

Camp Kearney

Davenport

Scott County

Camp Name Derivation: Major General Philip Kearney (1814-62)
Killed in Virginia in early October 1862.

Period of Operation: Fall 1862 to August 1866

Significance Evaluation

Camp Kearney is significant to Iowa's Civil War history because it illuminates the fact that the state was fighting a two-front war, with the Civil War to the south and the Indian Wars to the north. While Iowa never hosted Confederate prisoners of war (apart from a small number of hospitalized prisoners and political detainees at Keokuk and Davenport) it was deemed a secure point to incarcerate Sioux Indian condemned prisoners. Curiously the Indian prison was soon juxtaposed to the massive Rock Island prison camp. This second federal military post in the state, which also housed the district headquarters at various times, was in service longer than most other state rendezvous camps (of which this was not one). Because of the presence of a large number of graves, and the likelihood that the site possesses a very different range of artifacts and addresses different historical research questions, this is certainly the paramount Iowa Civil War archaeological site. It was also quite discrete in its boundaries so any artifact distribution can be more readily located and tested. The core post was also stockaded, which should mean that this former post line might also be found. The present site is now a residential suburb but recent map interpretations appear to indicate that the site might be less disturbed and more accessible to investigation than was previously thought. The Indian burial ground appears to have been located as a separate site and it too, appears to be on largely open ground.

The Indian "burial ground" is a separate significant site that is directly associated with the camp proper historically. While the location is discussed as a part of the Camp McClellan site, a most interesting lead has just been developed. It seems that the Sioux Indians do a regular spiritual ceremony at one of the houses in the addition, specifically 301 McClellan Heights. It also seems that the house has a history of being spirit-filled and a related high and frequent turnover of owner/occupants. This house is in proximity to the burial site mapped by architect Seth Temple in the 1920-30s.⁵⁸⁹

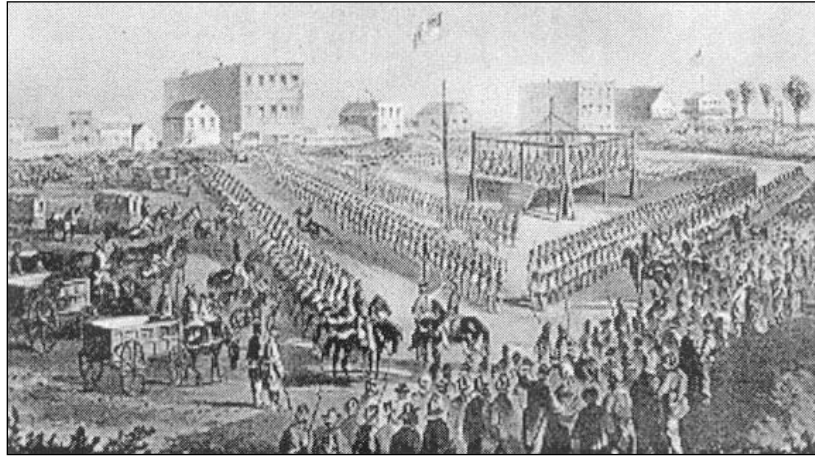
Sioux Indian Prisoners at Davenport

Sioux Uprising Context

The Sioux (or Santee Sioux, or, using their proper name, Dakota) uprising in central Minnesota stemmed from the non-payment of annuities to reservation Indians. The first attacks took place on August 17, 1862, with major and bloody battles at New Ulm (August 23), and Birch Coulee (September 2). A large number of white refugees fled the area and regional military attention resulted in the suppression of the insurgency by the end of September. There were 393 military trials with 323 convictions and the issuance of 303 death sentences. Thirty-eight Dakotas were executed on

⁵⁸⁹ Phone conversation with Ken Oestreich, October 29, 2009

December 26, 1862, in what was the largest mass execution in U.S. history. In April 1863 the U.S. Congress acted to evict the Dakotas from Minnesota and the remaining convicted prisoners, along with family members, were sent to Camp McClellan in Iowa, where they would remain until March 22, 1866, when they were ordered released by President Andrew Johnson.



**Figure 19-41: The mass hanging at Mankato, Minnesota, December 26, 1862
(*Harper's Weekly*)**

The apparent cause of the removal of the Indian prisoners to Davenport likely was based on concerns for the safety of the Indians given the level of public antipathy towards them. As late as March 1865 the same concern mandated a large guard over the remaining prisoners still in Minnesota. Another influencing factor was that dealing with Indian prisoners using a military force was a poor match and caring for the prisoners had become problematic to their military caretakers. Colonel S. Miller, 7th Minnesota Infantry, was in command of the “Indian Post” at Camp Lincoln, Minnesota. In late November 1862 he wrote the district commander, Brigadier General Henry H. Sibley to request the assignment of special officers, including a surgeon to his post. He wrote: “It really seems to me almost impossible to control the prisoners and supply their wants, unless I have the aid of officers and a surgeon familiar with their language, habits and diseases, etc.”⁵⁹⁰



**Figure 19-42: Sioux Indian Internment camp, Fort Snelling, Minnesota
(*The South Besieged*, p. 409, credited to Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul)**

⁵⁹⁰ Temple, pp. 38-39; Chronology of the Dakota Conflict, www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/ftirials/dakota/dak_chrono.html.; (Miller to Sibley, November 21, 1862, RG 393, Department of the Northwest, Entry 3559, Unentered Letters

The Indians whose death sentences had been commuted were first combined with the other Indian prisoners at Fort Snelling. Major General John Pope, commanding the Department of the Northwest, ordered General Sibley in late March 1863 to “Bring [the] condemned Indians down to Snelling and ship them by first boat to Davenport Iowa. Send down one company to guard them which will return by first boat. Indians [are] to be delivered to Captain Robert Littler 2d Iowa at Camp McClellan Davenport.” Pope instructed Colonel W. N. Grier at Davenport to “Direct Captain Littler at Camp McClellan to prepare to receive three hundred condemned Sioux and arrange quarters for them accordingly.”⁵⁹¹

The Indian/Missionary Perspective

The events of August 1862 in western Minnesota fundamentally influenced subsequent Santee Sioux Indian history. Today, tribal members annually commemorate the mass hanging and the forced march of their people from Mankato to Fort Snelling, in Minnesota. More accurate historical markers have been erected only in recent years at the key historical sites. The events of so long ago have left their echoes today.

The Indian side of the story offers a diametrically opposing account of these proceedings. The public hysteria in Minnesota demanded reprisal and the military was pressured to produce a scapegoat. The problem was that those Indians being most involved in the attacks evaded capture and fled to Canada. The nearly 400 “trials” were conducted over a few days with many cases being judged within a few minutes. Most of those tried spoke no English, had no defense, and trusted the missionary who served as a translator. The massive list of condemned men was pared down by President Lincoln because he was fearful of a European backlash. The President first determined to execute those who were guilty of rape, but that provided just two names, hardly enough to satiate domestic vengefulness. The criminal threshold was then raised and the final tally was determined.

One innocent man was hung due to a similarity of names. The bodies of the executed men were then buried on a river bank and were immediately secured by grave robbers who sold the dead to area medical schools. The surviving Indians were marched from Mankato to Fort Snelling and were attacked en route, losing numerous dead to angry crowds.

The massacre of the 18th of August was the protest of a dethroned dynasty, venerable as that of the Bourbon kings, against usurpation—of prescription against change—of blind inertia against restless progress. Little Crow was the Canute who would have set the limit of his royal prerogative to the advancing tide...While we take vengeance[sic] on this wild freebooter of the plains, let us do him justice. We have cursed the assassin, let us pity the exile. It is not his fault that he belongs to an age and an order which no longer exists, and which has no place in the grand economy of the modern world.

St. Paul Weekly Press, April 23, 1863

After the Davenport contingent of Indian prisoners was sent down river, Brigadier General Henry H. Sibley, commanding military operations in Minnesota, wrote to President Lincoln, on February 16, 1863, concerning the eventual disposition of the other captives who were being held at Fort Snelling, in St. Paul. His letter addresses the matter of guilt among those who did not survive the hangman’s noose, who went to Camp Kearney:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the despatch [sic] of 7th inst. addressed to me by Private Secretary Nicolay, in accordance with your directions, and in obedience to the instructions therein contained, I proceed, very briefly, to state my opinions, as to the final disposition of the remaining condemned Indians and half breeds still in my custody. I desire in the first place, to state, most emphatically, that

⁵⁹¹ Pope to Sibley, March 23, 1863, RG 393, Entry 3436, Vol. 3, telegrams sent; Pope to Grier, same date, *ibid*.

the action of the Military Commission in the case of these prisoners has been fully justified by subsequent developments, except in a very few cases in which the sentence appears to have been dis-proportioned to the guilt of the accused. These exceptions do not exceed five or six in number, in which it is doubtful whether the men were really voluntary participants in the murders and massacres committed in their presence. D. Faribault Jr., in whose behalf appeals have been transmitted to you, is probably one of these cases. The great majority of the prisoners are deeply guilty, and deserve hanging, as did all of those who have been already disposed of in that way. In my judgment, at least fifty more of those who are the most criminal, should be executed, and the remainder transported to the military prison at Alton, Illinois, or some equally secure place of confinement outside of the limits of Minnesota, and be put to hard labor for the rest of their natural lives.

From this number should be excluded the very few I have mentioned, as comparatively innocent, and who can easily be selected from the mass. I have taken the liberty to advert to the action of the Military Commission, because I wish to relieve your mind from any apprehension, that these prisoners have been harshly treated. I am aware that representations have been made to you by Missionaries and others long resident in the Country, who had natural and pardonable attachments for particular Indians, and were loth[sic] to concede their guilt, questioning the justice of the proceedings of that Court. I myself revised and carefully scrutinized those proceedings, and approved of the findings in each particular case, only after being fully convinced of their propriety and justice. I endeavored to guide my self in this grave and important matter, by all the light and information, I could obtain, and under a deep sense of my responsibility as an officer and a Christian man. The condition of things in this district fills me with deep anxiety. There is little doubt, that the powerful bands of Upper Sioux are combining, to renew the scenes of murder and desolation, of the past year on a grander scale, along the whole border. To guard the prisoners at Mankato requires the greater part of an entire regiment. There for with the aid of faithful officers and men, I have been able to protect these condemned men against unlawful violence, but the entire population of the State is deeply exasperated, and I very much fear that if murders are committed in the spring by the savages, as may well be feared, there will be a general uprising of the Citizens against the Criminals, which all the force I can command will be unable to resist.

To avert any possibility of a fatal and dreadful collision between the U. S. troops and the enraged people. I beg of you, Mr. President, to issue immediate instructions to have those of the condemned men who are not to be capitally punished, removed without delay from the State, for there is no secure place of confinement within it, and apart from the danger of collision before adverted to, should they be kept where they are, the large force requisite to guard and protect them cannot be spared from the defence [sic] of the border settlements. To release them is, of course, out of the question, for they would return to their prairie haunts, filled with thoughts of revenge and murder. There are also about sixteen hundred men, women & children (mostly the two latter) in the Indian Camp at Fort Snelling, who should be removed immediately upon the opening of the navigation, to some spot to be selected by the Secretary of the Interior, outside of the State. They are now supported entirely by the Govt. at great expense, and if sent up the Minnesota River as far as it is navigable, and thence under Military guard, to the Coteau de Prairie in Dakota Territory, they might begin at once to cultivate the ground and subsist themselves. I shall anxiously await your instructions with reference to these important matters. I have not enough men properly to guard the frontier, and at the same time take the field against the concentrated bands of prairie warriors, who are threatening the whole line of settlements, but if I can be dis-embarrassed of these Indians in the manner I have suggested, or in any other you deem proper I hope, if continued in command here, to crush out this Indian combination, and rid the border States of the Northwest from what now seems to

indicate a general war of races, which will involve an expenditure of blood and treasure beyond calculation (Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress.

Henry H. Sibley to Abraham Lincoln, February 16, 1863

Removing the Sioux Prisoners to Iowa and the Establishment of a Prison Camp at Davenport:

INDIAN PRISONERS.—We learn from Adjutant General Baker that there is a prospect that the reprieved Indians at Mankato, Minnesota, are to be transferred to this place for safe keeping. It now require[s] about a full regiment of troops to guard them. To turn them loose would ensure their speedy death at the hands of the outraged Minnesotians [sic].—By bringing them here it is thought that two companies can take care of them, thus economizing in troops to the extent of at least half a regiment. There are about two hundred of the red devils chained together in pairs. Gen Baker thinks they will be brought here immediately.

Davenport Democrat and News, March 23, 1863

We understand that official notice has been received at Post McClellan to prepare for the three hundred Indian prisoners spoken of a few days since. They will be sent here as soon as they can be accommodated.

Davenport Democrat and News, March 26, 1863

Camp McClellan.—Capt Littler is making arrangements as fast as possible for the reception of his Indian menagerie, which is soon expected down from Minnesota. He is enclosing three barracks within a very high board fence, for the residence of the murderers. It is likely that they will be delivered here next week.

Davenport Democrat and News, April 11, 1863

The condemned Indians (Sioux) who have been confined at Mankato, Minn., since last fall, have been sent to Davenport, where they will be turned over to the military authorities and will be kept at hard labor during the continuance of the Indian War and perhaps during life. The whole number sent, was 277 Indians and 24 squaws.

Cedar Valley Times, April 30, 1863

Late on April 21, the promised entourage departed Mankato, Minnesota and headed downriver for Davenport and what was to be known as Camp Kearney:

THE INDIAN MURDERERS AT POST McCLELLAN.—On the night of the 21st inst, the condemned Minnesota Indians, numbering 278 Sioux braves (including one Winnebago) were quietly removed from their log prison at Mankato, Minn., where they had been confined and strictly guarded since last December, and marched on board the steamer Favorite, Captain Hutchins, and started down the river for this point. The night time was taken for this movement, and great secrecy was observed in order to elude any demonstration that the outraged Minnesotians [sic] might make—they having made the threat (and taken necessary measures to put it into execution) that the blood thirsty copper skins, who had so savagely murdered their wives, their children, brothers and sons, should never leave the State alive. But the boat and its heavy freight of murderers got off without trouble. In addition to the Sioux warriors, there were sixteen squaws and two papooses that embarked and came down also. The prisoners, while at Mankato, were guarded by the 7th Minnesota Volunteers, Col. S. Miller. The guard under which they came down was Company C, 74 men—Captain Burt, 1st Lieutenant Winscow, 3rd Lieutenant Pratt, a detachment of the 7th Minnesota. Major Brown, of the same regiment, who for the last forty-five years has resided with the Indian tribes of the Northwest was with the party. The other officers were Quartermaster Redfield and Dr. Signeute, the Surgeon of the Regiment. With the Indians came three interpreters: David Ferribault, a half-breed Sioux, who speaks English fluently and writes a handsome hand, he having received some education at school in Prairie du Chien;

Antoine Provocili, another French and Indian half-breed; and George Godfrey, a half-breed Indian negro, the same who escaped hanging with the thirty nine who were executed last winter, by turning State's evidence, and who is under sentence of imprisonment for ten years. It is said that he alone murdered 18 men, women and children in that awful massacre.

The Favorite arrived here on Saturday morning [July 25]. She landed above East Davenport in front of Post McClellan. Captain Littler was ready with his command, and in thirty minutes after the landing the prisoners were all in quarters at camp. The pen made for their reception is 200 feet square, and encloses four buildings, formerly barracks. The bunks are all taken out. Two of these barracks are occupied by the prisoners as sleeping quarters, one is assigned for hospital and the occupation of the women, and the other is the guard house of the Post. Outside of the fence and four feet from the top, is a staging running clear around, on which the sentries walk.

Major Brown complimented Captain Littler very highly upon his judgment in designing and carrying out this plan, and assured the Captain that had he been consulted he could have suggested nothing better.

Most of these Indians were taken by Gen. Sibley, who led the attack against them, the considerable number of them came in and gave themselves up, that being their best chances for life. Their average age is 28 years, though among them are some very old men with gray hairs, just tottering on the brink of the grave. Their captivity is fast ending their days. Nineteen of them are sentenced to imprisonment for terms varying from one to ten years, and 253 are sentenced to be hung. Of the squaws, Captain Littler has detailed ten to cook rations, four to do the washing, and two have been assigned to hospital duty.

One of the squaws is the daughter of a noted Sioux chief, who died in consequence of wounds received in the fight with the Minnesota troops. She is a splendid specimen of an Indian princess—probably a decided belle among the Indian damsels. She dresses better, has finer blankets and ornaments than the rest of the females, and has a really distinguished air.—An interpreter told us that she was the wife of a field officer of one of the Minnesota regiments.

The greater portion of these prisoners are professing Christians, a small number are gentiles, some are Catholics, but the great majority belong to the Presbyterian order of protestants. These hold religious ceremonies in one of the barracks three times each day. The Rev. Cas ke-a (first male child) dispenses the gospel in the Sioux language. We had the pleasure of attending one of their meetings yesterday afternoon, through the politeness of Captain Lottler [sic]. The minister stands in the centre of one of the barracks; around him squat his hearers—the squaws on the front seats. The service is carried on in the usual style of the Presbyterian Church. A hymn is first sung, then a prayer is offered, then singing again, and then comes the reading of the scripture in Sioux, and then the extempore address of the minister, after which there is another prayer and more singing.— Cas ke a speaks in a very fluent and apparently impressive manner. The audience listens with the most profound respect, solemnity pervading the exercises. We never attended a meeting of more devout people, as far as we could see. The singing is good. The tunes are the old fashioned ones that used to be common in our churches. We were most agreeably surprised at this part of the service. After the regular service was over, there was religious exhortation by several earnest speaking Indians.

They are chained together at the ankle by pairs, except some of the more vicious [sic], who are manacled separately. Their food is fresh beef, they cook to suit themselves—mostly in soup—and four bushels of shelled corn per day, which they hull in lye, and

cook after their own wild custom. They prefer this to bread, which though dealt out, is no favorite of theirs. Salt pork and salt meats generally are not in their line.

Among this number there are about 200 of Little Crow's fiercest braves. A finer lot of Indians in physical development it would be difficult to find. They are large, straight and of mostly resolute mien. No captivity can obliterate the native majesty or dim the fiery restless eye of these strong, patriotic savages.

The most affecting scene connected with the trip, from Mankato occurred while passing Fort Snelling, where were quartered 1600 Indians—mostly the squaws and children of the prisoners. The prisoners knew not but that they were going away to their execution, and that they were for the last time beholding their wives and children. The scene is described as being peculiarly affecting. At another time, a deck hand, by signs, gave them to understand that they were going down the river to be hung and have their throats cut. This caused a deep sensation and much weeping among the squaws. Their fears were allayed by Major Brown, and there was no further trouble. They are highly satisfied with their new quarters, while they have plenty of room outdoors and in. Among them they have a thousand dollars or more, which they have saved for time of need. Twenty have died during the winter, and a few of them are very low now.

Davenport Democrat and News, April 27, 1863

The moving of the prisoners was newsworthy throughout the state:

THE CONDEMNED INDIANS.—On Saturday morning, the steamer Favorite arrived at Davenport, with 292 Indians, from Mankato, Minn. Of these Indians, 253 are sentenced to be hung, and 19 to be imprisoned for various terms between one and ten years. Sixteen women and four children accompanied them, the women attending as cooks or nurses to the sick. Among the men are four who speak English. One is a half n---r and half Indian, balance devil, who has more innocent blood on his hands than any of the others, but having turned State's evidence the Government, partly, perhaps owing to his African descent, let him off with ten years imprisonment. The Indians are to remain at Davenport some time.

Dubuque Herald, April 28, 1863

A correspondent to the Cedar Falls *Gazette* parroted the *Democrat and News* article quoted above, but added some details concerning the stockade. The *Gazette* reported:

...a tight board fence around it [the stockade] about 16 feet high. On the outside of the fence and about 13 feet from the ground a substantial walk 3 feet wide has been constructed on which the guards promenade around the enclosure and have a full view of the inmates. On the outside of the enclosure are four buildings—one of which is to be used as an Indian hospital. The fence and buildings are all whitewashed.

Cedar Falls Gazette, May 1, 1863

The remaining Indians living in Minnesota were now being removed to the west. This could be done by steamboat given that the Missouri River was, by this time, militarily secured. The *Democrat* reported in early May:

MOVING THE INDIANS.—Government has determined to remove several thousand of the Indians from the State of Minnesota. To this end the Northern Line steamers have commenced taking them down the river [the Mississippi]. They go by boat to Hannibal[Missouri], thence up the Missouri to Dacotah Territory, where new tracts are assigned to them. The Davenport went down yesterday with 762, and other boats will follow after. The Davenport's cargo contained a large number of the wives and children

of the Indian prisoners now at Post McClellan. The Indians declare they will not stay in Dacotah, but [will] go straight back. This they can do in a few months, and government will have the job to do over again.

Davenport Democrat and News, May 7, 1863

Sioux missionary John Williamson was on board the *Davenport*. The boat was halted for some time at the landing and Williamson was allowed to visit the captives. He wrote that the captives were being well-treated, but seemed depressed. They were "chained two and two."⁵⁹²

"INJUNS."—The Northerner passed down yesterday, with seven hundred and thirty-eight as filthy and squalid specimens of humanity on board as can well be imagined.—

They were Indians, mostly squaws and children, belonging to the Sioux tribe, and are being removed by Government, from their homes in Minnesota, to a new reservation in the Territory of Dacotah. They were under the charge of Lieutenant Steward, and a detachment of thirty-eight men from the 10th Minnesota regiment. There is, among the number, one that has been convicted of murder, having been engaged in the last massacre in Minnesota. He will be hung on arriving at Fort Randall. He was a villainous looking man, seemingly rife for any fiendish deed.—

The tribe is much dissatisfied at their removal, and threaten to return. The women seemed deeply affected when leaving Davenport, where many of their friends are confined at Post McClellan. They wept bitterly, keeping their tearful eyes on the flag that waves over that post, as long as it was visible. They will be transferred to the cars at Hannibal, Mo., and from thence transported to St. Joseph, when they will proceed up the Missouri to Fort Randall.

Large number of our citizens visited the boat to gratify their curiosity by a sight of the Indians.

This shipment is the last lot of Sioux. Fifteen hundred more Indians, of various tribes, will be shipped as soon as transportation can be had.

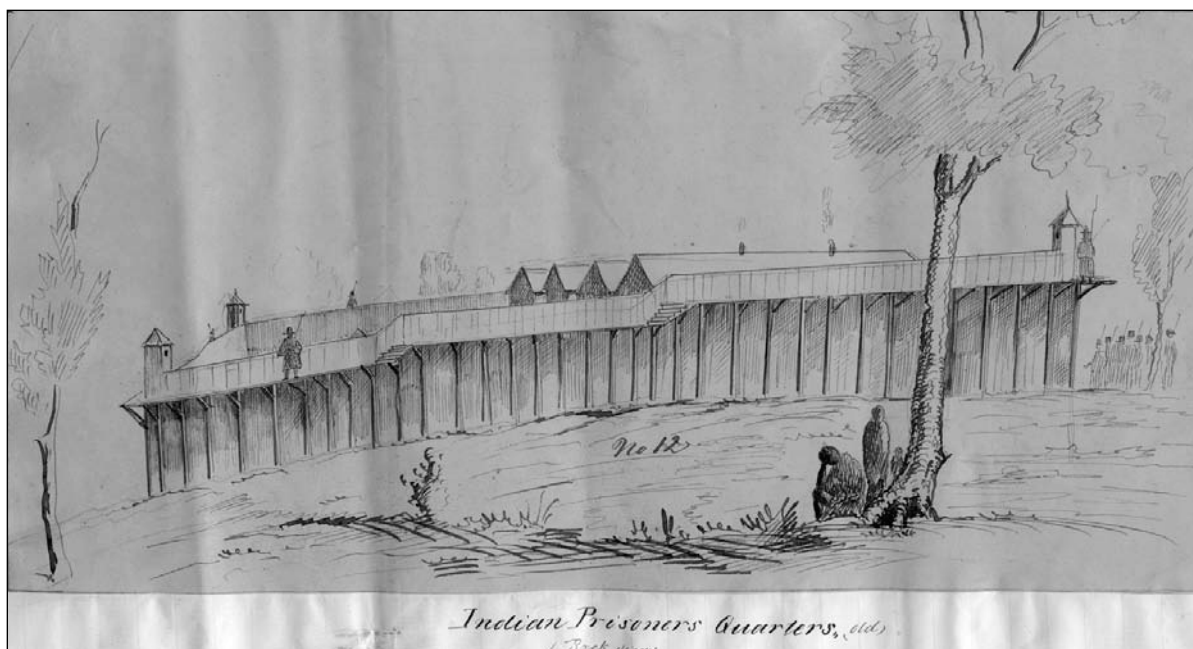
Muscatine Daily Journal, May 9, 1863

Mid-month the steamer *Canada* came down with 752 Indian passengers, these being Winnebagos. The same source reported, "the Winnebagos are the enemies of the Sioux, and while passing down by Camp McClellan, where the Sioux prisoners are confined, they got up a war dance around a Sioux scalp which they had in their possession."

The depopulation of Minnesota's Indians had proceeded in two phases. First those Sioux, held at Fort Snelling who had not been charged with crimes were sent down on two steamboats in early May. Then the Winnebagos followed in mid-May. It was noted that the scalps used in the dance were freshly obtained. In fact, two Sioux men, who were with the Winnebagos, were murdered at Mankato, likely in the hope that the act would curry favor with the authorities. The Winnebagos blamed the Sioux for the actions that forced them to leave their homeland as well.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹² Stuart, *History Of The Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe*, p. 37

⁵⁹³ Davenport *Democrat and News*, May 18, 1863; Lass, "The Removal From Minnesota...", pp. 353-64



**Figure 19-43: Drawing of “Old” Indian Prisoners Quarters, “back view,” view northeast
(Record Group 92, Post and Reservation File, National Archives)**

Oddly, the supply of tobacco was one of the first orders of business once the captives were back on dry land at Davenport. Department headquarters instructed Captain R. W. Littler as follows:

In reply to your communication of May 6th I am directed to say that Major Burns Commissary at these Hd Quarters has been instructed to supply the tobacco rations to the Indians confined at your post in lieu of sugar, coffee &c. Requisitions for the same will be made upon him.

I am directed further to say that the Indians will be securely protected by you, and if they can be used to advantage in any way, that you will put them to work.

Separate and careful accounts will be kept of all rations and supplies of any kind furnished these Indian prisoners as the account must be refunded by the Indian Department

Reflecting that need to maintain separate accounts, District of Iowa headquarters instructed the captain to “furnish to this office without a delay a statement (tabular) at what cost to the Govt. the Indians at your Camp are kept; including quarters, food, clothing, fuel, light, med. Attendance, medicines, pay of soldiers standing guard &c.”

General Roberts issued preemptory orders to Captain Littler, concerning his expectations of the Indian prisoners at Davenport:

The commanding general of the district directs me to instruct you that he wishes the Indian Convicts confined at Camp McClellan to be kept habitually at such labor as you can find for them to do in and about your camp, especially at the fatigue and police of the camp and its vicinity.

It is desirable that they should be made to feel that they are objects of abhorrence, and undergoing punishment for crimes of unexampled enormity; and in this view of their confinement, you will not permit them to be visited by any parties or persons in any

pretence without special authority from these headquarters. Instruct your sentinels to permit no citizens to pass up onto their platform or to have or to hold any conversation or intercourse of any kind with them from there or elsewhere. You will also forbid their dances and games of amusement of every kind and make their confinement hourly felt as part of the retribution that is awaiting their inhuman murders of men and slaughter and torture of women and children.

No presents of food or clothing of any kind will be permitted, and only such quantities of beef, salt and corn as shall be found necessary for their health and the support of life, will be issued as rations.

Roberts to Littler, June 19, 1863

There was immediate pushback at least on the matter of local tourism. Within days, Roberts modified his instruction, stating: “So much of the order as regards the treatment of convicted Indians at your camp, as refers to their being visited by strangers is hereby altered, as to permit visitors to pass around the prison enclosure, upon the [guard] platform outside accompanied by a noncommissioned officer.”⁵⁹⁴

The general also was dealing with a direct challenge to his command turf in the form of Lieutenant Colonel William N. Grier, newly arrived to assume command the state’s recruiting service as mustering and disbursing officer. Perhaps as an initial test, Roberts sent a summation of the new command arrangement, as claimed by Grier, hoping for an intervention from the Milwaukee departmental headquarters. Camp McClellan and its commander, one of Grier’s subordinates, was not “wholly under his [Grier’s] direction and control” in Robert’s words. He reiterated his command situation at the Indian camp, stating:

The convicted Sioux Indians are confined at their camp and guarded by the recruits- these Indians are by General Popes instructions placed under my charge but the Camp of Instruction and the troops there are under Colonel Grier and beyond my orders and supervision, the care of the Indians should also be assigned to him.

Roberts to Selfridge, June 25, 1863

Roberts set to work implementing his departmental instructions. His first target, naturally, was the Indian missionary, the Rev. Thomas S. Williamson. The general first demanded of Williamson to know by what “authority...permits your intercourse with the convicted Indians at Camp McClellan as their spiritual adviser[?]” A month later he instructed the commanding officer of the camp “...that the intercourse of Rev. Mr. Williamson with the Indians is unauthorized by any authority. You will hereafter forbid it giving notice to Mr. Williamson of the fact” The issue spoke to the complexity of the situation. The camp was a military post and the prisoners were military prisoners. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was generally responsible for the prisoners as well but there is no indication that they were playing any active role in this matter. Rev. Williamson was paid by the “American Board” and the minister’s friends immediately appealed Robert’s order to department headquarters..⁵⁹⁵

Push-back also came from the department headquarters. General Pope made inquiry as to the purpose for the lock-down. Roberts responded, explaining:

⁵⁹⁴ Meline to Littler, May 12, 1863, RG 393, Entry 3436, Vol. 3, p, 285; Bell to Littler, July 28, 1863, RG 393, Entry 236, Part 3, Letters Received, District of Iowa, p. 66; Roberts to Littler, June 23, 1863, RG 393, Entry 236, Part 3, Letters Received, District of Iowa, p. 19

⁵⁹⁵ O. Lovejoy, Princeton, Illinois, to Pope, August 16, 1863, RG 393, Part 3, Entry 236, Endorsements, District of Iowa, p. 16; Roberts to Williamson, June 23, 1863, RG 393, Entry 236, Part 3, Letters Sent, District of Iowa, p. 14; same to Ragon, July 24, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 56

...my orders for the governance of the Indian prisoners...grew out of a military necessity. The prison at Camp McClellan had become a sort of Menagerie, where all the idel [sic] and curious people seemed to congregate and amuse themselves with the antics of these savages, as managed by the Rev. T. S. Williamson. This gentleman officiating as spiritual adviser to these convicts, without authority from my military superiors tome, finally brought to his aid a Rev. Mr. Briggs as teacher of music and applied to be for permission to admit him as their musical instructor. To have added such a farce to the other Powwows alreay [sic] got up by Mr. Williamson, under religious names, would have mad[e] this Indian Prison, already a nuisance to Camp McClellan, intolerable. But I had other grave objections to Mr. Williamson, he was teaching these convicts falsely; and indotrinating [sic] them with the ideas that they are not guilty of any atrocities unusual in Indian wars. On remonstrating with him on this subject, I found him insubordinate and untruthful. Both Mr. Williamson & Mr. Briggs have since [receiving] my directions to exclude them from visiting these Indians, published articles in newspapers misrepresenting the actual facts of their case and the condition of the Prisoners, their rations and the discipline I have established over them. I[t] would be a great mischief to Camp McClellan were either of these gentlemen permitted to return to these Indians as spiritual advisors or teacher of music.

Roberts to Meline, August 22, 1863

The matter of Rev. Williamson was settled a few days later when General Roberts was instructed from Milwaukee that “free access [is] to be accomodated [sic] to clergymen desirous of visiting the Sioux Prisoners, under such regulations & restrictions only as are necessary for the maintenance of good order & proper discipline.” Roberts had over-reached. No instructions were issued concerning the privileges of music teachers for the inmates.

Roberts penned his mea culpa the reverend, but gave as little ground as they had to. He instructed the camp commander to invite Williamson back, stating:

You will be pleased to inform the Rev. Mr. Williamson Missionary to the Sioux Indians, that he is at liberty to visit the convicts confined at Camp McClellan at such times as he may desire, for religious instruction and services; and that he can at any time also admit to them other clergymen he may desire to aid him in his religious duties.

You will however signify to Mr. Williamson that such scenes as Indian dances and Indian singing, are not by me regarded as at all necessary to the spiritualization or religious instruction of these convicts; and that they disturb the order of the Camp filled with Recruits, whose curiosity to witness such scenes draws them away from their proper duties. Such displays of Indian taste and habits moreover draws about the camp many idle, curious and mischievous persons, that are a very great nuisance about any garrison of law raw and undisciplined Recruits.

Roberts to Pickenpaugh, September 4, 1863

The hard labor reference for the prisoners was carried out. In early June it was reported, “We noticed this morning at Camp McClellan that Captain Littler makes the Indian prisoners “work for a living.” Some were digging a well, others chopping wood, grading and sweeping the grounds, white washing, &c. As a general thing they work well. Capt Bob’s [Littler] orders are brief-“Ingin no work Ingin no eat.”⁵⁹⁶

The newspaper and military accounts describe a tightly controlled stockaded population that was subjected to unrelenting forced labor. Other sources challenge this depiction, and they also serve to illustrate the details of the lives of the camp inmates. It is worth noting at this point that there are a great many historical sources, beginning with the trial records themselves, that might be further

⁵⁹⁶ Meline to Roberts, August 31, 1863, RG 393, Entry 3436; Davenport *Democrat and News*, June 3, 1863

investigated. There is a very large corpus of letters written by the camp inmates to their missionary contacts. There is a strong likelihood that the names of most of the deceased Indians who are buried at Davenport could be learned by comparing the trial list, the pardon list, and the survivor's list. This work lies beyond the scope of this research project however.⁵⁹⁷

The Indians did not arrive and depart as a single group. Individual Indians were brought to the camp, while others were released (there were also additional convictions and executions at Fort Snelling). One such case is Wowinape (meaning Place of Refuge) (aka The Appearing One/Thomas Wakeman) (1846-1886). His role in the uprising is not known but he was present at three battles with his father, Taoyateuduta (aka Little Crow). The family fled and Wowinape was arrested when he returned in late July 1863. He had a separate trial, was reprieved from a death sentence, and was brought to Davenport, where he survived his internment.

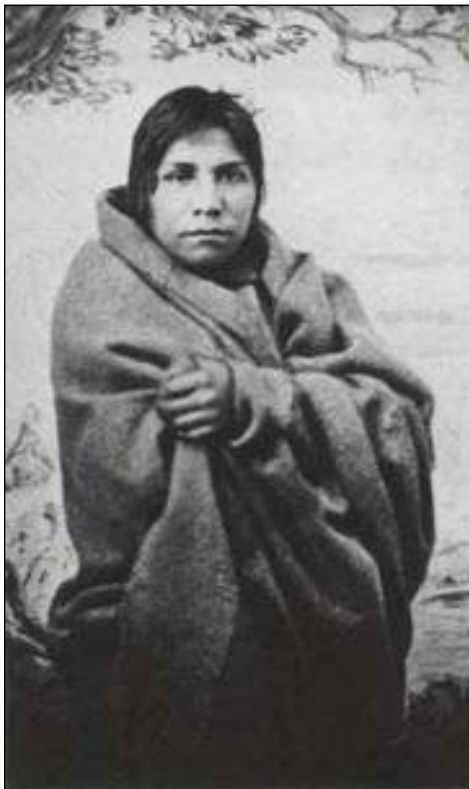


Figure 19-44: Wowinape
(Anderson, p. 281).⁵⁹⁸



Figure 19-45: Big Eagle
1864 photograph

Jerome Big Eagle (1827-1906) was a leader of the Mdewakanton Dakota and an active leader, along with Little Crow, in the uprising. His name was included on the 1864 pardon list and he was ordered released in early December of that year. This incredible photograph was taken in Davenport during his confinement. W. W. Hathaway, then the assistant commissary at Camp Kearney, described the circumstances of making the image:

⁵⁹⁷ Record Group 75, Series 98 (L2), Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1807-1904, Roll 66 includes File #235, "Removal of Santee Sioux prisoners from Davenport, Iowa, 1866. Roy W. Meyer's History of the Santee Sioux: United States Indian Policy on Trial (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993) contains accounts of inmate treatment at Davenport. Report 156 of the U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1865, M-1099, includes a Census of Dakota Indians Interned at Fort Snelling. This list excludes those sent to Davenport, however. (Gary Clayton Anderson, Through Dakota Eyes..., pp. 279-80)

⁵⁹⁸ The image of Wowinape was likely also made in Davenport.

I was also a personal friend of Big Eagle, the chief of the tribe confined in the pen. An amusing incident arose during the summer when I tried to get a photograph of the old chief. There was a mulatto named Jack confined with the Indians and he conspired with me to get the old brave to sit for a picture. Accordingly Big Eagle put on all his finery and paraphernalia and we went down to the studio of a photographer who had opened up his place of business down on the river road at the end of what is still known as "Hog's Back Ridge." Everything went well until we neared the place when Big Eagle began to remove his finery. We asked him what the trouble was and he said he would not pose unless we paid him \$15.

While this is a remarkable photograph, made near the camp, it is instructive to know that the chief had at least his symbolic weapon and his personal belongings with him at the camp. He also was able to make a visit to the local photo gallery, although he did have company.⁵⁹⁹

"BIG INGIN."—Captain Littler proposes fitting up a car on the 4th of July in which he will place about twenty Indians in "full dress," the whole surmounted by a gay bower of flowers, with a young girl perched on the top representing the "Goddess of Liberty." The Captain is going into the celebration with his whole soul and energy, and when he takes hold with a will things have to move.

Davenport Democrat and News, June 2, 1863

The military department was apparently wearied of caring for the Indian prisoners by summer's end in 1863. It would seem that Adjutant General Baker was particularly fed up with the situation and he entered into negotiations with the warden at State Penitentiary in Fort Madison, Iowa, to contract for their care. Baker actually reported that he had "made an arrangement with the Governor of Iowa" pending War Department approval. It was costing the government 23.5 cents a day to care for each Indian inmate and the warden was willing to do the same for a 25 cents price that allowed for "one pound of beef, one pint of corn or cornmeal and furnishing one pint of salt for each hundred men per day." The state would "increase the Prison Guard largely & make the confinement secure" also providing blankets and clothing. The arrangement would "relieve the Military from the great nuisance of [holding] so many filthy Indians." General Roberts communicated directly with Warden Edward Layton to confirm the conditions of the proposed deal. General Pope offered his endorsement, writing:

The enclosed papers are respectfully referred to the Genl. In Chief. They relate to the Sioux condemned prisoners taken by Genl. Sibley last autumn they are and have been for some time confined in Camp near Davenport Iowa awaiting the decision of Govt as to their final disposition. If the Govt has not decided upon any other disposition of them the recommendation & proposal in these papers are approved & submitted.

Byron McLain (per Roster) was a recruit for Company A, 2nd Iowa Cavalry, who reached Camp McClellan on October 31, 1863. On November 2 he wrote in a letter: "There are about 2 or 3 hundred Indians here under guard. They are prisoners for murdering whites up in Minnesota. Their leader a Negro brags that he has killed 16 or 17 women and children. The boys all hate the hole [sic] drove particularly the Nig and say if they ever give them a chance they will blow their brains out"

⁵⁹⁹ Big Eagle's release was the subject of a telegram sent by President Lincoln. Details of the discussion were not found (Sully endorses Ten Broeck, December 2, 1864, RG 393, Entry 3442, Book 3, Endorsements, Department of the Northwest, p. 342; Davenport *Weekly Democrat*, September 28, 1905; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Eagle; The History of Carroll County, Illinois..., p. 80; Pope endorses Baker, August 7, 1863, RG 393 Entry 3442, Endorsements, Dept. of the Northwest; Baker to Meline, *ibid*, Letters Received, District of Iowa, p. 85; Roberts to Layton, July 24, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 55).

The issue of the sale of liquor to the Indians and soldiers, at Davenport, also came to the fore at this time. A department level endorsement cited the regulations pertaining to liquor sales to either of these categories and referenced a September 16, 1863, instruction to Captain Dwight, at Camp McClellan to “prevent the men of his command from visiting and frequenting liquor saloons by a system of patrols.”

As winter approached, some compassion for the inmates was forthcoming from the district commander. Roberts instructed Lieutenant Colonel George R. White, 11th Iowa Infantry, and acting quartermaster at the camp to issue a blanket and a pair of shoes (“one pair Infantry Bootees”) to each prisoner, “in consideration of the extreme inclemency of the weather, and the great destitution of the Sioux Indian prisoners confined at your post.”

The Indians were serving varied prison terms, and by the late fall of 1863, a number of “one-year” termers were approaching their release dates. General Roberts sought instructions for this process and he urged General Pope to consider ridding the camp of 16 (or 10?) women and 4 children who were serving as the camp cooks, being paid by the “Indian Department.” This was a singular reference to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Roberts thought that the 253 prisoners were capable of doing their own cooking and that the cost of caring for the women and children was “wholly unnecessary.” Four of the prisoners were due for discharge on October 7 and Roberts recommended that they and the women and children, be collectively discharged and the whole lot could return to their tribe. Roberts was also concerned that the “Negro Jas. Godfrey” was also due an early release for his role as a state witness. Godfrey had a “great influence” over the other prisoners and Roberts thought that it would best that he should go immediately to a penitentiary.⁶⁰⁰

The Indian prisoner releases also drew the attention of General Baker, who wrote the following on October 27, 1863:

The General Government sent the convicted Indians (Sioux) of Minnesota to this point to Camp McClellan, where they have been under guard ever since.

As their term of service expires, they are released and as the Government has made no provision for their transportation to any particular point, they are left to find their tribes at this inclement season or permitted to loaf about town to the annoyance of citizens.

This nuisance will probably increase and I ask your attention to the matter, so that some remedy can be afforded, either through the Brig. Genl. Commanding this District or the A. A. Pro[vost] Marshal of this District.

That same day, the general asked Secretary of War Stanton, “Why cannot an Invalid Corps be organized here from those that have passed examinations at this point, may be examined at Keokuk and other points and thus have a corps here that can guard the Indian prisoners here and thus enable the able bodied soldiers at Camp McClellan to rejoin their regiments more promptly?”

Towards the end of October, General Roberts forwarded a report on the camp conditions within the prisoner compound:

At present sickness is increasing among them as well as deaths. Pneumonia is the prevailing type of sickness supposed to be consequential to their exposure to the

⁶⁰⁰ McClain, letters, 1863-64, digitized diary, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu.cwd>; Endorsement, September 18, 1863, RG 393, Part 3, Entry 236, p. 22, Department of the Northwest; Jos. McC. Bell to White, September 23, 1863, RG 393, Entry 236, Part 3, Letters Sent, District of Iowa, p. 172a; Roberts to Meline, September 29, 1863, RG 393, Entry 236, Part 3, Letters Sent, District of Iowa, p. 183

changes of weather, being badly clothed & blanketed and their quarters having no arrangements for fires. If they are to remain here the coming winter, their clothing and blankets must be renewed, and arrangements made to heat their barracks by stoves, any other plan would expose the barracks to burning as they are careless about fires.

Shall I supply their buildings with enough stoves to keep them comfortably warm, and issue additional clothing & blankets for winter? The Principal Chief among them wishes us to permit them to join our army and fight the enemies of the Great Father. I would suggest sending them to Genl. Schofield to be employed with the army in Arkansas against the hostile Creeks and Cherokees, with the promise of pardon to such of them as shall serve faithfully during the war.

Robert's report resulted in the formation of a Board of Survey, consisting of Lieutenant Pickenpau, the Camp McClellan commander, and Assistant Surgeon Jno. M. Adler. The Board was tasked with reporting "on the condition of the Sioux Indians confined at Camp McClellan, as regards their health, state of Barracks, facilities for heating, clothing and every particular that related to their well being during the coming winter" The report of that board, contents not divulged, were forwarded to Milwaukee in early November.⁶⁰¹

General Roberts once again focused his attention on his Indian guests in late November 1863. Roberts instructed Lieutenant A. C. Pickenpau, then commanding Camp McClellan:

You will require of the Indians confined in your Camp, all the labor they are capable of performing. You will furnish such aid as the strength of your command will furnish to Captain Hunt A.Q. M. in men to dig the holes for the fence posts for the high fence around the new barracks and for such other purposes connected with the building of that fence as he may require."

A.D.C. S. Prentice to Pickenpau, November 21, 1863

In November 1863, two old camp buildings were torn down at Camp McClellan and the materials were reused at what would soon be called Camp Kearney. Recall that the original barracks were some of those from the original camp arrangement. Maybe the removed buildings were part of that same row (there was also a partial barracks.) The action was taken at the behest of Lieutenant Colonel Grier and General Roberts belatedly hastened to make an investigation. The fundamental issue was that of who controlled the camp(s), the army or the Provost Marshal and Grier represented the latter. Roberts complained to department headquarters in Milwaukee that Grier had cited a letter dated November 20, 1863, from General Pope to himself, "places him [Grier] in Independent command of all the works in Iowa, without further order or instructions." Regarding the lost buildings, Roberts wrote:

The two buildings referred to are those that were taken down for the repair of the Indian prisons, under instructions from Department Hd. Quarters. Col. Grier does not inform me in what manner he became responsible for these buildings or the nature of that responsibility. If I understand rightly the laws & regulations, the Quarter Masters Department, and not individual officers, is responsible for public quarters. These old buildings were reported to me two months ago as unfit for winter use, and in danger of tumbling down. On making inquiries as to costs of repairs, I was informed that repairs would involve the cost of taking down & rebuilding.

Obviously the general wasn't concerned about the fate of the old buildings but he was very much so with the developing chain of command issue.

⁶⁰¹ Baker to Stanton, October 27, 1863, AG Correspondence, XI-208; same to same, same date, *ibid.*; Roberts to Meline, October 22, 1863; RG 393, Entry 236, Part 3, Letters Sent, District of Iowa, p. 218; same to same, November 4, 1863, *ibid.*, p. 235; Special Order Number 30, District of Iowa, October 30, 1863, RG 393, Entry 236, Book 2, Part 3, p. 45

The original guards at the prison are not identified but the *Democrat* reported in early December that a Company G, 30th Wisconsin Infantry, was due to arrive on December 3 to take over the guard duties. That unit remained at the post as late as April 1864. The same source added “those red-skinned devils that are clothed, warmed and fed at Camp McClellan, when they ought to be hung.”⁶⁰²

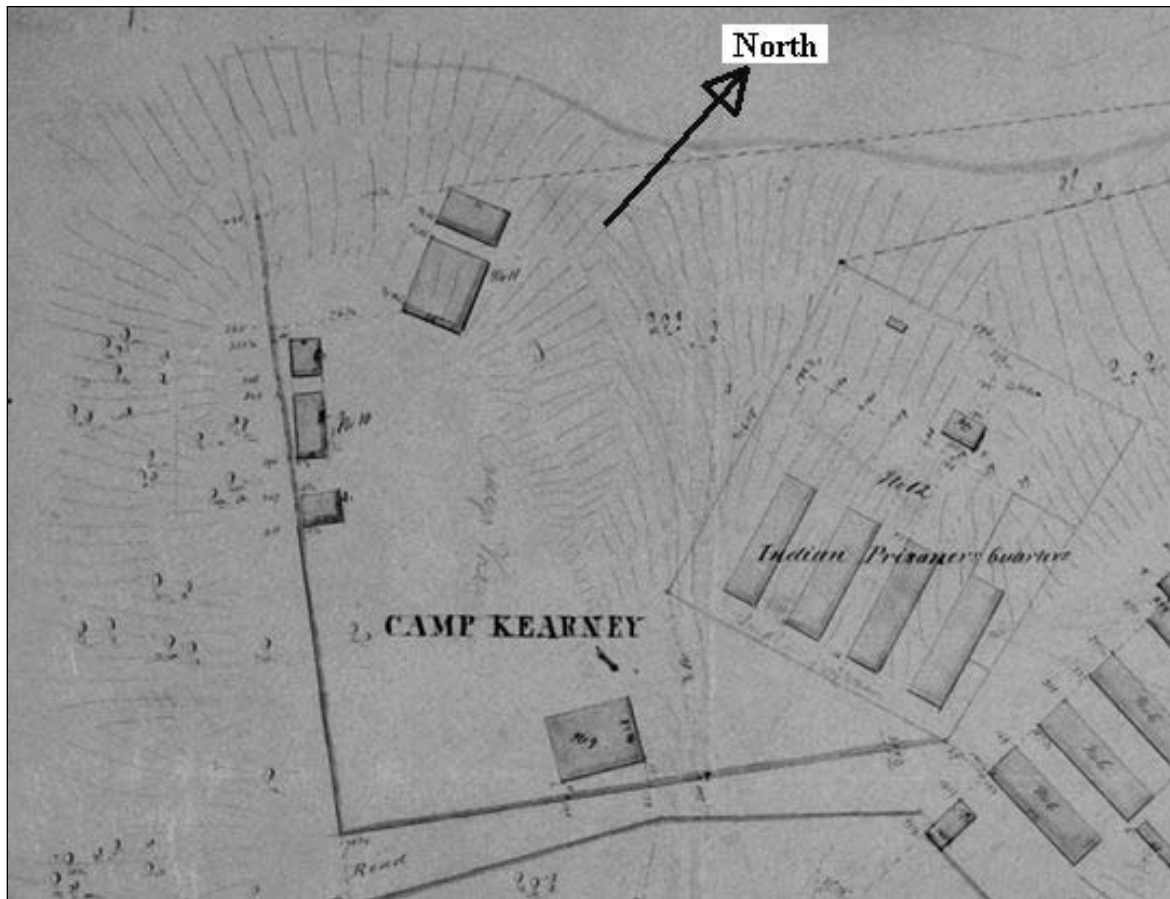


Figure 19-46: Detail, undated map of Camp McClellan-Camp Kearney (National Archives, College Park, Maryland, RG 92, Post and Reservation File, Davenport, IA)

⁶⁰² Roberts to Captain J. F. Meline, November 28, 1863, RG 393, Entry 236, Part 2, Letters Sent District of Iowa, p. 25; Davenport *Democrat and News*, December 3, 1863; Supplement to the Official Records, Part II, Record of Events, Vol. 76, p. 671

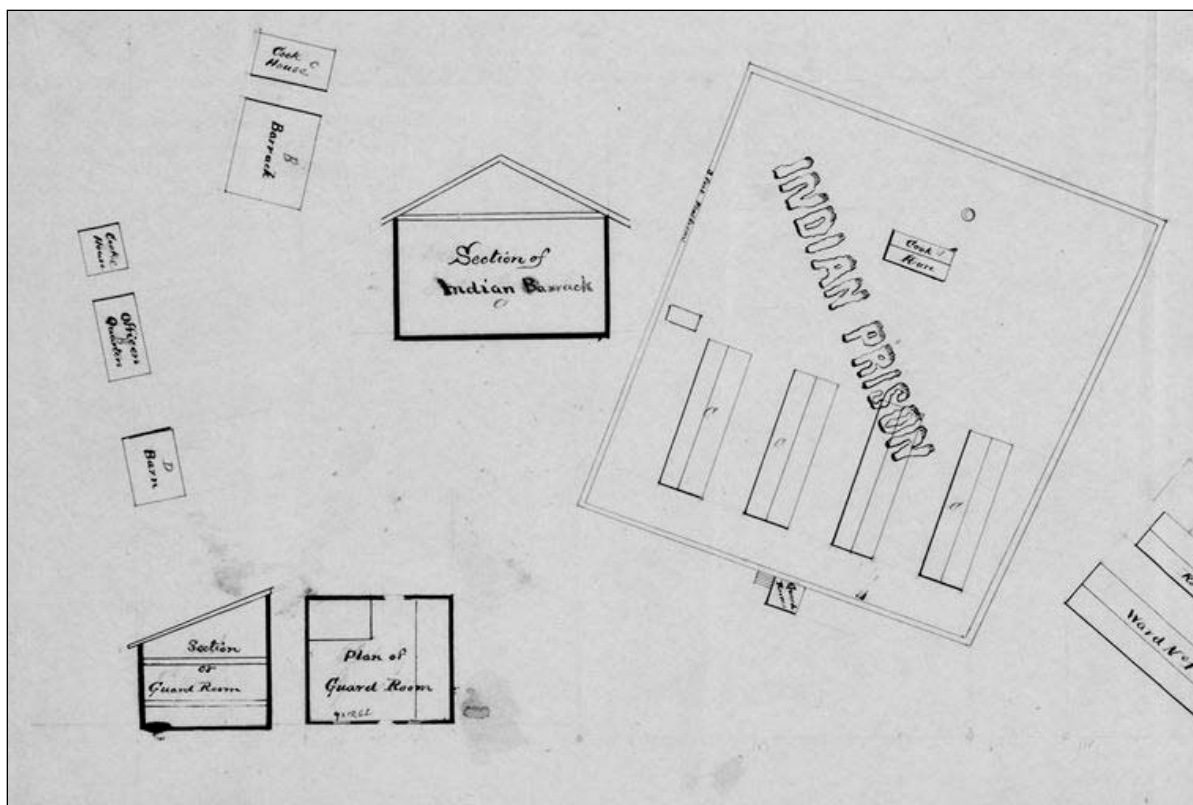


Figure 19-47: Detail, map of Camp Kearney plan with sectional views of and guard room plan
Undated "Plan of Camp McClellan and of Camp Kearney, Located at Davenport, Iowa"
(National Archives, College Park, Maryland, RG 92, Post and Reservation File, Davenport, IA)

No reference to the use of the term "Camp Kearney" appears prior to December 1863 and the earlier accounts simply referenced Camp or Post McClellan when discussing the Indian stockade. On December 3 it was reported:

ANOTHER CAMP.—Captain Hunt, the popular and efficient Post Quartermaster at this place, has been ordered by Gen. Pope to establish another camp somewhere in the vicinity of Camp McClellan, to be called "Camp Kearney." Captain Hunt will proceed to perform the duty at once. The object of this addition to the facilities now enjoyed is said to be purely military.

Given the earlier descriptions of the stockade, the easy assumption was that the only thing that the captain had to move was the new camp designation. But the following account argues otherwise, that this was a new camp with all-new buildings. The original camp was said to contain three of the original barracks, so it makes sense that it comprised an end-portion of an original line of identical barracks. Still the description of the stockade, the exterior walkway, and the four other buildings more than closely matches the much later images and plans of the camp. The *Democrat* reported:

CAMP KEARNEY.—This new camp which has been erected here by order of Gen. Pope, Major General Commanding, is made by first issuing an order and then drawing a line along the west side of the wagon road that passes through Camp McClellan, and afterwards erecting a partition fence. The Indian quarters will be in Camp Kearney, and several other buildings. Carpenters are already at work tearing away and erecting new buildings in this camp, for the use of the guard and the officers' quarters. This entirely separates the Indian business from the recruiting and instruction camp...

Camp Kearney was to be the only U.S. army camp name designation made in the state during the war. (The other camps/names originated with the State of Iowa.) It honored the late Major General Philip Kearney, who had been mortally wounded at the battle of Chantilly, in Virginia, during the fall of 1862. The probable name association lies with General Pope, departmental commander, and his former position commanding the Army of Virginia, which included Kearney's division.

General Order Number 20, Military District of Iowa, dated December 2, 1863, divided Camp McClellan into two separate posts, Camps McClellan, and Kearny. Captain Ala B. Swain, Company G, 30th Wisconsin Infantry, presumably just arrived, assumed command of the new camp. General Roberts moved all of his operations over to Kearney and this explains the row of administrative buildings that were built to the south of the prison stockade. Quartermaster Thos. B. Hunt was charged with setting the limits of the new post and to oversee the construction of new buildings.

The press had some confusion with this new post. The Dubuque *Herald* reported mid-month, "There has been an addition made to Camp McClellan on Rock Island, called Camp Kearney, in which the Indian prisoners are confined." The Cedar Falls *Gazette* reported "Camp Kearney is the name of a new camp just established at Davenport, designed especially for the Indian business."⁶⁰³

The establishment of a separate Indian prison camp was necessitated by the confluence of several other factors. The command and control squabble between the Provost Marshal and the Army continued and the army was now withdrawing from the fight. The major reason for this was the approach of the military draft and the conversion of Camp McClellan into a camp of instruction for draftees, a function that was solidly under the control of the Provost Marshal. A separate camp allowed for separate control and for the first time, the department had provided a detailed garrison, in lieu of using whatever force was available from Camp McClellan. General Pope ordered Roberts in early December to

...separate by a high board fence that portion of Camp McClellan occupied by Indian Prisoners together with barracks for their necessary guard/one company, eighty (80) strong.

A company of the 30th Wisconsin will be sent [to] you immediately. A small cheap guard house & such other cheap buildings as are actually necessary, you can erect within the enclosure which will be known as "Camp Kearney," will constitute the Military Post at Davenport. The remainder of Camp McClellan together with the regiments, batteries in progress of organization or already mustered into service, will be turned over to the Mustering & Disbursing Officer of the State of Iowa, and you will hereafter consider yourself in no way responsible for the supply, discipline or police of any forces raising or mustered into service in the State of Iowa.

Meline to Roberts, December 1, 1863

The Iowa City *Republican* sent reporters to the newly-designated camp in mid-December. The resulting lengthy account offered few helpful observations but made clear the antipathy of the visiting newspaper men towards the Indians. Most of the latter material is omitted given its redundancy:

UGH!—When at Camp McClellan, the other day, we visited the Indian pen, where they have some 365 men, women and children, real 'native Americans.' We have read

⁶⁰³ General Order Number 20, Military District of Iowa, December 2, 1863, RG 393, Entry 236, Volume 2, Volume 2, Entry 3, p. 34; Davenport *Democrat and News*, December 3, 5, 1863; Boatner, pp. 449, 659; Dubuque *Herald*, December 11, 1863; Cedar Falls *Gazette*, December 18, 1863; Temple, pp. 43-44

something of Indian romance, but in looking at those specimens we could not see it. We had the good fortune to meet the Governor and Adjutant General at the Camp, and thus gained admittance inside, among the 'animals,' and a more disgusting menagerie we never witnessed. They were called out in line, drawn up in front and required to listen to a 'talk,' from one of their orators...We could see no evidence of nobleness or dignity of character, but rather evidence of treachery, and cruelty. In our mind was the picture of the horrid cruelties perpetrated upon the people of Minnesota...We saw the half-breed, negro and Indian, who was proved to have slain sixteen of our people. We were disposed to give him a wide berth, and were disgusted with the petting he received from others. We had in fact, no disposition to pet any of them, but viewed them with a feeling of disgust and abhorrence.

...The President should look for worthier subjects for his clemency....They spend much of their time in making rings and trinkets of various kinds for sale to visitors. I wondered at the eagerness with which they were sought...We were admitted to the female department, and saw a daughter of Little Crow, and one who is counted a beauty among them, who excited the jealousy of her lord as much by the attention her charms received from others, that he attempted to stab her a few days since, but failed to do her much injury.

...The Lieutenant in command said the more kindness they have shown them the surer they want to die.

The Governor suggested that he devote to them his utmost attention. Some 27 have died since they came to Camp McClellan. Although the gallows was cheated, yet justice is not altogether. Whoever wishes to retain any of the romance of the Indian character, let him keep clear of Camp McClellan.

**Davenport Democrat and News copies Iowa City Republican
December 11, 1863**

There were no additional Indian deaths through the end of 1863 and the Cedar Falls *Gazette* reported the same total death toll, 27 persons as of mid-January 1864.

Recruit McLain, 2nd Iowa Cavalry, wrote on December 6, 1863: "For some time the Indians have been put at digging post holes around the new barrack. A fence 12 or 14 feet high is partly completed around them. They have been fixed up for the conscripts."

A tri-monthly report for the camp covers the period from mid-September through mid-December 1863. Captain A. B. Swaim, Company G, 30th Wisconsin Infantry was in command of the post garrison. His garrison consisted of four officers and 66 men present, 98 total being present and absent. Captain M. J. Arch, Chief of Cavalry, District of Iowa, curiously signed as post commander. This was the first post report filed and for some reason, the report was re-submitted with some considerable changes just ten days after the first report. The garrison report was altered to five officers and 63 men present, 107 present and absent. One notable gain was that of Brig. General Albert Sully who arrived "at these headquarters" to assume command of the District of Iowa. Clearly the general at least briefly established his district headquarters at Camp Kearney rather than Camp McClellan. In the revised report, Gen. Sully signed the report. Neither report made reference to the prison captives.^{604 605}

⁶⁰⁴ Cedar Falls *Gazette*, January 15, 1864; McClain, letters, 1863-64, digitized diary, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cwd/>; Tri-Monthly Report, Camp Kearney, Iowa, District of Iowa, December 10, 20, 1863

⁶⁰⁵ The precise arrival date for the Wisconsin Company is not yet determined. It was at this post when it filed its bi-monthly muster rolls for November-December 1863. It most likely arrived during the latter month and might have come with Gen. Sully when he assumed district command.

Captain Arch was the “advance man” on General Sully’s district staff who was sent on to take command of the district office (an implication that General Benjamin S. Roberts, Sully’s predecessor, had similarly been housed at Camp Kearney). The captain was “to consider himself in special command of the new post, Camp Kearney, lately established here.” His staff position was said to be aid-de-camp.

By the end of December there was a dearth of military units in the city. General Sully put the Wisconsin company on provost guard duty in the city, while Lieutenant Grier cobbled up sufficient men to guard the Indians.⁶⁰⁶

The Indian prisoners are still confined within the inclosure [sic] in that part of the camp assigned for their accomodation [sic]. The dull monotony of their camp life is now seldom disturbed by visitors, as most every one who cares to see them has by this time had an opportunity to gratify his curiosity.

The Cedar Valley Times, February 11, 1864, copies the Davenport Gazette

In March there were more Indian casualties reported:

The Indians confined at Camp McClellan are dying off fast. There are about 250 left, and 50 of these are in the hospital and pesthouse. Smallpox has got among them and it is thinning them out rapidly. About 20 have been sent to the pesthouse within a week.

Davenport Democrat and News, March 11, 1864

Reprinted in the Davenport Democrat and Leader, July 20, 1924.⁶⁰⁷

The personal feelings of Adjutant General Baker toward the internees was made clear in April 1864. On April 9 the brother of Lieutenant Colonel Pattee, who commanded the Iowa garrison (14th Iowa/41st Iowa Battalion) at Fort Randall, Dakota Territory, was killed by roving Sioux Indians on the Big Sioux River. Baker wrote:

The infernal scoundrels who by the misplaced confidence of the President are held as prisoners here—I mean those Sioux. Convicted Indians, are in constant communication with their tribes. I talked to them this afternoon and I told them that I should write to you and request you to ask the President that for every Indian shot on a boat [Baker adds “I mean when an Indian shoots on a boat”] in the river one of the convicted Indians should be hung, and that for every white man killed by the rascals on the river banks in ambuscade, four convicted Indians should be hung. There is little use in talking or acting with them unless the action comes first. Many of the tribes have professed friendship during [the] past few months, but if such outrages are permitted, all the “braves” of the tribes will try their hands in secret scouting parties. Let justice be done, but let punishment be so swift and sure that all here as prisoners and their relatives “at home” will know well that their “Great Father” is in the vicinage.

Baker to Governor Stone, April 20, 1864

Failing to receive satisfaction, he wrote the Governor two days later, and complained:

I do insist that the President should make an example of some of the convicted Indians in Camp here on account of the murder of our citizens on the Big Sioux River. There should be at least four of the regularly convicted devils hung. These Indians here and through them the Sioux Indians in Dacotah well understand that the shooting of

⁶⁰⁶ Davenport Democrat and News, December 5 1863; Davenport Democrat and News, December 30, 1863

⁶⁰⁷ The majority of the Indian deaths were attributable to tuberculosis, resulting from the poor barracks and exposure, and this smallpox epidemic (The Presbyterian and Congregational Churches Among The Dakota...).

peaceful men on our river will not be tolerated. If the policy is to be pursued of treating them kindly here, while their relatives with impunity can coldly murder our citizens, there will be a feeling created like that which existed in the State of Minnesota when these Indians were sent here. If the President does not know who to select for example let him appoint a commissioner here. From the documents, there can be no doubt who should be selected.

Baker to Stone, April 22, 1864

Thomas S. Williamson, Missionary to the Sioux, wrote to President Lincoln on April 27, 1864 to secure a pardon of the remaining Indian captives who were under a death sentence:

In behalf of the Sioux Indians now imprisoned at Davenport Iowa, who have now been confined since the first of November 1862, now and for nearly all of said period have been under sentence of death, I appeal to your clemency, and beg leave to assign a few of the many reasons for my request that they be pardoned.

1st The integrity and good faith of the nation demand their pardon for their agent, its legally appointed military commander Col., now Genl., Sibley promised these men that "if they would deliver up to him their captives 279 women and children they should be dealt with justly and kindly," upon this assurance. they delivered the captives and surrendered themselves.

2nd They have been severely punished already, by their long and close confinement. Besides the 38 executed at Mankato 67 have died, making 105 deaths up to the 22nd ultimo. constituting about one third of the whole number condemned. and more than one fourth of their families, and of the other Indians who surrendered with them have died during the same period. many over two hundred died at Fort Snelling while confined during the winter.

3d All the Sioux Indians have been driven from their homes and stripped of all their property, and their annuities forfeited and the families of those who survive are located upon the Upper Missouri River above Fort Randal.

4th Most of these prisoners are Christians and members of the Christian Church.

5th When these prisoners surrendered the captives they expected to be treated as friends.

6th The treatment which they have received has been the cause caused the continuance of the hostilities which have continued and the liberation of these men would tend to put one end to these hostilities and save millions of money to the Government and many precious lives.

Williamson enclosed a supportive note that was penned by George E. H. Day, who wrote:

I was appointed Special Commissioner to the Indians of the Northwestern Superintendency -- including the Sioux and beg leave to add to what Dr Williamson has said that I fully concur with him, and, in behalf of those condemned Indians & in the name of humanity beg that you will now order them released and sent to take care of their starving families now perishing for want of food.

The President quickly issued a pardon for 25 of the Camp Kearney inmates on April 30, 1864. They were Tapeta Tanka, Tahohpi wakan, Wakanhdito, Tate sica, Wiyuha, Tunkan Oyate yanka, Pantaninniye, Conhdoka duta, Kinyan hiyaya, Wiyaka, Kinyan hidan, Oye Maza, Cinkpa tawa, Tunkan Canhdisku, Wakaninapedan or Mazakiyemani, Katpantpan ku, Tahokage, Tunkan

hnamani, Bogaga,⁶⁰⁸ Tyasa mani, Teaduze, Manikiya, Ahotonna, Maza hdidi, and Tate Ibomdu. The actual release orders were issued by the War Department as special orders, on December 3, 1864.⁶⁰⁹

Twenty five (25) Indian prisoners released by the President go to their homes tomorrow the term of imprisonment of four (4) others has expired. Shall I send the four (4) with the twenty five (25) [?]

Ten Broeck to Meline, May 17, 1864

For some reason General Baker offered to give up the garrison at Camp Kearney in early May. He wrote the Secretary of War stating “As there are sufficient reserve corpsmen to guard [the] Indian prisoners here, why not send Co. G, 30th Wisconsin to the field. They are not needed here.”

In late June 1864 Captain George E. Judd, Company K, 4th Regiment Veteran Reserve Corps, was in command at the camp.⁶¹⁰ About this same time Major Edward Ten Broeck, 8th Iowa Cavalry, took it upon himself to make an inspection of the camp stockade. He reported the fence in “very bad unsafe condition” with “accidents likely to happen” and that “a very high wind would likely blow it down.”

By the summer of 1864, there were extensive grain fields and gardens at Camp McClellan and it the harvesting was done “with the aid of the Indian prisoners.”⁶¹¹

Tensions over the presence of the Indians continued:

THE INDIANS.—“Another Tax-payer” writes us complaining of laxity in allowing the Indians to be out of camp. We are assured by Major Ten Broeck and by Captain Judd, that while it is intended to compell [sic] the Indian prisoners to do as much work as possible, and to obtain water from the river, squads are necessarily sent out of camp under guards, it is intended that nothing shall be permitted that in any way annoys our citizens; and, further, that if definite complaints are made of the misconduct of Indians or neglect of duty by their guards, a prompt remedy will be at once applied. Maj. Ten Broeck and Captain Judd will thank any citizen who will inform either of them of such occurrence as are complained of by our correspondent.

It should be remembered, however, that there are Indians in this vicinity who have never been in camp and are neither prisoners nor Sioux; also that several days ago twenty seven of the Sioux were pardoned out by the President, and did not leave this region until within a day or two.

Davenport Daily Gazette, August 20, 1864⁶¹²

An early September visit by the same newspapermen updated the Indians’ situation:

⁶⁰⁸ Bogaga’s case is documented in Senate Records 37A-F2, Transcript of the Trials of Sioux Indians, Case 106. He was a member of Shakopee’s band and was alleged to have participated in three battles. Hapenduta (Scarlet Second Born Son), Case #94, was one of those sentenced to hang and is not included in the pardon list. He was 63 years old when released in 1866.

⁶⁰⁹ Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress. Transcribed and Annotated by the Lincoln Studies Center, Knox College. Galesburg, Illinois, <http://www.chgs.umn.edu/educational/addInfo/Letters/lincolnPapers.pdf>; Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress. Transcribed and Annotated by the Lincoln Studies Center, Knox College. Galesburg, Illinois; *The History of Carroll County, Illinois...*, p. 80

⁶¹⁰ Judd remained in command as of late March 1865. His company remained at Camp Kearney from May until June, 1865 (Burlington *Hawk-Eye*, June 25, 1864; Judd to Baker, Correspondence, March 21, 1865; ORAS, Series II, Vol. 79, p. 597)

⁶¹¹ Baker to Stanton, May 6, 1864, AG Correspondence, XIV-50; Davenport *Democrat and News*, August 1, 1864; Ten Broeck to Captain Judd, June 20, 1864, RG 393, Entry 3442, Endorsements, Department of the Northwest, p. 186

⁶¹² Note that the pardoned Indians were released from Camp Kearney.

The Indians are kept within bounds and are employed daily in police duty, such as clearing up the camp, digging sinks, gardening, &c., &c. They are under charge of Captain Judd of the Veteran Reserve Corps, and are held in strict subjection, none being allowed out of camp without a proper guard. This we noticed in several instances ourselves yesterday.

That same report discussed the need for a Provost Guard at Camp McClellan. It noted "Camp Kearney being separate, is guarded by a company of the Veteran Reserve Corps, who guard the Indians and have no jurisdiction over the troops at Camp McClellan" The Veteran Reserve Corps was generally unarmed and served in a light duty capacity, mostly as clerks and orderlies in the hospitals. This limitation was being severely tested by their extended duties as camp guards as well as city provost guards.⁶¹³

Sioux missionary Stephen Return Rigg described his experience with Camp Kearney in his memoir, Mary and I: Forty Years With The Sioux. Rigg's account stresses the freedom awarded the Indians and argues that the successive guards were won over to the plight of the captives:

The course of the Mississippi forming the eastern line of the State of Iowa is from north to south; but its trend, as it passes the city of Davenport, is to the west; so that what is called "East Davenport" is a mile above the city. At this point, in the beginning of the civil war, barracks had been erected for the accommodation of the forming Iowa Regiments, to which was given the name of "Camp McClellan."

Thither were transported the condemned Sioux who had been kept at Mankato during the winter. On the opening of navigation in the spring of 1863, a steamboat ascended to Mankato, took on the prisoners, and, on reaching Fort Snelling, put off about fifty men who had not been condemned, to unite their fortunes with those in the camp. The men under condemnation were taken down to Davenport, where, at Camp McClellan, they were guarded by soldiers for the next three years.

After a little while their irons were all taken off, and they enjoyed comparative liberty, being often permitted to go to the town to trade their bows and arrows and other trinkets, and sometimes into the country around to labor, without a guard. They never attempted to make their escape, though at one time it was meditated by some, but so strongly and wisely opposed by the more considerate ones, that the plan was at once abandoned. Generally the soldiers who guarded them treated them kindly. It was remarked that a new company, whether of the regular army or of volunteers, when assigned to this duty, at the first treated the prisoners with a good deal of severity and harshness. But a few weeks sufficed to change their feelings, and they were led to pity, and then to respect, those whom they had regarded as worse than wild beasts.

The camp was not a pleasant place, except in summer. The surroundings were rather beautiful. The oak groves of the hill-side which bordered the river were attractive. And the buildings occupied by the troops were comfortable. But within the stockade, where the prisoners were kept, the houses were of the most temporary kind, through the innumerable crevices of which blew the winter winds and storms. Only a limited amount of wood was furnished them, which, in the cold windy weather, was often consumed by noon. Then the Indians were under the necessity of keeping warm, if they could, in the straw and under their worn blankets. In these circumstances, many would naturally fall sick, go into a decline pulmonary consumption, for which their scrofulous bodies had a liking and die. The hospital was generally well filled with such cases. The death rate was very large more than ten per cent, each year, making about

⁶¹³ Davenport Daily Gazette, September 7, 1864; Ten Broeck to Meline, August 8, 1864, RG 94, Entry 731, Microfilm P2282, page 0144-6

120 deaths while they were confined at that place. About one hundred men, women and children, who came afterward into the hands of the military, were added to those who were first brought down. These latter were uncondemned [sic]. As some women had been permitted to come with the prisoners at the first, and now more were added, a good many children were born there. And thus it came to pass, that all who were released, and returned to their people from this prison, numbered only about two hundred and four score.

For the first two years of their abode at Davenport, Dr. Williamson had the chief care of the educational and church work among them. During this time I only visited them twice, once when a difficulty and misunderstanding had arisen between Dr. Williamson and a Gen. Roberts, who at one time commanded that department, the doctor was obliged to return to his home in St. Peter. On learning the fact, I counseled with Gen. Sibley, who gave me a letter to Gen. Roberts. Before I reached there, however, Roberts had become ashamed of his conduct, as I judged, and so I found it quite easy to restore amicable relations. No such difficulties occurred thereafter.

For the prisoners these were educational years. They were better supplied with books than they could be at Mankato. A new edition of our Dakota hymn-book was gotten out, and in 1865, an edition of the Dakota Bible so far as translated, besides other books. The avails of their work in mussel shells and bows gave them the means of purchasing paper and books. With only a few exceptions, all in the prison who were adults, professed to be Christians. A few had been baptized by Rev. S. D. Hinman, of the Episcopal church, who visited them once while at Davenport. But while a number were recognized as members of that church, they worshiped all together. Morning and night they had their singing and praying; but especially at night, when they were not likely to be disturbed by any order from the officer in command.

In church matters they naturally fell into classes according to their former clans or villages. In each of these classes one or more than one Hoonkayape was ordained. He was the elder and class leader. This arrangement was made by Dr. Williamson. It was one step toward raising up for them pastors from themselves [Williamson in fact left Camp Kearney and went to Crow Creek with the other resettled Sioux at this time].

The winter that followed, I gave to the prisoners at Davenport. They had passed through the small-pox with considerable loss of life; and that winter, only the ordinary cases of sickness, and the ordinary number of deaths occurred. These were numerous enough. The confinement of nearly four years, and the uncertainty, which had always rested upon them like a night-mare, had all along produced many cases of decline. And even when the time of their deliverance drew nigh, and hope should have made them "buoyant, they were too much afraid to hope the promise was too good to be believed.

The spring of 1866 saw the prisoners at Davenport released by order of the President; and their families, which had remained at Crow Creek for three dry and parched years, were permitted to join their husbands and brothers and fathers, at Niobrara, in the northeast angle of Nebraska

Riggs, pp. 193-202

Two apparently contradictory reactions to their situation were taking place at Camp Kearney. On the one hand, the captives were fully committed to becoming like their captors, by adopting their religion in an almost fervent manner (they also committed fully to adopting an agriculturally based existence). Their own God, Wakantanka "the Great Spirit, creator of all things" was somewhat transformed to survive the transition. In order to accomplish this the adherents needed to become

literate, which resulted in the contradiction. They learned Dakota rather than English, so in a real sense they became more Dakota than ever..⁶¹⁴

Clifford Stuart et al in their History Of The Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe present a useful overview of the Dakota experience at the camp:

Some of the prisoners at Davenport were released during the winter of 1865-66 and joined their families at Crow Creek. While some of them became lay preachers, others were a disappointment to [Pastor] Williamson." Those already returned here (from Davenport)," wrote Williamson in January, 1866, "have not all turned out well – though our best men here are most of them from among those. The old men will sigh for old idolatries. One man met with the conjurers, another had taken both his old wives, while a third thought he was 'too old to come to meeting much more.' Big Eagle, later one of the founders of the Flandreau colony, says he is not indebted to God for his release and so we need not expect his assistance."

Thomas Williamson, who was in Davenport ministering to the prisoners wrote that he was against sending prisoners from Davenport to Fort Thompson as they would be compelled to become "hunters and savages." He preferred sending the prisoners to Fort Ambercrombe or Fort Wadsworth both in the Lake Traverse area, compelling them to farm.

In the spring of 1863, the prisoners in the Mankato stockade were moved to Camp McClellan at Davenport where they were held by the army until their release in 1866. Thomas Williamson followed them from Davenport to continue his mission and found them depressed and not evidencing "too much interest in religion or education as they did last winter." There was a good deal of sickness in the summer of 1863, and again in the spring of 1864 when a smallpox epidemic struck the camp. Williamson and Henry I. Whipple, the Episcopal Bishop of Minnesota, were in Washington in 1864 trying to obtain pardons for the Davenport prisoners. This was difficult at best, although President Lincoln reportedly was ready to order some pardons if the Minnesota delegation in Congress would agree. Without the consent of the delegation, however, Lincoln apparently was not prepared to do anything.

By May, Williamson had succeeded in obtaining pardons for only twenty five of the prisoners. When these prisoners arrived at Crow Creek the following July, they "commenced exhorting their friends very earnestly on the subject of religion" although several of them had been sick since they arrived there. Indeed, at Davenport, as at Mankato, a great deal of religious feeling was built and maintained among the prisoners. There were two or more religious meetings a day, and, after the first few months, the prisoners were allowed to go into town and mix freely with the white population. Some worked for wages in Davenport, while others were "boarded out" as agricultural laborers to farmers in the area. Some women accompanied the prisoners to Davenport, and adultery seems to have been a major concern of Williamson, particularly after the prisoners heard of the prostitution at Crow Creek.

The Army officers who were responsible for guarding the warriors of the Minnesota Uprising reported them to be uniformly docile and agreeable. In January of 1865, more prisoners were removed from Davenport and brought to the reservation at Crow Creek, "chiefly women and children," George E. H. Day, the former Northern Superintendent of Indian Affairs was in Washington working to get the prisoners released. In October of 1865, he wrote to Riggs that Lincoln had been ready to order the release of the prisoners but unfortunately was assassinated two days before a meeting with Day to

⁶¹⁴ An Experiment of Faith, pp. 8-9; Clifford Stuart, History Of The Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, p. 36

make final arrangements. Day felt that all of the prisoners would be pardoned and one hung. Early in 1866 the efforts to release the Davenport prisoners began to bear fruit, and they were turned over to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on April 1, 1866. They were to be sent up the Missouri to the best place that could be found for them, Crow Creek having been determined to be unsuitable. According to Meyer, the decision to locate the Santee Sioux at the mouth of the Niobrara River, a location fairly remote from other Indian groups, may have been a factor in hastening the release of the prisoners. The prisoners left Davenport on April 10, 1865, arriving at the Niobrara River around the middle of May, after an uneventful trip. The Santees at Crow Creek left there in ox carts on May 28 and arrived at the mouth of the Niobrara on June 11, 1865.

The one hundred seventy seven prisoners from Davenport, who landed with seventy women and children, at the mouth of the Niobrara River, found themselves in pleasant, hilly country, with an adequate water supply. There were a few white settlers, who had already taken homesteads, and a small village, but the area was relatively deserted. Although the Niobrara River site has been called a "land of milk and honey" as compared to Crow Creek, probably the greatest attraction of the site was that it permitted the reuniting of families separated since the Uprising.

Camp Operations, Late 1864-1866:

By the fall of 1864, the second wave of Indian prisoner releases approached. Based upon earlier reports, the majority of the prisoners held two-year sentences which would now expire. Obviously no such mass releases took place. One inmate, deemed too aged to take care of himself, was the object of attention when his release date approached. One option was turning him over to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs.⁶¹⁵

I am directed by the Major General Commanding to instruct you not to release any of the Sioux Indians now in confinement at Davenport without first communicating with these Hd. Qrs

Ten Broeck to Post Commander, September 6, 1864

General Pope placed a hold on any releases and turned to Army Chief of Staff, Major General Henry W. Halleck, for guidance in the matter, writing the following in early September 1864:

I have the honor to request instructions as to the disposition of Sioux prisoners held in confinement at Davenport, Iowa, in accordance with sentences of Military Commissions held in 1862. The terms of confinement are beginning to expire and already one or two of them have been ordered to be discharged by the Commissary General of prisoners.

It is not practicable or humane, to release a wild Indian from custody far from his home and tribe and turn him loose in the streets of Davenport without means of subsistence[sic] or any power to return to his people, aside from the inhumanity of such a proceeding, the people and civil authorities of Iowa very naturally object to being encumbered, but as I have no authority to send them anywhere nor to provide for their wants when released, I do not know how to act. I have called the attention of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in this region to these cases, but although he says he will attend to it he has not done so. By sending these released Indians back to their own country and then releasing them, we should only be reinforcing the bands of hostile Indians now in arms against the U.S. Some system of disposing of these

⁶¹⁵ Pope endorses Ten Broeck, August 12, 1864, RG 393, Entry 3442, Book 3, Endorsements, Dept. of the Northwest, p. 35

Indians should be adopted, and I have the honor therefore to ask instructions on the subject.

Pope to Halleck, September 1, 1864

General Sibley advised Pope that there were two pardoned Indian prisoners who were awaiting transportation home, and that there were 45 in camp who were “of no use to any one,” 18 of whom desired to relocate to the Upper Mission in the Dakotas. General Pope instructed Sibley that it was “not practicable” to transport anyone by river at that point in time and that he was to contact the Superintendent of Indian Affairs regarding the prisoners and the women.⁶¹⁶

Davenport residents were complaining about the matter, while others like George S. C. Dow, were attempting to assist the prisoners once they were released. General Pope wrote Dow, advising:

...It is not my intention to discharge any of the Indian prisoners at Davenport from custody unless the persons asking it give security that such Indians be supported and cared for. I cannot turn Indian prisoners into the streets of Davenport with nothing to eat and no one to care for them nor would I trust any of these Indians on the frontier until Indian hostilities are settled. I don't presume the President intends to set aside any of my arrangements about these Indians; certainly he would not without first advising me of the fact. I have no objection to releasing the Indian you mention provided you guarantee to feed & clothe him, & further secure the Govt against his again opposing in arms on the frontier. I regret that you should have met with any rudeness from the officer in charge of these prisoners but as I know nothing of the facts or circumstances, I have sent him a copy of your letter directing him to report the facts to me.

Pope to Dow, November 2, 1864.

District commander, Brigadier Alfred Sully, spent most of his service time in active campaigning in the Dakotas, but he was in Davenport during the winter of 1864-65 and took time to inspect Camp Kearney. He forwarded his report at the end of December, stating:

I have just returned from Davenport. While there I inspected the quarters occupied by the Indian prisoners. The buildings are becoming very much out of repair, having been occupied for three or four years and [being] very poorly built. In consequence the prisoners suffer somewhat in extreme cold weather. I therefore recommend there be issued to each Indian one shirt, a pair of drawers, and one pair of socks.

There are over two hundred prisoners confined here. I would recommend that a large number of them (selecting those not found guilty of the worst offences) to be released. I would divide them into small parties, and send them as far as possible from Dakota. I would also recommend that these small parties of Sioux be joined to different bands of Indians in different sections of the country. They would thus lose their identity as a nation.

On no account would I recommend any of them to be released and sent back to the North West, for most of them would undoubtedly join their hostile relatives in the North and we would be obliged to recapture them or kill them.

The friendly Indians in the North West do not wish to have the Santee Sioux, and it cannot be expected they will remain on their Reservation at Crow Creek Agency if sent there; for there is no chance there of being able to live.

Sully to Pope, December 31, 1864

Indian deaths continued at the camp:

⁶¹⁶ Pope endorses Sibley, Oct. 7, 1864, RG 393, Entry 3442, Book 3, Endorsements Department of the Northwest, pp. 122-3

Meanwhile, back in Minnesota and presumably at Fort Snelling, there remained 270 other “condemned Indians whose sentences have not yet been approved by the President,” in General Sully’s words. Sully was preparing for yet another spring offensive in the West and complained that these prisoners required a full regiment as a guard, not so much because of the Indian’s zeal for escaping, but because the Indians were “in constant danger of being massacred” by the local citizenry. Sully wanted his regiment for field operations and recommended, in mid-March, that either the captives be added to the Davenport camp, or that other guards be brought up from Davenport to relieve his force. Sully urged General Pope to obtain a resolution of the problem before river navigation reopened. Pope immediately forwarded Sully’s letter to the War Department. His preference was to move the Indians to either Davenport or Madison, Wisconsin. Pope reported that the Indians were collecting for a spring campaign “against the settlements” and that “the least appearance of uneasiness among the Indians will immediately depopulate the border towns and settlements.”

The *Gazette* once again returned to Camp Kearney in early March 1865. It penned an unusually sympathetic report concerning the Indian captives:

There are about two hundred of the Sioux Indians in Camp Kearney; some of them at work digging ditches, some chopping wood, some at the wash-tub, some smoking, some making trinkets, and some doing nothing. The sentence of death passed on some of them has been postponed; and here let me say, that though the Sioux generally need killing, yet we commend the Government for not executing them. They are those who have been under missionary training for many years, having left their pagan worship, and are now worshippers of the Living God. And although some writers have tried to make the impression that the Christian portion of the Sioux nation were more barbarous than the pagan during the outbreak, yet this is false and MALIGNANTLY so. Some of these very Indians confined here were running the risk of their own lives to save the whites, and several white women and children owe their preservation from captivity to some of these convicts. Let the Government punish the guilty; but to punish the innocent would be barbarous.—The assertion that the Christian portion was worse than the pagan originated in an infidel brain. Dr. Williamson, who has been a missionary among them over thirty years, is here, acting as a kind of chaplain and surgeon among them. He speaks and reads their language fluently—has been and is doing a good work for this benighted, oppressed and much abused race.

Davenport Daily Gazette, March 17, 1865

Proposals to provide firewood to the several camps were sought in late April 1865. The monthly requirement for Camp Kearney was 30 cords of wood.⁶¹⁷

No post inspection reports from Camp Kearney have yet been located. One extracted summary, filed within a contextual timeframe of August 1865, reads as follows:

Remarks of Inspecting Officer

That portion of Camp Kearney, Davenport, Iowa, occupied by Indians held as prisoners of War, is very filthy, which arises from want of proper Police duty, there are now 283 Indians confined in the Camp and 72 have died since their confinement—the records of the Camp show that no instructions have been received by the Commanding Officer in regard to their discipline, and it is evident that their condition has not been laid before the proper authorities.

⁶¹⁷ General Orders Number 10, District of Iowa, February 6, 1865, RG 393, Entry 242, Part 3, General Orders, District of Iowa; *Davenport Daily Gazette*, February 9, 18, 25, 1865; *Iowa State Register*, February 15, March 2, 1865—newspaper research by Karen O’Connor, Davenport Public Library; Sully to Pope, March 15, 1865, RG 393, Entry 3436, Book 3, p. 231; Pope to J. C. Kelton, same date, *ibid.*, p. 232; *Davenport Daily Gazette*, May 2, 1865

I would respectfully recommend you that they be either released, or that their sentences be carried out and if they are to be held as prisoners of War that they be removed to some Post on the Missouri River where they can be kept without so much unnecessary expense to the Government and treated as Prisoners should be.

J. Galligan, Major and A. I. G.

The large number of inmates still present in the camp, despite the presumed many releases, seems to indicate that perhaps some additional prisoners had been added from Minnesota. There is no documentation that supports this possibility however.

In October 1865 the 6th Cavalry returned to Camp McClellan for mustering out. It had spent its service in the Dacotah Territory, fighting Indians. Sergeant Joseph H. Drips of Company L, minced no words when he made the following entry in his diary:

Found a good camp and a lot of the Indians from Ulm County as prisoners, fat and healthy, well fed and clothed in government clothing and guarded by U.S. soldiers. It would not have been very healthy for these red gents if the soldiers just from Dakota had been placed on guard over them.

When the quartermaster and commissary departments in the city were consolidated in early December, Captain Pearmann removed his offices downtown. The *Gazette* reported “We notice that he [Pearson] has concluded to make the Indian prisoners [dependent] on Uncle Sam’s commissary stores useful, and brings them out in squads to do all the labor connected with his department.” This change reflected the non-availability of soldiers or hired civilians to do the work.⁶¹⁸

The Indians at Camp McClellan have been on the trail in Illinois recently, and have shot several deer a few miles beyond Moline. The Republican, of the latter place, says that on Friday last a squad of them started a buck from the jungle, and passing over a clean ravine where the snow had partially melted, froze and left a sheet of ice, they caught him as expeditiously as greyhounds could have done. It is fun for the Indians.

Davenport Daily Gazette, January 8, 1866

No post returns survive or were prepared until a return was completed at the end of January 1866. Most important, the captives were then tallied at 145 men, 36 women and 28 children, or 239 total. The previous return, presumably from December 1865, had given a total of 245 captives and the subsequent report listed six dead during January 1866. First Lieutenant W. Mitchell, 3rd U.S. Infantry commanded the post. His unit, Company C, consisted of himself and 56 men present, with an aggregate present and absent of 61 men. The last return had given 67 present, 73 present and absent. Captain Henry H. Freedley was absent on detached service. The final post return, covering February 1866 listed the same commander, 68 officers and men present, 73 present and absent for the garrison. The Indian population remained the same.

CAMP KEARNEY.—The sale of buildings yesterday at Camp McClellan leaves only the hospital buildings, Indian pen and barracks, and the necessary buildings for officers and men for one company. This is Camp Kearney. Orders to sell these buildings will probably soon be received, as we understand the Indian prisoners are to be released on the first of next month. It is designed to send them up the Missouri River to a missionary station or settlement on Crow Creek on the Minnesota side, between Fort Pierce and Fort Randall. Of course they will be clothed and fixed up, as Uncle Sam is liberal. After having a had a good time here for nearly three years, no doubt these red skins will return to their new homes with a “great heap” of appreciation of Uncle Sam’s

⁶¹⁸ Davenport Gazette, December 4, 1865

rations, the pale faces liberality and particularly pleasing recollections of Camp McClellan and Davenport.

Davenport Daily Gazette, March 6, 1866

The March 20 *Gazette* reported that Company C, 3rd “Regulars,” “the only military on duty here,” were under orders to be ready to move from the city. The newspaper predicted that the Indians would be moved away soon as well.

In April 1866, the Indian inmates from Camp Kearney were pardoned by President Andres Johnson. The surviving 177 inmates were transported to Santee, Nebraska. Local historian/architect Seth Temple stated that 178 Indians were released. When compared with the February post return, it seems hardly likely that there were 61 deaths since then, so the some of the prisoners must have been otherwise removed from the camp. A list of sentenced men still at the camp as of January 20, 1866, gives just 61 names. Temple estimates a total death rate of 100 persons based upon a comparison of the original arrival headcount, and the number finally released. However it is clear that additional females were added and many children were born in the camp or brought in.⁶¹⁹

UNDER ORDERS.—By Special Order No. 75, from Headquarters Department of Missouri, dated St. Louis, March 29th, all the Indian prisoners “confined” at this post are to be turned over to the Indian Agent (on his arrival) and under escort of Co. C, 3d U. S. Inf., now stationed here are to be taken to the Indian reservation at the mouth of the Niobrara River, near Fort Randall. After complying with the order, Co. C is ordered to Fort Leavenworth and report to the commanding officer of the regiment for assignment to station. Major Palmer, Commissary of Subsistence at this place, is instructed to furnish necessary rations and supplies. This order signifies the immediate forwarding of the Indians, which will be done on the arrival of the agent, who is daily expected.

Davenport Daily Gazette, April 4, 1866

MILITARY.—As we noticed yesterday, an order has been received for the removal of the Indians at Camp McClellan, to the upper Missouri. An order naming the 10th inst[ant], as the day of leaving has also been received. Lieut. Mitchell, with his command, will escort the “prisoners.”

Davenport Daily Gazette, April 5, 1866

DEPARTED.—The Sioux Santee Indian “Prisoners,” who have for the four years past luxuriated on Uncle Sam’s rations with occasional extras in the way of “fricassee dog” of which dish they are said to be very fond, yesterday bid adieu to the “pen” and the beautiful surroundings of Camp Kearney and were embarked on the steamer Pembina, for St. Louis, en route to the reservation (four townships) assigned by the Government to that tribe. The location is said to embrace excellent land, and the Niobrara River, upon which it is situated, abounds with fish. Judge Kilpatrick, the special agent to superintend the transfer, says that an effort will be made to civilize them, and get them to adopt agricultural pursuits. Most of them now profess Christianity.

At St. Louis they will be transferred to a Missouri River boat, which will take them to their destination, which by looking at the map will be seen to be only about eight miles from the northwestern boundary of Iowa, and in the north-eastern part of Nebraska Territory. The squaws and papooses of these Indians who have been in the vicinity of Fort Randall, at Crow Wing, since the conviction of the prisoners, are to be sent to join them, and no doubt Uncle Sam will set the reorganized families of “redskins” to house keeping in good shape, and then if any of our Davenport folks should happen to be out

⁶¹⁹ RG 159, Entry 3, Extracts of Inspection Reports, Volume 2, p. 247; Post Returns, Camp Kearney, Davenport, January 21, February 28, 1866; Temple, pp. 38-39; Chronology of the Dakota Conflict, www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/ftrials/dakota/dak_chrono.html