Company A, Omaha Scouts (members of the Winnebago tribe), relieved the Michigan cavalry. Under the command of Capt. George M. Bailey, they garrisoned the isolated fort during the harsh winter of 1865-66.

During Red Cloud's War the following summer, Col. Henry B. Carrington of the 18th U. S. Infantry led a force of 700 men into the Powder River country to begin construction of two other new posts farther to the north. They reached Fort Reno on June 28, 1866, and stayed two weeks. When he left on July 9, Carrington left behind two companies to replace the existing volunteer garrison, which mustered out of the service and departed home "without a single regret." The newly arrived Regular Army soldiers constructed a log stockade around the unprotected garrison buildings, complete with log bastions on the northwest and southeast corners. They also built a sturdy adobe commander's quarters. In 1867, the post was renovated and expanded. The garrison (whose number ranged from 125 to a high of 300 soldiers) endured the routines of camp life and the harsh winters and hot summers, occasionally skirmishing with hostile Indians and keeping the southern end of the Bozeman Trail open and passable.

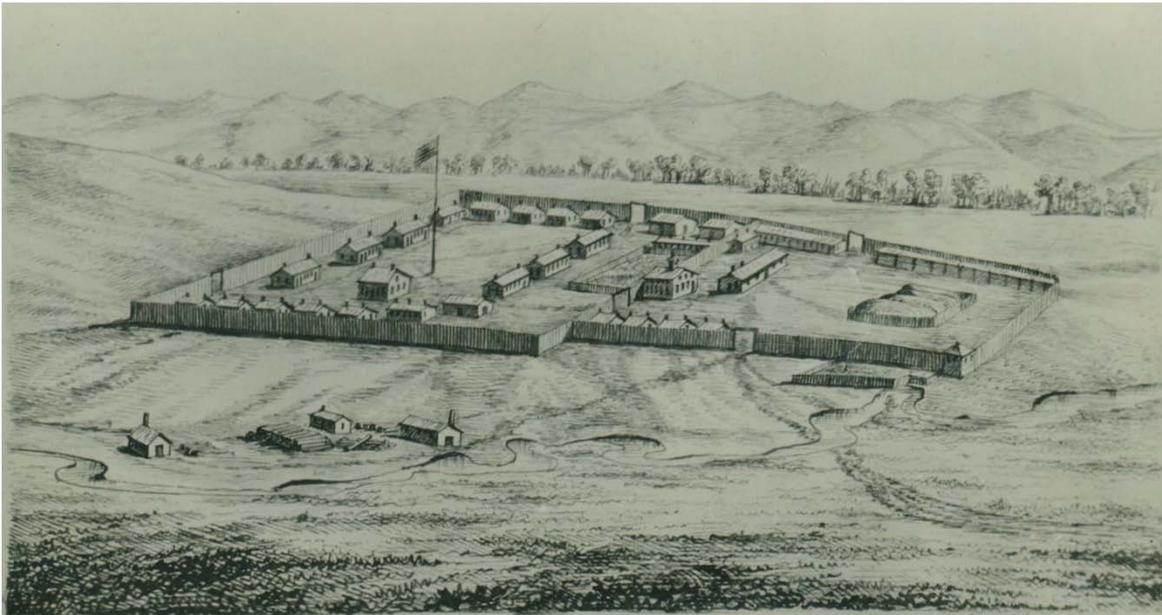
The 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie ended Red Cloud's War and essentially ceded much of their old hunting grounds to the Lakota. Along with Forts C.F. Smith and Phil Kearny, Fort Reno was abandoned as a condition of the agreement. Shortly after the military left, the entire post was destroyed by fire, possibly ignited by Cheyenne warriors. Gen. George Crook's troops briefly visited Fort Reno in March 1876, but found that all that was left were some adobe walls and building debris. Nevertheless, he used the site as a supply base.



Fort Phil Kearny, D.T. Jan 15th 68 to Baton Rouge, Louisiana; forwarded to Ringgold Barracks, Texas.



Fort Phil Kearny was the largest of the three new forts built along the Bozeman Trail to protect miners and settlers travelling from the Oregon Trail, which went through Fort Laramie, to the gold fields in Montana.



Fort Phil Kearny, D.T., 1867 bird's eye view from the south, from a sketch by Lieutenant Paulus.

Fort Phil Kearny construction began July 13, 1866 by Companies A, C, E and H of the 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry, under the direction of the regimental commander and Mountain District commander Col. Henry B. Carrington. The post was named for Maj. Gen. Philip Kearny, a popular figure in the American Civil War. The fort was located along the east side of the Bighorn Mountains in present-day northern Johnson County, approximately 15 miles north of Buffalo. Along with Fort Reno and Fort C. F. Smith, the fort was established along the Bozeman Trail in the Powder River Country at the height of the Indian Wars to protect prospective miners travelling the trail north from the Oregon Trail to present-day Montana.

Fort Phil Kearny was the largest of the three stockaded fortifications along the trail. Its eight foot high log walls enclosed an area of 17 acres. The walls measured 1,496 feet in length, tapering in width from 600 feet on the north to 240 feet on the south. Construction of the stockade required more than 4,000 logs. In 1867, the building construction required over 606,000 board feet of lumber and 130,000 adobe bricks.

The fort was under continuous construction and was nearing completion in December 1866, when its garrison was due to be re-designated the 27th Infantry. At its peak strength the garrison numbered 400 troops and 150 civilians: 9 officers, a surgeon, and 329 enlisted men of five infantry companies of the 18th/27th Infantry, including the newly-recruited Company K, 27th; one officer and 60 men of Company C, 2nd Cavalry, and 150 civilian quartermaster and contractor employees.

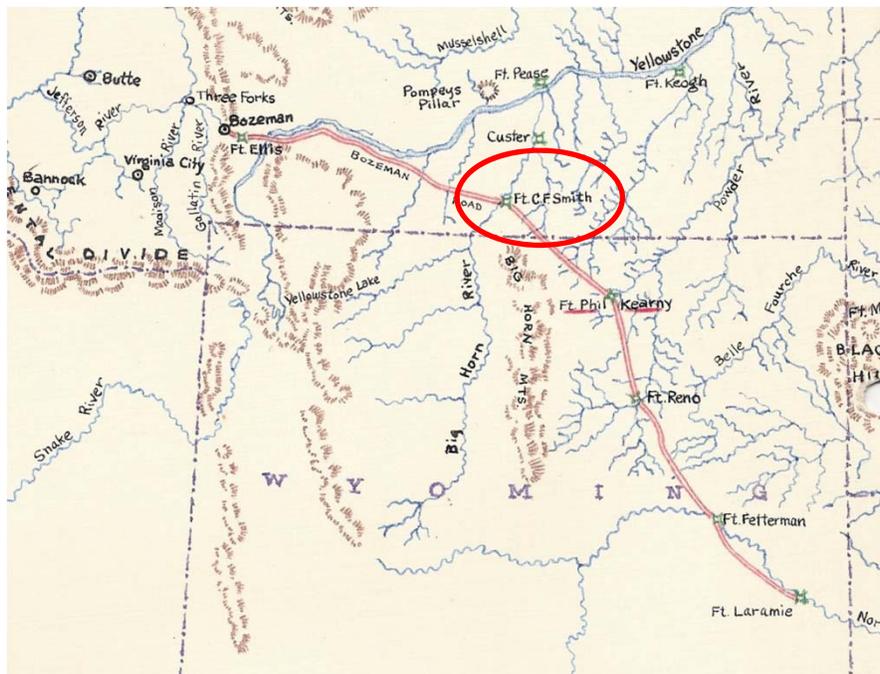
The fort, known to the Indians as the "hated post on the Little Piney", played an important role in Red Cloud's War. The area around the fort was the site of the Fetterman massacre and the Wagon Box Fight. By 1868, the Union Pacific Railroad had reached far enough west that emigrants could reach the Montana gold fields through present-day Idaho, rendering the dangerous Bozeman Trail obsolete. All three forts along the trail were abandoned as part of the Treaty of Fort Laramie (1868). Shortly after, it was burned by Cheyenne Indians.



Letter datelined **Fort C.F. Smith June the 1 1868** (the writer may have meant July 1) carried by military courier to Cheyenne, where it entered the mails with their **Cheyenne, Dak. Jul 13 (1868)** postmark for delivery to Myerstown, Pennsylvania. Enclosed letter transcribed, in part, below.



...we are going to leave the Plains in about four weeks and I guess that we will get pretty far back in the States but I don't want to yet but I sooner stay where I am now. The Indians won't let any body (leave). Sometimes they get a little on the war Path but they soon quit fighting again they come two times since I am here but they did not hurt much ...Your Affectionate Cousin,, Percival Killmer; Address to: Percival Killmer, Co. J the 27th US Infry, Fort C.F. Smith M.T.



Fort C. F. Smith June ¹⁸⁶⁸ 1st

Sunday Morning

Dear Cousin Carrie

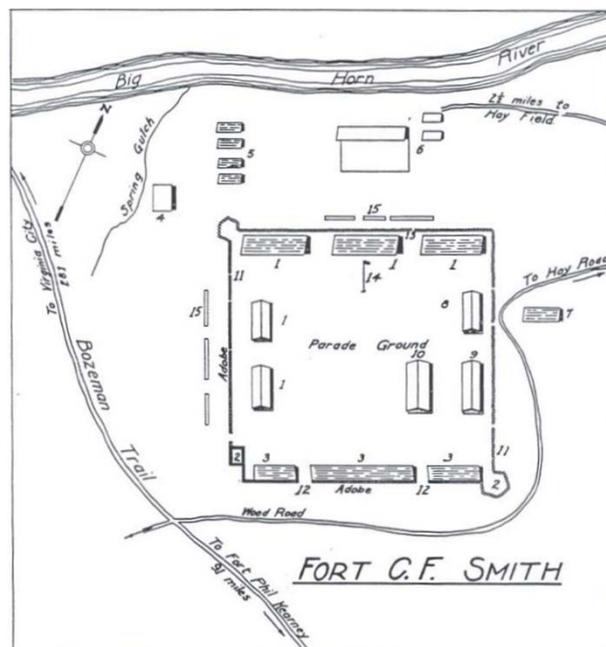
Your letter dated
April ¹⁰ is com safely to hand
and I was very glad to here from
you and its just took a Month
to com to hand and i was very
glad to here that you was all
well at that time and further
I let you know that i resived
Six letters that time yours com
to ~~hand~~ ^{hand} and now i let you
know that we are going to leav
the Plains in about four week
and i gues that we will get
puty far back in the state but
i dont know wase to get but
i sooner stay wase i am now
the Indians want best only botly



Fort C. F. Smith was a military post established in the Powder River country by the U.S. Army in Montana Territory on August 12, 1866, during Red Cloud's War. Established by order of Col. Henry B. Carrington, it was one of three forts (along with Fort Phil Kearny and Fort Reno) that was intended to protect travelers on the Bozeman Trail, which connected the Montana gold fields with the Oregon Trail.

Originally named Fort Ransom, the post was renamed in commemoration of Gen. Charles Ferguson Smith. It included a 125-foot square stockade made of adobe and wood for protection, with bastions for concentrated defense. Two companies of the 18th Infantry Regiment (approximately 90-100 officers and men) were stationed at Fort Smith during 1866, and during 1867 the garrison consisted of 400 men of the 27th Infantry.

A large Sioux party unsuccessfully attacked haycutters guarded by 20 soldiers near the Fort in the Hayfield Fight in 1867. The Army abandoned Fort C.F. Smith as a condition of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868.



FORT C. F. SMITH

Drawn from information furnished by Vie Willits Garber and F. G. Burnett.
 (1) Officers' quarters; (2) Block and guardhouse; diagonal corner also a blockhouse; (3) Barracks; (4) Sawmill; (5) Teamsters' and employes' log cabins; (6) Stable and corral; (7) Sutler's store; (8) Office; (9) Storehouse; (10) Quartermaster's department; (11) Port holes situated at several points in the four walls of the stockade; (12) Wagon gates; (13) Small gate; (14) Flag staff; (15) Rifle pits.