

Indian Wars Everywhere: How Colonialism Became Counterinsurgency in the US Military

by

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Abstract

It seems as if the so-called “Indian Wars” of US continental expansion continually haunt the US military. Consider just a few examples: American soldiers in the Philippine-American War celebrated many of their commanders as “Indian fighters.” Marines in the Vietnam War regularly referred to enemy territory as “Indian Country.” And in 2011, Operation Neptune Spear resulted in the death of terrorist Osama Bin Laden, whose mission codename, “Geronimo,” referred to a famous Apache chief. In an effort to make sense of these resonances, this dissertation investigates how the violence of North American continental expansion has shaped the US military from the nineteenth century to the present. What emerges is the story of how colonialism became embedded in the US military, particularly within the realm of what is now known as counterinsurgency warfare. Counterinsurgency, as practiced by the United States, is as much about cultural attitudes towards those defined as insurgents as it is about applying a technical form of warfare, and those attitudes, I argue, have colonial roots.

Using military records, strategic manuals, battlefield reports, and literary texts, I explore how the process of continental expansion positioned Native people as “insurgents” in their own homelands, subjecting them to indiscriminate, biopolitical violence. Most critical work on counterinsurgency and the biopolitics of warfare focuses on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. However, if we turn our attention to the violence that accompanied US continental expansion, colonialism emerges as a key site for the development of biopower, which manifested in what I call “euthanasia politics.” Euthanasia politics names a specific moment in the history of US colonialism when a growing imperative to manage Native life was combined with an increasingly indiscriminate approach to military violence. To these overlapping forms of state power was added the colonial nostalgia of the “vanishing Indian,” the presumption that Native people’s extinction was inevitable.

At the end of the nineteenth century the “Indian Wars” went global as the US acquired overseas territories following the Spanish-American War. Charting these transnational connections, I show how American soldiers in the Philippines imagined themselves as “Indian fighters” and instituted tactics that had been honed in the plains and deserts of the western United States. These imaginative references to the frontier would continue to define what I refer to as America’s “counterinsurgency culture,” a national mythology shaped out of a range of colonial discourses that simultaneously valorized the nation’s revolutionary origins while consistently opposing the self-determination of others. As forms of proto-counterinsurgency (and later, outright counterinsurgency) emerged as the continual subtext to US military action, the formative experience of continental expansion became embedded in the US military, the origin story of a counterinsurgency-culture. Almost every US conflict since has been, at least partially, imagined as an “Indian War.” The violence of continental expansion has left such an enduring imprint on military culture that contemporary theorists of counterinsurgency warfare study the Indian Wars for strategic insight into the ongoing War on Terror. This dissertation reflects on what it means for the conquest of Native peoples to be thought of as a success that can be used as a blueprint for modern warfare.

Introduction: Geronimo EKIA

On May 2nd, 2011, President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, and other members of the United States national security team sat in the White House situation room. In tense silence they listened as CIA director Leon Panetta narrated the unfolding of Operation Neptune Spear, a mission targeted at long sought after Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden. When the Special Forces operatives reached the target, Panetta reported that “we have a visual on Geronimo,” and after a few minutes he proclaimed “Geronimo EKIA.” Geronimo, the name given to Chiricahua Apache leader Goyahkla by his Mexican enemies, was code for Bin Laden, and the coded message that reported a successful mission was “Geronimo – EKIA,” or “enemy killed in action,” drawing a comparison that Fort Sill Apache Tribe chairman Jeff Houser would later call “painful and offensive.”¹ The ensuing debate over the code-name controversy, which was taken up in newspapers, blogs, and the Senate committee on Indian Affairs, pointed to the enduring legacy of the so-called “Indian Wars,” those conflicts fought in the continental United States primarily in the second half of the nineteenth century. Geronimo has been held up as one of the most intractable, elusive, and dogged resisters of US continental expansion, the last famous Native leader to surrender. He has been variously represented as incurably savage, impossibly elusive, and unwaveringly cruel. In short, Goyahkla the person has been replaced by a representation, “Geronimo,” which has been appropriated to serve a variety of interests. As Richard King notes, “Goyahkla may have been captured in 1886, but images of him have always

¹Karl Jacoby, “Operation Geronimo Dishonors the Indian Leader,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 2011, <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/may/10/opinion/la-oe-jacoby-geronimo-20110510>. Native comedy troupe The 1491’s have also produced a poem that criticizes the usage of “Geronimo” as a code for Bin Laden, repeating the refrain “Geronimo was not killed in Pakistan.”

been restless and liberated, living on long after his death in 1909 in the form of Geronimo.”²

Geronimo has been both admired and reviled, but he has most consistently been imagined as an iconic enemy of the United States, feared while he still resisted and celebrated once gone.

So why Geronimo, and why Bin Laden? The terror attacks of September 11th, 2001 touched off the War on Terror, a massive worldwide military campaign so broad that definitions of the “terrorist” became increasingly fluid, applied to revolutionaries, militias, religious fundamentalists, and a host of enemies in a range of countries. The War on Terror made apparent that the conflicts of the United States are still understood in racial terms, as ethnic and religious groups were coded as “terrorist” and subjected at home and abroad to a range of disciplinary practices justified through wartime necessity. As Mahmood Mamdani argues, after 9/11 terrorism was understood and explained as “Islamic,” reducing long and complex political histories down to cultural and racial essences.³ However, the War on Terror, like almost every American war, also saw the recycling of frontier mythologies and language that referenced conflicts with Native people. These representations still relied on race to make sense of the United States’ enemies, but did so using earlier racial formations from the era of continental expansion.⁴ Policymakers argued that “if the government of Iraq collapses... you’ve got Fort Apache in the middle of Indian country, but the Indians have mortars now.” Elsewhere the US Army published strategic papers that looked to campaigns against Apache Indians to help better

² Richard C. King, *Unsettling America: The Uses of Indianness in the 21st Century* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 57.

³ Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004), 17-19.

⁴ Nikhil Singh argues that the US has always connected war making and race making, from the frontier wars, to the imperial wars of the early twentieth century, to the world wars. See Nikhil Pal Singh, *Race and America’s Long War* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), xii. María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo makes a similar, geographically focused argument in María Josefina Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given: Racial Geographies across Mexico and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016). See also: Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

wage war in Iraq and Afghanistan. And journalist Robert Kaplan wrote that “welcome to ‘Injun Country’ was the refrain I heard from troops from Colombia to the Philippines, including Afghanistan and Iraq. To be sure, the problem for the American military was less fundamentalism than anarchy. The War on Terrorism was really about taming the frontier.”⁵ More than 100 years had passed since Goyakhla surrendered to the US army but somehow America was still fighting a global Indian war.

Culture and Counterinsurgency

“Indian Country” and similar characterizations draw on a long history of representations of Native people found in literature, media, and art. From the novels of James Fennimore Cooper to the cowboy movies of John Wayne, “savage” Indians have consistently been represented as a threat to the United States settler-colony, an inversion that serves to sanitize the history of conquest.⁶ These images function as what Gerald Vizenor calls “simulations,” constructs of Indianness that act as a fog, obscuring the political and cultural concerns of indigenous peoples.⁷ At the same time, the U.S. military has a long history of using words and images referring to Indians to represent itself, from Apache helicopters to the paratroopers that shout “Geronimo” as they jump from airplanes.⁸ Indianness is deeply coded into the imagination of the US military (and American culture at large). Goyakhla’s resonance as the ultimate elusive enemy made him a likely candidate for deployment in the most high-profile mission of the War on Terror. However,

⁵ Stephen W. Silliman, “The ‘Old West’ in the Middle East: U.S. Military Metaphors in Real and Imagined Indian Country,” *American Anthropologist* 110, no. 2 (June 2008): 237–47, 240; Kendall D. Gott, *In Search of an Elusive Enemy: The Victorio Campaign, 1879-1880* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004); Robert D. Kaplan, *Imperial Grunts: The American Military on the Ground* (New York: Random House).

⁶ Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Knopf, 1978); Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁷ Gerald Robert Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 6.

⁸ Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* (New York: Atheneum, 1992); Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).

the usage of Geronimo as a code word was also a reminder that some the earliest experiences of the US military with irregular warfare were in conflicts with Native people resisting the imposition of US sovereignty. The image of the Indian casts a long shadow over the US military that solidifies whenever the words “guerilla” or “insurgent” are deployed in the service of empire.

But what does it mean for an image or idea to *solidify*? What are these things we call “culture” and “discourse,” and how do they relate to the fingers on the triggers of guns, the hands that hold the torches used to burn villages? Culture has been defined in a myriad of ways: as the symbolic structures within a given society, as the glue that ties members of a group together (and determines who is outside the community), as the “common sense” ideologies that shape the beliefs and attitudes of individuals, and as a *process*, a set of meanings that continually shift over time, giving shape to social relationships and the material world.⁹ This dissertation offers both a cultural history attentive to the materiality of warfare, and a history of violence attuned to the ways culture shapes that violence. In that sense, culture, in this project, is both the symbolic terrain on which meaning is made, and the expression of cultural ideas in physical actions, objects, and events. It is both the object and means of analysis, naming not only a complex web of meanings and actions, but the analytical category used to investigate that very web.¹⁰

Cultural history, as a subfield that focuses on “language, identity, perception, and meaning making,” has much to offer in the analysis of the powerful images, ideas, and ideologies that have shaped US history.¹¹ But that should not imply a separation from the physical or

⁹ My definitions here are drawn from Aaron B. O’Connell, *Underdogs: The Making of the Modern Marine Corps* (Harvard University Press, 2014), Introduction; and Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), Introduction.

¹⁰ Philip Joseph Deloria and Alex Olson, *American Studies: A User’s Guide* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017), 6-9.

¹¹ James W. Cook, Lawrence B. Glickman, and Michael O’Malley, editors. *The Cultural Turn in U.S. History: Past, Present, and Future* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 3-58.

material expression of those ideas, the actions of individuals shaped by ideologies. When cultural ideas *resonate* they do so not only through language, but through bodies, through actions. These cultural ideas often take shape as a discourse, “a historically specific ‘structure of statements, terms, categories, and beliefs’ generated within a particular social and institutional context.” For example, we might think of “manifest destiny,” the nineteenth century belief that the United States’ continental expansion was divinely ordained, as a particular kind of colonial *discourse*. Mary Renda calls the process by which actors are shaped by discourse “cultural conscription,” an appropriately militaristic rendering of the linkages between culture, discourse, and action. Discourse, and the identities they play a role in shaping, are not unconstrained, but rather are produced in relation to specific structures of power.¹² This project is most concerned with the enduring role that discourses of colonialism have played in shaping the culture and practices of the US military.

Resonances of the frontier function as powerful discursive structures, making meaning out of violence and conscripting military action into a familiar narrative and form.¹³ They are metaphors that draw on the legacy of US colonialism to produce a potent ideological justification for the projection of US empire on a global scale. However, the reoccurring discourse of “Indian country” gestures towards an underlying continuity that is harder to track, a tactical legacy born from the United States’ earliest experiences with guerilla fighters. The processes of colonialism that resulted in the creation and expansion of the United States have often positioned Native people as insurgents, long before that word entered common usage. Consistently viewed as rebels in their own homelands, proto-insurgents to an unrealized US continental supremacy, the

¹² Renda, *Taking Haiti*, 17-24; Nan Enstad, “Fashioning Political Identities: Cultural Studies and the Historical Construction of Political Subjects,” *American Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (December 1, 1998): 745–82, 746.

¹³ For a description of discourse and “cultural conscription” see Renda, *Taking Haiti*, 16-24.

conquest of Native people in North America is central to the history of counterinsurgency as a particularly *imperial* form of warfare. We might go as far to say that US history is typically conceived of as a counterinsurgency without naming it as such: an effort to impose political authority on a series of lawless and dangerous territorial acquisitions, from continental expansion, to the annexation and occupation of foreign territories, to the repression of urban resistance, to the global War on Terror. Out of this process emerged America's unique "counterinsurgency-culture," a national mythology shaped out of a range of colonial discourses that simultaneously valorized the nation's revolutionary origins while consistently opposing the self-determination of others, continentally, internally, and globally. As forms of proto-counterinsurgency (and later, outright counterinsurgency) emerged as the continual subtext to US military action, the formative experience of continental expansion and colonial warfare became embedded in the US military, the origin story of a counterinsurgency-culture. Almost every US conflict since has been, at least partially, imagined as an "Indian War."

The colonial origins of America's counterinsurgency-culture have been largely unexplored due to the dearth of strategic material the US military produced specifically focused on Indian fighting. The same is true for counterinsurgency theory more generally, which has largely been the province of European writers grappling with the consequences of colonization and decolonization. In the twentieth century Europeans wrote the theory on counterinsurgency; Americans had already baked it into their national ideology.¹⁴ However, engaging the loose threads of counterinsurgent thinking in US history is crucial because it can help us to understand moments like this interaction during the congressional hearings on the My Lai massacre during the Vietnam War:

¹⁴ For a concise history of counterinsurgency literature see Laleh Khalili, *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2012), 11-43.

Captain Robert B. Johnson: Where I was operating I didn't hear anyone personally use that term ["turkey shoots"]. We used the term "Indian Country."

Congressman John Seiberling: What did "Indian Country" refer to?

Johnson: I guess it means different things to different people. It is like there are savages out there, there are gooks out there. In the same way we slaughtered the Indian's buffalo, we would slaughter the water buffalo in Vietnam.¹⁵

When Captain Johnson says "in the same way we slaughtered the Indian's buffalo, we would slaughter the water buffalo in Vietnam," you can hear the unspoken subtext: in the same way we fought Indians, we fight the Vietnamese. Remember, this was in the context of congressional hearings on the most visible, but hardly unique, massacre of the Vietnam War, a massacre that resurrected the ghosts of Native people killed at Bear River, Sand Creek and Wounded Knee.¹⁶ Captain Johnson is not only talking about how he imagined the Vietnamese; he is talking about how he *fought* them.

How to chart these connections from Wounded Knee, to My Lai, to the War on Terror? The answer lies in the history of US colonialism, militarism, and particularly in the history of counterinsurgency. Counterinsurgency, or COIN, is a form of warfare designed specifically to combat insurgency, defined by the US military's field manual on counterinsurgency as "an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control."¹⁷ Insurgents often rely on guerilla warfare to combat the numerical and technical superiority of an occupying power. In turn, a counterinsurgency is the "military,

¹⁵ Silliman, "The Old West," 237-247.

¹⁶ For a full accounting of US-lead massacres in Vietnam, see Nick Turse, *Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam* (New York: Picador, 2013).

¹⁷ United States Army and United States Marine Corps, *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1-2.

paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.”¹⁸ A crucial distinction from other forms of warfare is that victory in counterinsurgency terms does not simply entail the destruction of an opposing army, but rather the pacification of resistance and the reincorporation of insurgent populations into a governing structure. Insurgents must be corrected, not simply defeated, a formulation that emphasizes the biopolitical aspects of counterinsurgency warfare.¹⁹ Military defeat (or the illusion of it – George W. Bush famously and prematurely declared “Mission Accomplished” in Iraq in 2003) often breeds “insurgency,” and military defeat of “insurgency” can further the grounds for resistance as fighters are dispersed and new recruits are mobilized. This may be why counterinsurgency strategies, ostensibly focused on “winning hearts and minds,” often veer back into the realm of total warfare as imperial militaries, unable to achieve anything resembling victory, reduce populations to the point of complete demoralization.

However, while these definitions provide a useful baseline, they give little sense of the contested and shifting definitions of the insurgent that varying counterinsurgency policies have sought to suppress. Counterinsurgencies and the enemies marked as “insurgent” have always been fluid and shifting, subject to the imperial flexing of discursive power. They often remain submerged; the shadow-wars that have continuously occupied the United States despite a military history that tends to emphasize large-scale conflicts. In fact, the field manual on counterinsurgency was written to address the US military’s lack of institutional knowledge despite a history replete with efforts to repress and eliminate so-called insurgents. In the

¹⁸ US Army / Marines, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 1-2.

¹⁹ Markus Kienscherf calls contemporary counterinsurgency a form of “modern biopolitical imperialism” in which humanity must be made secure from its own inherent threats. Markus Kienscherf, “A Programme of Global Pacification: US Counterinsurgency Doctrine and the Biopolitics of Human (In)security,” *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 6 (December 1, 2011): 517-535; 522.

aftermath of the War on Terror the military scrambled to create both practical strategies and a usable history on which to draw, pivoting away from the perceived failures in Vietnam and a dominant narrative in which the military was chronically unable to learn from past experiences.²⁰ It is in this context that the “Indian Wars” have come to function as a military success story for the scholar-warriors of modern counterinsurgency theory.

While most histories of counterinsurgency warfare are concerned with the twentieth century, there has been an increasing effort by the US military in the last two decades to draw on the Indian Wars as a source of tactical insight, as examples of a successful counterinsurgency. Studies by both military professionals and historians often focus on the tactics of the militant late-nineteenth century tribes and their US Army opponents and seek to draw comparisons to the American campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan.²¹ The arguments are largely concerned with demonstrating an example of success in counterinsurgency warfare, with saying “see, the US has effectively fought these sorts of conflicts before.” In essence, this work is concerned with asserting what counterinsurgency *is*, and how it can be more successfully applied to contemporary US military efforts.

In contrast, this dissertation is concerned with where counterinsurgency comes *from*. The practices and ideologies of this form of warfare, at least in the US military, emerged in part from American colonial expansion. Counterinsurgency, as practiced by the United States, has been as

²⁰ D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms: The Failure of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 4-6.

²¹ Robert Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror: Military Culture and Irregular War* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2008); Matthew J. Flynn, *Settle and Conquer: Militarism on the American Frontier, 1607-1890* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2016); Jeremy T Siegrist, *Apache Wars: A Constabulary Perspective*. (Fort Leavenworth: School of Advanced Military Studies, 2012); Wesley M Pirkle, *Major General George Crook's use of Counterinsurgency Compound Warfare During the Great Sioux War of 1876-77* (Fort Leavenworth: US Army Command and General Staff College, 2015); Ike Skelton, “America’s Frontier Wars: Lessons for Asymmetric Conflicts,” *Military Review* July-August 2014; Kendall D Gott, *In Search of an Elusive Enemy: The Victorio Campaign, 1879-1880* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004).

much about cultural attitudes towards those defined as insurgents as it has about applying a technical form of warfare. And those attitudes, and the accompanying tactics, I argue, have colonial roots. There may not be an unbroken chain of *strategic* continuity that links the nineteenth-century Indian Wars to the contemporary War on Terror. However, there is an ever-lurking set of resonances, ideologies, and tactical gestures, utterances of America's counterinsurgency-culture that find continual expression via ideas about Indians and Indian-fighting. This dissertation is an argument for the centrality of colonialism to the broad arc of US history, particularly in the realm of military violence. There are undeniable continuities in the history of American violence that are bound together by that ever-present race war, the "Indian War," simultaneously pervasive and invisible, a deep structuring narrative of US history.

In this effort I join a group of scholars from fields such as American Studies, Ethnic Studies, and History, who have turned a critical eye on the contours of US state violence, at home and abroad. In particular, there is an exciting body of emerging scholarship that examines the role of counterinsurgency in the interrelated histories of the Cold War, mass-incarceration, policing, and the War on Terror.²² In conversation with this work, my research demonstrates the relevance of Native American history to the broader historiography of US empire by exploring the continuities between the violence of continental expansion and the increasingly global imperialism that was inaugurated with the Spanish-American War. These are connections that have remained elusive in the literature on US history. A handful of scholars have noted the

²² Recent meetings of the American Studies Association have featured a critical mass of panels investigating counterinsurgency and its relationship to The Cold War, the War on Terror, domestic policing, and other topics. Examples of this work include: Jordan T. Camp, *Incarcerating the Crisis: Freedom Struggles and the Rise of the Neoliberal State* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); Hannah Gurman, ed. *Hearts and Minds: A People's History of Counterinsurgency* (New York: The New Press, 2013); Nick Estes. "Born on the Fourth of July: Counterinsurgency, Indigenous Resistance, and Black Revolt." *The Red Nation* <https://therednation.org/2017/07/04/born-on-the-fourth-of-july-counterinsurgency-indigenous-resistance-and-black-revolt>, (accessed December 18, 2018); Stuart Schrader, *Policing Revolution: Cold War Counterinsurgency At Home and Abroad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, Forthcoming).

repetition of words like “Indian Country” in Vietnam and the Middle East, or the presence of frontier veterans in the Spanish-American War, but this project is one of the first to systematically consider the relationship between continental expansion and ongoing US militarism.

This intervention builds on the work of the “New Indian History,” a field that, as Richard White put it in his definitive book *The Middle Ground*, places “Indian peoples at the center of the scene” in an attempt to understand the reasons for their actions.²³ This focus on “reframing” or “looking East from Indian Country” has allowed historians to re-read familiar source material minus the “Imperial biases” present in the archive, while exploring new stories that highlight Native actions and Native power. Historians have worked to move beyond what Vine Deloria Jr. called “the cameo theory of history” wherein “indigenous peoples make dramatic entrances, stay briefly on the stage, and then fade out.”²⁴ To a large degree this enterprise has been successful, at least within Native American history.²⁵ It is no longer possible to tell the story of the “American southwest” without paying equal attention to Comanche, Ute, Apache and O’odham people, in addition to Spanish colonists and Anglo-American settlers. Scholars of the antebellum Southeast have had to broaden their conceptual framing of “slavery” to incorporate Native participation and subjection to captivity and slavery. The “Great Lakes” are no longer the province of

²³ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), xxvii.

²⁴ Michael Witgen offers a deft re-reading of “Imperial” sources minus their biases in his work: Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012). Daniel Richter’s *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), models the sort of conceptual reframing that is a hallmark of New Indian History. Pekka Hämäläinen, quoting Vine Deloria Jr., works against the “cameo theory of history” in his work *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), tracing Comanche Imperial power deep into the nineteenth century.

²⁵ Scholars are less optimistic about US history writ large – much of the discussion at the 2013 Newberry Library Conference “Why You Can’t Teach American History Without Native American Studies” focused on the inability of historians in the field to destabilize the enduring myths of American history outside the discipline Native American History, where they are “preaching to the choir.”

voyageurs moving between villages of passive Native hunters, but are rather the geography of a “Native New World,” related to not subordinated to the “New World” of English and French settlements.²⁶

While the New Indian history has proven a persuasive revision to the history of colonization in North America, it comes with its own set of problems. As Jeffrey Ostler writes in *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee*, New Indian history “has deemphasized questions of power, ideology, and the state” in its valid attempt to focus more on the autonomy of Native people.²⁷ On the one hand, playing down “power, ideology and the state” is sort of the point: New Indian history often argues that “the state,” i.e. the colonial state, is a far less potent force than historians have always assumed. However, Ostler’s criticism cannot be ignored given the ongoing colonial situation in North America. The settler-state is a far more comprehensive force in the twentieth century than the eighteenth or nineteenth. The stories that emphasize Comanche, Ute, and Ojibwe power, autonomy, and regional dominance in earlier centuries would not be the same if they extended into the twentieth century. So although Ostler’s concern about efforts to “minimize the vast imbalance of power between Native peoples and Europeans” misses the point in some examples of New Indian history, where a reframing of the balance of power is exactly the object, his criticism is a potent

²⁶ Ned Blackhawk, Karl Jacoby and Julianna Barr have emphasized the participation, and even dominance, of Native people in the formation of what is now the American Southwest. See Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Karl Jacoby, *Shadows at Dawn: An Apache Massacre and the Violence of History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009); Julianna Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007). Historians including Tiya Miles and Christine Snyder have radically revised the historiography of slavery in the U.S. to include Native people, both as slave-holders and slaves. See Tiya Miles, *Ties That Bind the Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Christine Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

²⁷ Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

reminder of the vast mobilization of colonial violence following the Civil War, which, for Ostler, culminated in the massacre of hundreds of Lakota people at Wounded Knee in 1890. That same decade is when much of the scholarship on U.S. empire begins to focus on military violence, particularly the Spanish-American War. The result has been a partial separation of Native American history from the broader historiography on US empire. In large part this is a separation between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a separation hinged by the year 1898 and the Spanish-American War, when some scholars have argued that the US moves overseas and becomes a colonial power for the first time.²⁸ The conquest of Native people in North American typically functions as an analogy for some later instance of colonial conflict. Scholars of US empire frequently cite soldiers who liken their particular context, whether in Haiti, Cuba, the Philippines or Vietnam, to the “Indian Fighting” of the frontier, but leave these connections mostly unexplored.²⁹

The field of settler-colonial studies has proven an invaluable tool when exploring these very connections, as it offers a theoretical framework for analyzing the continuities of ongoing colonialism in the United States. In contrast to more extractive forms of colonialism premised on the acquisition of resources or the exploitation of labor (for example, many European colonies in Africa), settler-colonialism is a project of replacement, one that works to eliminate the

²⁸ Although this separation isn't pervasive – for example Matthew Frye Jacobsen's *Barbarian Virtues* seeks to draw some minimal connections across the 1898 divide, it still emerges in the work on US Empire, often in a way that eclipses Native sovereignty. For example, Anne Foster's *Projections of Power* argues that in 1898 U.S. imperialism *changes into colonialism*, with colonialism defined as the imposition of outside governments on acquired territories. In other words, Foster doesn't think that U.S. continental expansion was the imposition of an “outside government,” effectively denying a preexisting Native sovereignty. See Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001); Anne L. Foster, *Projections of Power: The United States and Europe in Colonial Southeast Asia, 1919-1941* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 2-3.

²⁹ This example is taken from Mary Renda's *Taking Haiti*, but it shows up elsewhere, typically taking the form of an analogy both at the level of the source, i.e. what a soldier says, and at the level of the writer's analysis, i.e. this instance of colonial violence is like *that older instance* of colonial violence. This frequent invocation of analogy has prevented, in my opinion, scholars from pursuing the seemingly deeper implications of these comparisons between “Indian Country” and overseas colonialism.

indigenous presence. Settlers establish new political entities, impose borders, and assert legal claims to territory.³⁰ This makes the colonial process “a structure, not an event.”³¹ This eminently quotable formulation is a useful way to counteract histories that locate North American colonization somewhere in the “past,” not relevant to contemporary political issues and concerns. The danger of this formulation is that settler-colonialism assumes a prior or foundational status as the determining effect on *all* relations in a colonized society. Everything reduces down to settler-colonialism, and the consequence has been a range of arguments that subordinate a variety of structures (gender, race, capitalism, sexuality...) to the determining effects of ongoing settler colonialism. Additionally, this invitation to systemic analysis risks flattening out the interventions of the New Indian history. If settler-colonialism is a totalizing blanket that settles over the entire continent of North America sometime in the eighteenth century, then the stories of indigenous political autonomy, economic independence, and imperial power can become obscured.

Attention to historical specificity should not foreclose the generative theoretical tools that settler-colonial studies offers. This dissertation has a wide-ranging chronology, and ongoing colonialism is the connective tissue binding the various chapters together. Military practices at the center of US global power emerged from the process of continental expansion, a *settler-colonial process* that attempted to eliminate Native people from the land. “Elimination,” as Patrick Wolfe reminds us, can take different forms, including death, removal, and legal erasure or incorporation into the settler-state. What is consistent across the different forms of “elimination” is the attempted elimination of native sovereignty. Wolfe argues that “the

³⁰ Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 33-52.

³¹ Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999), 2.

irreconcilable Native difference that settler polities seek to eliminate can be detached from the individual, whose bare life can be reassigned within the set of settler social categories, yielding a social death of Nativeness.”³² Settler-colonialism in the United States sought to transform Native people from an “Indian problem” to an *internal* problem, domesticating indigeneity through the administration of Native life that sought to subtract the “native” from the equation. Settler-colonialism, like counterinsurgency, can both kill and transform, wielding military violence in one hand and biopolitical governance in the other hand.

The Biopolitics of Counterinsurgency

Rather than reading the Indian Wars backwards as an early example of counterinsurgency warfare, this project interrogates the politics that defined Native people as insurgents and explores how the specific processes of US continental expansion produced military doctrine and cultural meaning generative of this particularly American form of war. The nineteenth century military was both ambivalent about and preoccupied with Native people, deriding “savage warfare” yet committed to retaining control of Indian policy. By the end of the century however, the Army had developed a coherent program for Indian fighting. The Army exercised devastating violence alongside complex social and cultural controls as they worked to conquer people that were defined as insurgent in their own homelands. This biopolitical blend of governing and violence has since become central to how the modern US military wages counterinsurgency warfare. This dissertation will chart the emergence of a population-centric biopolitical militarism during the “Indian Wars” that laid a foundation for modern military and paramilitary practices.

Most critical work on the history of counterinsurgency focuses on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In her excellent history of confinement in counterinsurgency, Laleh

³² Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (Verso Books, 2016), 186.

Khalili argues that an emphasis on populations “distinguishes modern counterinsurgencies from their nineteenth-century predecessors. The emergence of population as a concept of study, warfare, and manipulation emerged most apparently in the mass incarceration of civilians in a number of twentieth and twenty-first century counterinsurgencies.”³³ This dissertation will push back against Khalili’s chronology. Nineteenth century US Army officers were preoccupied with Native people as populations to be manipulated, confined, governed, and in some cases destroyed.

Biopolitics refers to a political shift that theorist Michel Foucault locates in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in which modern states became invested in life – its production, maintenance, proliferation and examination. “Populations” became the focus of governing power, particularly their productivity, health and reproduction. Where the older regimes of absolute sovereigns wielded a power to “take life or let live,” the new biopower instead exercised a power to “make live or let die.”³⁴ In other words, power no longer intervened at the moment of taking a life, but rather took hold of life itself in an attempt to proliferate, regulate, and control it.³⁵ However, as Foucault theorized this preoccupation of the modern state with *life*, he had to explain instances of horrific and large-scale *death* that these same modern states were engaged in. To explain the murderous effects of biopower he introduced the idea of state racism, which creates a caesura within the population between those who get to live and those who must die, those whose existence is conceived as a threat to the population. This inaugurates a military

³³ Khalili, *Time in the Shadows*, 42-45.

³⁴ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*. Translated by Robert Hurley. (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 137.

³⁵ Michel Foucault. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76* (New York: Picador, 2003), 240-241.

relationship within the realm of biology – kill so you can live becomes a logic for entire populations, rather than for soldiers facing each other on the battlefield.³⁶

Theorizations of biopolitics have been invigorated in the twenty-first century, deployed to analyze increasing globalization, refined techniques of state surveillance, and the patterns of detention, torture, and racialized violence that characterize the War on Terror.³⁷ Central to this scholarship has been Giorgio Agamben’s writing on the “state of exception.” Building off the work of Carl Schmidt and Foucault, Agamben shows how the power of the sovereign is defined by the ability to transcend the law; in other words, the sovereign maintains the law by reserving the power to exceed it. This gives the sovereign the power to render individuals or populations as “homo sacer,” bare life who are subject to the power of the sovereign but not included within the system of law that coalesces around the sovereign. Homo sacer was a person who, under Roman law, could be killed but not sacrificed; subject to death within the system but whose death was not a violation of the laws of that system. They were included through their very exclusion, occupying a state of exception. The contemporary example that animates Agamben is the US practice of indefinite detention of “enemy combatants” at places like Guantanamo Bay. These detainees exist at the threshold of the law, outside the protections of US or international law yet subject to US sovereign power.

Scholars have noted Foucault’s lack of attention to questions of race, colonialism, and empire. As Ann Stoler shows, Foucault’s work on biopolitics was curiously inattentive to these questions, even as he helped develop tools to analyze them, notably through the above-mentioned exploration of racism as foundational to modern states. Arguing that “race is not a subject marginal to Foucault’s work,” Stoler and others have shown how the histories of

³⁶ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 256.

³⁷ Adam Sitze, ed. *Biopolitics: A Reader*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), Introduction.

colonialism and empire are a crucial part of the development of biopower.³⁸ And for all his well-documented blind spots regarding European colonialism, Foucault did claim that “racism first develops with colonization, or in other words, with colonizing genocide.”³⁹ Historians and theorists of race and colonialism have certainly expanded on the foundation laid by Foucault. Perhaps no investigation of colonial biopolitics has been as devastating as Achille Mbembe’s work on “necropolitics.” Mbembe terms “necropolitics” those spaces where biopower, the state of exception, and what he calls the “state of siege” all converge with colonial regimes of racialized violence to produce “death worlds,” new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living dead*.⁴⁰ Under necropolitics entire populations are targeted with militarized state power, literally *under siege*.⁴¹

Contemporary scholarship on questions of security, counterinsurgency, and development have also made use of biopolitics to understand how liberal states position the world as threatening and unstable, in need of governance and control. Jasbir Puar argues that modern regimes of biopower deploy “the racializing biopolitical logic of security,” in which “less than lethal” violence sits alongside a range of techniques used to manage and control marginalized communities.⁴² As states mobilize biopower to regulate, proliferate, and perpetuate (certain kinds) of life, populations billed as security threats are subjected to particular forms of violence, a fragmentation of the biological field along racial lines. Similarly, Jaclyn Pryor argues that a post-9/11 United States functions as a “security state” defined by the regulation and control of

³⁸ Ann Laura Stoler. *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

³⁹ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 255-257.

⁴⁰ Achille J. Mbembe “Necropolitics.” *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11–40, 40.

⁴¹ Mbembe, “Necropolitics”, 30.

⁴² Jasbir K. Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 2.

bodies, borders, and populations through measures ranging from surveillance to outright violence. These biopolitical measures constitute what Foucault calls a “disciplinary society” in which subjects are required to conform out of necessity; the state is not simply invested in making subjects live, *but live a certain way*. Tweaking Foucault’s formulation, Pryor deftly utilizes “security state” as a sliding descriptor connoting both the forms of state-power devoted to security, as well as the affective states of fear and precarity marginalized communities are subjected to under regimes of (in)security.⁴³

The flurry of theory that utilizes biopolitics to analyze the War on Terror provides a set of tools for revisiting the “Indian Wars” and situating them in a long lineage of US militarism. We can reformulate Mbembe’s theory to show how the state of siege can work both ways. Mbembe uses the phrase to describe conditions under regimes of necropolitics, a “terror formation” of colonialism that combines biopower, the state of exception, and the state of siege. Necropolitics draws our attention to the particular biopolitical violence of the colony, the space where racial violence intersects with bureaucracy. But an inverted “state of siege” has often been mobilized by colonizers to justify their own violence, portraying settlers as under a constant state of threat. These sorts of discourses have their roots in the ideologies of “defensive conquest” that defined US continental expansion. As Philip Deloria has shown, US settler-colonialism consistently reframed invasion as a defensive struggle in which settlers are always under attack, exemplified by the image of the surrounded wagon train. The settler “state of siege” defines Native space as threatening, making the transformation of Native territory into colonized space a necessary act to preserve life. Mbembe gestures towards this relationship, likening colonies to “frontiers” inhabited by “savages.” In these zones western norms governing wars between sovereign nations

⁴³ Jaclyn Pryor, *Time Slips: Queer Temporalities, Contemporary Performance, and the Hole of History*. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2017), 18-19.

do not apply, the distinctions between combatants and noncombatants are dissolved, and exceptional violence is viewed as operating in the service of “civilization.”

The besieged-settler finds its current iteration in descriptions of a dangerous and undeveloped third world threatening the global liberal order. Brad Evans and Markus Kienscherf have shown how the wars, interventions, and occupations justified through references to security reframe older binaries of savage/civilized into one of developed/underdeveloped.

Humanitarianism is then used to justify military intervention as societies are targeted for wholesale transformation in the name of global security. This is often explicitly biologized, as recalcitrant, resistant, or marginalized populations are rendered as contagions that must be cured by the counterinsurgency inoculation, securing humanity from its own inherent threats. And as much as contemporary counterinsurgents seek to highlight the humanitarian aspects of the practice—the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* advises that “some of the best weapons do not shoot”—we should not forget that violence lies at the core of this form of warfare. According to Ben Anderson counterinsurgency acts as the bridge between war and development, advocating the killing of particular kinds of life, “insurgents that refuse the remedial logic of repair and improvement. Counterinsurgency is the point of contact, then, between two ways of dealing with what threatens—a will to improve life and a will to destroy life.”⁴⁴

It is this space between improving life and destroying life that what I call the “euthanasia politics” of nineteenth-century Indian policy operated. What I am calling “euthanasia politics” names a specific moment in the history of US colonialism when a growing biopolitical imperative to manage Native life was blended with an increasingly indiscriminate approach to military violence. These overlapping forms of state power were combined with the colonial

⁴⁴ Ben Anderson, “Population and Affective Perception: Biopolitics and Anticipatory Action in US Counterinsurgency Doctrine.” *Antipode* 43, no. 2 (March 1, 2011): 205–36, 209–213; 229.

nostalgia of the “vanishing Indian,” the presumption that Native people’s extinction was inevitable. The military’s obligation to Native people was, as General William Tecumseh Sherman put it, to hasten their “inevitable fate” with a “due regard to humanity and mercy.”⁴⁵ Managing extinction became a humanitarian act. This was not a necropolitics intended to maintain the racial terror of the colony; it was a euthanasia politics intended to usher Native people out of history. Central to this process was defining Native people as guerillas and insurgents – criminals rather than sovereign nations. This characterization normalized, simultaneously, the machinery of biopolitical management and tactics of indiscriminate violence.

Leerom Medovoi, tracing the common genealogies of globalization and the War on Terror, details the expansion of biopolitical governance and the resulting collapse of liberalism’s traditional distinction between internal and external enemies. Globalization and the War on Terror both take the entire globe as their frame of reference, the target for biopolitical intervention.⁴⁶ Similarly, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri show how biopolitical practices of security collapse divides between the foreign and domestic, between policing and militarization, by replacing “defense,” which focuses on external threats, with “security,” a constant militarized biopower that is global in form. Contemporary regimes of biopower, of which the United States is a crucial arbiter, take the entire globe as their object. Building on Foucault’s formulation of the productive elements of power, Hardt and Negri show how the permanent state of exception created by the endless wars of the United States results in an imperialism “charged with the task of shaping the global political environment and thus to become a form of biopower in the

⁴⁵ Charles Devens, Jr. and William T. Sherman, *Addresses to the Graduating Class of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York, June 14, 1876* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1876), 25-26.

⁴⁶ Leerom Medovoi, “Global Society Must Be Defended: Biopolitics Without Boundaries.” *Social Text* 25, no. 2 (91) (June 1, 2007): 53–79.

positive, productive sense.”⁴⁷ Biopolitical logics of security attempt to shape the global environment through military and policing actions – increasingly, counterinsurgency – aimed at the transformation of life. Indeed, we might think of the endless war of the twenty-first century as a militarized biopolitical intervention targeted at the transformation and proliferation of (certain kinds of) life through military intervention.⁴⁸ Hardt and Negri highlight, as others have, a “revolution in military affairs,” or RMA, that took hold following the end of the Cold War. The combination of rapid technological advancement in warfare, seemingly unquestioned US global dominance, and the likely end of large-scale conflicts resulted in a restricting of US military strategy towards air and naval superiority and a de-emphasis on the deployment of large numbers of ground forces. War becomes increasingly virtual and bodiless as incredible technological superiority (ideally) translates into a minimizing of risk for US soldiers. This creates, according to Hardt and Negri, newly biopolitical soldiers, able to not only kill, but to dictate for the conquered populations the cultural, legal, political, and security norms of life.”⁴⁹

This newly (or is it? More on that later...) biopolitical soldier has seen its greatest role in the revolution *within* the RMA, namely the shift towards counterinsurgency warfare undertaken by “insurgents” in the US military establishment such as General David Petraeus and Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl, the flashpoint of which was the publication of the aforementioned *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*.⁵⁰ The very practices of counterinsurgency have been analyzed as biopolitical projects par-excellence, military actions that attempt to blend warfare into an alchemy of social, cultural, economic, and political actions.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. (New York: Penguin, 2005), 23.

⁴⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 13.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 41-45.

⁵⁰ For a detailed history of these counterinsurgency-insurgents see Fred Kaplan, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013).

⁵¹ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 65.

In the following chapters I will argue that the biopolitical dimensions of contemporary US counterinsurgency warfare—“development,” “population-centric,” “winning hearts and minds”—have both deep and precise origins in the violence that accompanied US continental expansion in the nineteenth century. Re-reading sources traditionally used to construct heroic portrayals of the frontier, I show how American soldiers positioned Native people as insurgent to US authority and subjected them to a militarized biopolitics that blended indiscriminate violence with mechanisms for governing populations. Most military histories of these conflicts gloss the so-called “Indian Wars” as an interlude between the Civil War and World War One, while critical scholarship on counterinsurgency and biopolitics tends to focus on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In contrast, I reconstruct how nineteenth century Army officers incorporated a politics of life and death into the machinery of militarized colonization. Ultimately, this written and experiential archive of proto-counterinsurgency would be used to devastating effect during the US occupation of the Philippines, though it did not become immediately codified in military doctrine. Despite this gap, I show how contemporary counterinsurgents have returned to the Indian Wars for insight into the ongoing War on Terror, questioning what it means for settler-colonialism to be thought of as a military “success.”

Chapter Summary

This project is divided into three sections that chronologically cover more than 200 years and span several continents. This breadth is balanced by a series of deep cuts into key moments of US militarism that help to render visible a history of the development of US counterinsurgency warfare as a *particularly* colonial form of violence. Part one, “Colonial Violence and the Indian-Fighting Army,” reconstructs the history of “Indian fighting” as a related set of strategic and ideological formations in the US military over the course of two

chapters. It locates the development of concepts that have been critical to the contemporary analysis of global militarism, including “security” and “population-centric warfare,” in the nineteenth century and the unique blend of civil-military power that was central to the expansion of the US settler-colony. This is a key part of the story about the emergence of militarized biopolitics, a story that has been recently emphasized in the context of twenty-first century counterinsurgency, but which actually has deeper roots. Part Two, “Indian-Fighter Culture and Global US Empire,” charts, in two chapters, how the tactics and ideologies of the Indian Wars moved overseas and influenced the expansion of America’s territorial possessions after the Spanish-American War, with an emphasis on the Philippines-American War. Part Three, “Indian-Fighters and the War on Terror,” surveys the fluid mobility of ideas and practices of Indian warfare during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It focuses on the expansion of a counterinsurgency-culture that has increasingly turned to lessons from the Indian wars to better prosecute the War on Terror.

Chapter one charts the emergence of a codified doctrine of Indian fighting, a precursor to counterinsurgency warfare. As long as the United States has existed, Native people have functioned as an enduring example of insurgent fighters. But despite more than one hundred years of sustained conflict the US military was slow and hesitant to develop formal tactics or strategies, or to include “Indian Fighting” within the mainstream of military activity. These were “savage wars,” far removed from the sort of civilized combat of European states that the new nation sought to emulate. Indian-fighting tactics were relegated to the realm of cultural representation. They could be found in popular novels, and could be used to criticize one’s opponents (Civil War generals on both sides regularly accused their enemies of acting like Indians), but they did not find their way into Army doctrine. This is not to say that US military

officers thought little about Native people. In fact, soldiers penned hundreds of articles, essays and speeches advocating military solutions to the “Indian Question,” often demanding control of Indian Affairs even as they argued in the same breath that Native people were doomed to eventually disappear. It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that a small number of strategic manuals appeared, and these advanced an approach to warfare that blended combat tactics with just the sort of governing apparatus military writers had advocated for. Native populations, not just warriors, had to be the target of military campaigns. It was not enough to defeat warriors on the battlefield. Native people had to be defeated and confined to reservations, where they could either fundamentally alter their social and cultural lives or wait out an inevitable extinction. The military wing of US settler-colonialism thus developed and practiced a form of warfare that blended civil governance with extreme violence, warfare aimed at either eliminating or altering entire groups of people.

The few military historians that have considered US colonialism tend to fit it into a story about the rise of total war. In a common version of this story generals like W.T. Sherman and Philip Sheridan normalized war against entire populations during the latter part of the Civil War. Sheridan, Sherman and their contemporaries then exported total war to the plains in the war’s aftermath and used these scorched earth tactics to drive Native people onto reservations, anticipating the extremities the twentieth century and two World Wars. However, this story fails to account for the fact that violence against noncombatants had always been an element of continental conquest. It also ignores colonialism as a structuring force on the warfare that followed the Civil War. Chapter two explores a specific instance of Indian fighting that was particularly influential on the nineteenth century military. Sheridan’s campaign against southern plains Indians in 1869-69, and much of the military policy that built on his strategies, more

accurately fits into a genealogy of US counterinsurgency warfare. Sheridan defined the Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Kiowa and Comanche that remained off-reservation as insurgents waging a guerilla war, and that designation subjected them to a winter military campaign in which several Native villages were targeted for destruction through surprise attacks. And although the destruction of settlements, food, and lives was hardly a new development, these tactics rose to increasing prominence during a period of burgeoning US military professionalization. These indiscriminate tactics were thus written into the new military publications that offered a blueprint for Indian fighting, and they left an enduring mark on an entire generation of officers. Many of those soldiers would suddenly find themselves overseas at the turn of the century, and the Indian Wars would go global.

Some of the first counterinsurgency experts the US military produced imagined themselves as global Indian Fighters. These were soldiers that had served in Indian Country before finding themselves in places like Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. The war and subsequent occupation of the Philippines was influenced by continental colonialism in particular ways. US soldiers narrated their time in the islands as an Indian war and imagined themselves as Indian fighters. The Indian Wars were translated, through the actions, imaginations, and writing of soldiers into a flexible discourse able to travel across space and time. Chapters three and four analyze the histories and writings of prominent generals Henry Ware Lawton and Charles King. Both were active in the fighting in the Philippines, and both were producers and subjects of the cultural representations around Indian Fighting. Lawton, as the man who captured Geronimo, was assumed before he ever arrived in the Philippines to be uniquely suited to defeating the supposedly “savage” Filipinos. While on the islands he formed a specialized scouting troop called Young’s Scouts, led by an “old frontiersman” named W.H. Young. Lawton used the

scouts in ways that directly drew on prior experiences with Native people, and they help to render visible the military linkages between continental colonialism and global empire. Charles King, himself a celebrated general, was more famous as an author. King, more than any other writer, narrated the experiences of frontier soldiers and helped to cement the “Indian Fighter” as an enduring cultural figure. King also found himself in the Philippines, and his later novels draw explicit connections between the Indian Wars and the Philippines-American War. Lawton and King show the continuities in US military policy, and the ways that counterinsurgency warfare was influenced by colonialism.

In 2006 the US Army and Marines Corps published Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, with a frank admission that the military had neglected to develop and maintain a clear and effective doctrine for that mode of warfare. As the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq continued, and the War on Terror expanded, the military was desperate for effective strategies and a history on which to draw from. In this climate the Indian Wars emerged as an example of American’s first successful counterinsurgency, with military theorists and writers returning to the study of the wars with Apaches, Cheyenne, Lakota and others. Chapter five shows how the Indian Wars reentered US military doctrine as a usable history and blueprint for contemporary counterinsurgency warfare. This was the result of the American counterinsurgency culture, which had proliferated cultural representations of Indian people during the twentieth century in ways that continually framed US military conflicts as “Indian Wars.” These mythologies of conquest were translated, during the War on Terror, into the technical vocabulary of “strategy.”

Over the course of five chapters this dissertation will cover more than two hundred years of history, move from North America, to Asia, to the Middle East, and examine everything from

battlefield reports to children's literature. This breadth of content is necessary to show just how intertwined the histories of colonialism and militarism are in the United States. The Indian Wars have been everywhere, and they continue to persist as both an imaginative framework for military violence and an origin story for the counterinsurgency strategies of the twenty-first century. This project is a history of the discourses and cultural ideas about Indian warfare that have continually reemerged in every American military conflict. It is also an examination of the biopolitical violence that originated in nineteenth century US military policy, an approach to warfare that mobilizes ideas about race and security to justify an ever-expanding global US militarism. Ultimately, however, this project is a critique of the ways in which American empire cannot stop re-fighting the Indian Wars. As the Indian Wars resonate into the present in the form of code-words, tactical manuals, and historical lessons, we would do well to remember that calling those conflicts "successful" casts a celebratory light on a series of profound losses for Native people. To reckon with the legacy of settler-colonialism means facing up to the influence those conflicts have had on patterns of US military violence.

Chapter 1. Euthanasia Politics and the Indian-Fighting Army

Prologue: Graduation at West Point

On June 14th, 1876, William Tecumseh Sherman, commanding general of the US Army, addressed the graduating class at the US Military Academy at West Point. It was the country's centennial celebration and Sherman's speech was forward-looking and hopeful. He charged the cadets to "carry into the next century all that is valuable of the lessons and memories of the last." Those lessons included the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, and the Civil War, all of which had left an example for these new officers to follow: "Revere the memories of the past" Sherman said, and "love that flag which now waves over you as the symbol of all past glories and the harbinger of greater yet to come."⁵² It is likely that some cadets rolled their eyes at Sherman's patriotic exhortations, as many were probably envisioning assignment to frontier outposts where they worried that their careers and daily lives would languish in a haze of dust, boredom, and vice. And while Sherman's genealogy of US military triumph did not include conflicts with Native peoples, he understood, just as the cadets did, that the nineteenth century Army's primary occupation was the conquest of Indian Country. Those Cadets inclined to be cynical about the first part of Sherman's speech may have felt he was speaking directly to them when he turned to the Indian Wars: "The mass of you, however, will pass into the cavalry and infantry, destined to be busily occupied until the Indian problem is finally settled... the probabilities are that you will be dispersed and scattered along the line of

⁵² Charles Devens Jr. and William T. Sherman, *Addresses to the Graduating Class of the US Military Academy, West Point, New York, June 14, 1876* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1876), 25-26.

frontier, pushed farther and farther as military posts become transformed into cities and towns.”

The cadets were warned to keep busy and to find solace in their horse, dog, and gun, to enjoy the natural beauty of western landscapes.

The new officers sitting in front of the general may have contemplated a life of monotony, but Sherman assured them that frontier duty would soon disappear. The Army would hasten that day by offering “protection and encouragement to that industrious mass of our fellow citizens who press forward to carry civilization and the arts of the white man to the remotest parts of the center of this great continent.” True, Indians stood in the way, but Sherman charged the cadets to hasten their “inevitable fate” with a “due regard to humanity and mercy.” Indians were unwilling to labor, unwilling to till the soil, and unwilling to abandon their territories, and the general warned against a sympathetic disposition towards Indians and their necessary conquest. These were questions that Sherman wanted the cadets to consider, particularly since their education at West Point had provided little preparation for frontier duty: “I have thrown out a few of these thoughts” the general said, “because I know you will soon have to grapple with them, and I believe they are not written down in any of your text books.”⁵³ One can imagine rows of cadets, hot, bored, and anxious to complete their graduation and perhaps do some celebrating. However, a few of the more thoughtful may have paused at Sherman’s warning, reflecting that their military training had offered almost no direction for the sort of warfare they could be facing after leaving the academy. Indian warriors featured prominently in the US cultural imagination, but far less prominently in the educational institutions and strategic policies of the Army.

⁵³ Devens and Sherman, *Address to the Graduating Class*, 25-26.

As the class of 1876 listened to Sherman's prediction of inevitable conquest, Cheyenne, Arapaho and Lakota warriors were preparing to offer a stunning rebuttal to US militarism on the northern plains. In the summer of 1876 the Army invaded the territory of the Lakota Sioux and their allies, targeting those bands who refused to submit to the reservation system and resisted continuing encroachment on Native lands. Just three days after Sherman's speech at West Point an Army column under General George Crook was checked on June 17th at the Battle of the Rosebud, and on June 25th-26th, Custer and the Seventh Cavalry suffered more than 300 casualties at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. "Custer's last stand," as the debacle came to be known, shocked the nation. As for the freshly graduated cadets, perhaps the anticipated boredom of a frontier posting was replaced with the fear of following in Custer's footsteps.

Introduction

In his speech at West Point Sherman worried that military education had little to say about Indian fighting, but less than two weeks later Custer was defeated attempting to execute what had become a core strategy of the Army in the nineteenth-century wars with Indian people. He charged the Native villages at dawn in the hopes of taking them by surprise and unleashing wholesale slaughter. And while the attack of the Seventh Cavalry ended in defeat, they had used that same tactic with devastating consequences in the years previous. This disconnect raises a question: how could the Army have a set of go-to strategies without an apparatus for training officers in their use? The answer lies in an exploration of the institutional, cultural, and political factors that influenced how the US military approached its role in the conquest of North America. This chapter will chart the development of a militarized colonialism that became embedded in the institutions of the US military over the course of the nineteenth century. What

emerges is a story about the relationship between militarism and culture, and the colonial violence that was central to the rise of modern biopolitical state-power.

This is not an easy story to uncover given how little the strategic and tactical apparatuses of the US military seriously considered Native people. This, in turn, has not encouraged engagement by contemporary academics. Few scholars of US military history have paid serious attention to the violence of settler-colonialism, and when they do they tend to deemphasize its influence, pointing to the lack of archival materials and fitting it into a narrative about broader military trends such as the rise of “total war.” Acknowledging the lack of source material, John Gates writes that “surprisingly, all of that experience in irregular warfare fostered virtually no doctrinal development and produced no doctrine of pacification.”⁵⁴ This has been variously attributed to belief that the Indian Wars were a temporary problem, a distraction from the military’s goal of preparing for overseas conflict, and disdain for the “savage” conflicts of the frontier, so far removed from the province of “civilized” war.⁵⁵ General John Pope derided the developmental value of the Indian Wars, arguing that they were not “conducive to the proper discharge of military duty or the acquirement, either in theory or practice, by officers or soldiers, of professional knowledge or even of the ordinary tactics of a battalion.”⁵⁶ However, Pope’s attitude did not stop him from penning articles and preparing reports with numerous recommendations for how federal Indian policy should function.

Pope’s perspective captures the contradictions in how nineteenth century officers viewed these conflicts, which they were often completely preoccupied with but simultaneously

⁵⁴ John M. Gates “Indians and Insurrectors: The US Army’s Experience with Insurgency,” *Parameters*, XIII, No. 1 (1983).

⁵⁵Gates, “Indians and Insurrectos”; Frank N. Schubert and Defense Department, *Other Than War: The American Military Experience and Operations in the Post-Cold War Decade* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2013).

⁵⁶ Schubert, “Other than War.”

dismissive of. In fact, by the end of the nineteenth century the US military *had* developed a doctrine of pacification. The problem was that only a few military publications acknowledged it, and much of the discussion of Native pacification took place in civil and administrative venues. Because there is no Indian Wars equivalent to the influential *Small Wars Manual* of the US Marine Corps (1940) or the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (2006), military historians like Gates very reasonably bemoan what they see as a gap in the military's doctrinal development. However, a doctrinal outline is there if one is willing to widen the lens to cultural discourses about the future of Native people, and chart how these conversations intersected with military violence.

By the late-nineteenth century a military consensus for how to wage Indian warfare began to emerge from a mishmash of strategic, political, and cultural strands of thought. Early military theorists in North America were slow to establish a formal set of tactics for conflicts with Native people. What they did write balanced disdain and admiration, on the one hand dismissive of the "barbarous enemy," on the other hand impressed by Indians ability to maneuver and take their opponents by surprise.⁵⁷ Ideas about racial difference determined how most Native violence was interpreted, cordoning it off from the "civilized" tradition of European warfare. Savage, primitive, and skulking were the keywords that structured attitudes towards Indian fighting, proliferated in early American literature, from captivity narratives to literature such as James Fenimore-Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*. In the years leading up to the Civil War a widespread belief in manifest destiny, the United States' divinely ordained right to continental expansion, made continued Native resistance to settler-colonialism increasingly galling. Anglo-Americans viewed themselves as waging defensive conflicts against dangerous

⁵⁷ James Smith, *A Treatise on the Mode and Manner of Indian War, Their Tactics, Discipline and Encampments, the Various Methods They Practice, in Order to Obtain the Advantage* (Paris: J. R. Lyle, 1812), 10.

enemies rather than expansionist invasions. As the nineteenth century passed and conflicts with Native people intensified the US military found itself with an ideological coherence and strategic incoherence. Native people were firmly situated on the savage side of a civilized/savage binary, imagined as primitive impediments to national progress. However, there were almost no formal strategies for fighting them, nor did the burgeoning institutions of military professionalism spend much time on training for these conflicts. It was not until the decades after the Civil War that a more formalized program for Indian warfare began to coalesce.

By the time of the Civil War the figure of the savage Indian was a cultural trope representative of guerilla fighters. Comparisons to Indians was used to critique both Union and Confederate violence. The upheaval of the Civil War would raise a host of questions about what is appropriate in warfare, particularly with regard to noncombatants, and the specter of Native violence hovered over these debates. However, the Civil War did more than simply confirm the discursive position of the Indian as the representation of guerilla fighters. It made visible a mode of warfare that was already normalized in conflicts with Native people. The Civil War made the “population” an increasingly important part of the vocabulary of the US military. The philosophical tradition of biopolitics that emerges from the work of Michel Foucault similarly emphasizes the rise of population-centric forms of state power in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but largely focuses on health, sexuality, and other sites of state-intervention into the lives of populations. Building on these theorizations of biopower, this chapter explores the biopolitical dimensions of this population-centric approach to warfare, often viewed as a revolutionary development of the Union’s Civil War effort. In fact, the wedding of biopolitical state power to military violence coalesced more completely in the systems of violence and governance that accompanied the conquest of Native peoples.

Many contemporary historians credit generals like William Tecumseh Sherman and Philip Sheridan with bringing this population-centric form of war, often referred to as “total war,” into the mainstream of the US military. However, if we situate our perspective looking east from Indian country it is more accurate to say that the Civil War brought strategies of indiscriminate warfare into the realm of “civilized war,” previously relegated to wars with the “savages.” What had been standard when fighting Native people was now rationalized by the modernizing military. This development would, in turn, influence the decades after the war. By the end of the nineteenth century it was standard for campaigns against Native people to be explicitly targeted at both combatants and non-combatants, with victory understood in much broader terms than the simple defeat of enemy warriors. This trajectory has typically been folded into a story about the rise of total war. However, this period more accurately reflects the converging forms of civil, governmental, and military power that coalesced into a colonial doctrine aimed at eliminating Native independence. Correcting recalcitrant populations, defeating fighters unilaterally defined as guerillas, and forcefully incorporating people into the burgeoning settler-state is an example of a modern military developing policies that would later become central to counterinsurgency warfare. Colonialism was intrinsic to the development of this more biopolitical form of military violence.

Total war simply does not go deep enough. It can be a useful way to highlight the severity of many of the Army’s attacks on Native villages. It conjures up the smoke, horror, noise, and death that accompanied these attacks, which often began with gunfire and the charging of horses, and ended with bonfires of Native lodges, food, and supplies. But officers thought about their campaigns in broad terms; surprise attacks and noncombatant deaths were not opposed to the provision of food, housing, and the careful management of Native lives. In

fact, the two worked together. Native life was the object of colonial power, a power that could be expressed through a rifle and through a sack of sugar. Destroyed buffalo meat had to be replaced with beef rations; destroyed ponies and the mobility they enabled had to be replaced with the fixity of the reservation. Native people were subject to a dense network of colonial controls, including the distribution of food, clothing and other necessities, the forced acculturation of Indian boarding schools, or the creation of allotment ledgers which allowed for the mapping and tracking of individuals and families. As Philip Deloria notes, these controls translated into power over Native people, making them “intimately visible to the colonial bureaucracy.”⁵⁸

The story of the Indian Wars slides between extermination and incorporation, which played out culturally in speeches and books, and materially in the policies of the military and the Indian Bureau. In the aftermath of the Army’s defeat by Lakota warriors at the Battle of the Hundred Slain or the Fetterman Fight in 1866, William T. Sherman angrily declared that “we must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux... even to their extermination, men, women and children.”⁵⁹ Ten years later he was encouraging West Point graduates to act with humanity and mercy. To be sure, these were different moments, both of which were public utterances intended to serve political goals. But neither is simple hyperbole. The nineteenth century military formulated policies that could balance extreme violence with the provision of those things necessary to sustain life. Native people could be eliminated while they were incorporated, killed, removed, or resettled.

As the strategic incoherence of the early nineteenth century began to erode the military found itself in a position specific to an army at the vanguard of settler-colonialism. By the end of the nineteenth century most US military officers were saying similar things about Native people:

⁵⁸ Philip Joseph Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 26-27.

⁵⁹ Russell Frank Weigley, *The American Way of War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 158.

Indians were doomed to vanish, and the mission of the military was to manage this inevitable disappearance and stamp out any remaining resistance, while regulating those who could be forced to surrender their autonomy. This militarized approach to the “Indian question” positioned Native people at the threshold of life and death and inaugurated a politics of euthanasia. The military’s job was, as one officer put it, to “smooth the downward road of this doomed race.” Native people were positioned as the living dead of US expansion and then forcefully brought into a system of governance. This meant that the provision of goods, resources, shelter, and other necessities were coterminous with policies intended to manage elimination. They were presumed to be headed towards extinction; the euthanasia-politics of military policy was aimed at managing that extinction. There is something fundamentally different about fighting a war against a population you believe is going to disappear regardless of that war’s outcome. This is a war at the threshold between life and death, inclusion and exclusion, a war in which the outcome is already decided in the minds of those issuing orders about who lives and who dies. This politics of military euthanasia leaves us with a question: how these beliefs manifested themselves in the strategies and tactics of the Indian Wars. The quote from the epigraph claims that “savages can only be governed by a military system,” and this chapter will tell the story of that system’s emergence in theory and in practice.

The People as a Military Objective: Military History and the Indian Wars

On August 1st, 1866, Lieutenant James Pike wrote a letter to William Tecumseh Sherman from the barracks at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. In the letter Pike thanks Sherman for the general’s interest in his career, which Sherman had developed while Pike was serving as a courier for the general during the Civil War. Pike reports that he has taken Sherman’s advice and committed himself to military study, currently reading Jomini’s *The Art of War*, Bismarck’s *Lectures on the*

Tactics of Cavalry, and Dennis Mahan's treatise on advanced guards and outpost duty.⁶⁰ In 1866 Pike and the rest of the US military was emerging from the restructuring that followed the Civil War and poised on the brink of 40 years of intensified conflict with Native peoples in the western portions of the continent. However, Pike, along with the rest of the military, had received little-to-no training in the specific forms of combat they were likely to face in wars with Native peoples. The books listed in his letter to Sherman make no mention of Native people, nor do they specifically focus on the military needs of the frontier soldier. Pike would eventually be posted to California where, according to popular legend (and the Texas State Historical Association website), he accidentally shot himself by smashing the barrel of his gun against a rock during a skirmish. A more thorough tactical study of frontier military strategy may not have prevented Pike's untimely death, but Pike, along with the rest of the army, spent the nineteenth century more focused on the strategic tradition of European militaries rather than conflicts closer to home.

Pike's letter to Sherman is indicative of what post-war US Army officers thought were important texts. Jomini and Bismarck were both European military theorists, with Jomini in particular occupying an influential role in the education of the US army's officer corps in the nineteenth century. However, the warfare advocated in his and other European's texts would have little to do with the sort of combat soldiers faced against Native warriors. Dennis Hart Mahan, an influential professor at the US Military Academy at West Point, was more familiar with the needs of an army in the vanguard of settler-colonial expansion, but most of his written work made no mention of Native people or tactics. Aside from a cursory inclusion in his antebellum lectures at the USMA, Mahan and the rest of the professors at West Point prepared

⁶⁰ James Pike, "James Pike to William Tecumseh Sherman," August 1, 1866, William Tecumseh Sherman Papers, Box 19, Reel 11, Library of Congress.

young officers through a curriculum firmly grounded in the European tradition with little attention paid to the duties most of their students would occupy following graduation.⁶¹ It is almost striking the degree to which combat with Native people was ignored by the nineteenth century US military. The post-Civil War period saw an explosion in publications, books, lectures, and educational institutions, “an awakening professionalism.” However, this increase in professional activity was focused on the “conventional” wars the military might face in the future and largely ignored the “unconventional” wars of the present.⁶² In fact, there was no consensus on whether the “Indian Wars” were actually a war.

In an 1876 Senate debate senator John Ingalls criticized his colleague John Logan’s refusal to award honorary rankings to soldiers fighting in Indian Wars, saying “You do not even dignify it with the title of war; you do not acknowledge it to be a condition of war; you dispatch converging columns into an enemy's country, order them to rendezvous at a certain point; they continue for months in the field. And when they ask the Senate for recognition of their heroic deeds, you refuse them the cheap embellishment of a brevet!”⁶³ The refusal to award Brevet rank, honorary promotions similar to medals, for service on the frontier demonstrates that even congress was unsure whether they were at war with Native people. Senator Logan argued that he opposed brevetting “on the ground that the law recognizes brevets only in time of war for gallant conduct in the face of the enemy... If the senate will not recognize glory in Indian warfare there will not be any glory in Indian warfare.”⁶⁴ The Indian Wars are also difficult to define because

⁶¹ Andrew Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, US Army, 1998).

⁶² Robert M Utley, *Frontier Regulars: the United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891* (New York: Macmillan, 1974). 44; Perry D. Jamieson, *Crossing the Deadly Ground: United States Army Tactics, 1865-1899* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), XII.

⁶³ United States Congress, *Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the Forty-Fourth Congress* (Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1876), p. 3951.

⁶⁴ Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 21.

they encompassed such a broad range of activities. Certainly Philip Sheridan's devastating 1868 campaign on the southern plains was a war, but what about first lieutenant Royal Whiteman's decision to allow a community of Aravaipa Apache people to farm and live in proximity to Camp Grant in Arizona in the 1870's? Both actions resulted in the massacre of Native people, but one was a coordinated military campaign while the other was a conscious effort to enforce President Grant's "peace policy" and *reduce* conflict.⁶⁵ Are both examples of the Indian Wars? Should we include the attempts to govern, protect, feed, police, house, and control Native peoples under the umbrella of the Indian Wars? Lieutenant Whiteman wasn't the only military official attempting to balance a range of policies and goals amidst bitter public debates over "the Indian question." Adding to the confusion, it wasn't until most officials considered the Indian wars to be over, in 1890, that congress retroactively awarded Brevets for service in the "Indian Wars." These "wars" only became official once they were widely considered to be over.⁶⁶

If the reading list of young Lieutenant Pike cannot offer a glimpse of the strategic approach to the Indian wars, where can we look? How did the Army adapt itself to a landscape of violence that was so different from their training, rooted as it was in the colonial process? How to fight these wars-that-were-not-wars? Despite the privileging of massive worldwide wars in the narrative of US history, the country has spent more time engaged in interventions, occupations, irregular wars and counterinsurgencies, and the Indian Wars were one of the earliest sustained conflicts that fall into this category. They were fought with an eye for the elimination of Native people and their simultaneous incorporation into the US state. What follows will begin to answer that question, by surveying a selection of texts published by writers affiliated with the

⁶⁵ Karl Jacoby, *Shadows at Dawn: An Apache Massacre and the Violence of History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009).

⁶⁶ Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 21.

US military. These texts, taken together, demonstrate a developing attitude towards the Indian Wars that was increasingly coherent in the decades after the Civil War. This archive, when combined with the second half of this chapter that focuses on the public debate over the “Indian question,” shows that the US military quietly developed a highly influential set of strategies for conducting settler-colonial warfare.

Indian Fighting in Early America

Although this section proceeds from the fact that a comparatively small amount of early US military theory focused specifically on the Indian Wars, there were a few writers who took up the question. Early texts focused on racial and ethnic differences, becoming more professional and strategic in the second half of the century. Some even explicitly acknowledge the lack of strategic literature, a lack they aimed to correct. William Smith’s *Expedition Against the Ohio Indians*, published in Philadelphia in 1765, worried that “scarce any thing has been published on a subject now become of the highest importance to our colonies,” and looked forward to the day when “a compleat system is at length formed for the conduct of this particular species of war.”⁶⁷ Smith would have waited a long time. It was not until the late 1800’s that US military theorists began to form a somewhat cohesive approach to Indian fighting. However, Smith provides an early glimpse into how Europeans attempted to make sense of their Native allies (and enemies).

The earliest accounts produced by Anglo military personnel understood Native violence in racial terms. They make recommendations that bear on tactics and strategy, the tactical observations emanating from the already-intact racial beliefs. In his narrative of Bouquet’s expedition during Pontiac’s War, Smith argues that “the advantages of the savages over civilized nations are both natural and acquired. They are tall and well limbed, remarkable for their

⁶⁷ William Smith and Charles Guillaume Frédéric Dumas, *Historical Account of Bouquet’s Expedition against the Ohio Indians, in 1764*, Bouquet’s Expedition against the Ohio Indians. (Cincinnati: R. Clarke, 1868), 94.

activity, and have a piercing eye and quick ear, which are of great service to them in the woods.”⁶⁸ Because Smith believed that Native warriors carried both innate and learned advantages in war, particularly in heavily forested areas, he recommends avoiding war whenever possible: “Experience has convinced us that it is not our interest to be at war with them; but, if after having tried all means to avoid it, they force us to it (which in all probability will happen often) we should endeavor to fight them upon more equal terms.”⁶⁹ As Richard White and Phil Deloria have argued, US settler-colonialism has consistently mobilized a discourse of “defensive conquest” to reframe invasion as a defensive struggle where settlers are always under attack.⁷⁰ Smith’s narrative shows that even pre-revolution Anglo settler-colonialism was being constructed in defensive terms, not as an invasion but as a reluctant response to conflicts forced by Native people. Europeans are portrayed as avoiding conflict, which Smith recommends, but which he also believes is inevitable. Smith’s narrative focuses on one of the earliest British expeditions into the Ohio valley, and is an early example of a military problem that would preoccupy later writers: how to fight a “savage” enemy using “civilized” means.

A different Smith was responsible for penning another early account of Indian fighting. James Smith, who fought in the 7 Years War, Pontiac’s war, and lead an anti-Indian militia in Pennsylvania, spent time as a captive of the Delaware and used that experience to endorse the validity of his narrative. In similar fashion to William Smith he criticizes the lack of written strategy when it comes to Indian fighting, arguing that early New England colonists, while somewhat successful in their wars with Indians, left very little record of their tactics. The result was a colonial population unprepared for Indian fighting, in his estimate losing 50 men for every

⁶⁸ Smith, *Historical Account*, 95.

⁶⁹ Smith, *Treatise*, 96-100.

⁷⁰ Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 50.

one Native warrior killed during Braddock's failed campaign to capture Fort Duquesne.⁷¹ Smith intended his work, *A Treatise on the Mode and Manner of Indian War*, to act as a resource to correct this problem. He celebrates certain aspects of Native tactics, but is wary of taking this emulation too far lest the boundary between civilized and savage be crossed.

In general Smith thinks very highly of Native warriors, going so far as to claim that the colonists' experiences in Indian fighting lead to success against the British during the Revolution. He argues that "after fighting such artful, subtle barbarous enemy as the Indians, we were not terrified at the approach of the British red coats."⁷² Smith criticizes popular descriptions of Indians as undisciplined savages. He argues that Indians are extremely well-disciplined but cautions that "we may learn from the Indians what is useful and laudable and at the same time lay aside their barbarous proceedings." The danger, according to Smith, was that the imitation of tactics could slip into racial degeneracy. He cautioned that "it is much to be lamented that some of our frontier riflemen are prone to imitate them in their inhumanity."⁷³ Here Smith articulates a central concept of the writing on the tactics of Native fighters. The Indian warrior is to be respected, sometimes allied with, but never emulated. For Smith, Native prowess in combat was threatening both as an effective impediment to settlement and a source of racial corruption.⁷⁴ This would prove a central problem for the small number of military theorists that would take up the question of Indian warfare: was it possible to fight an uncivilized war against a savage enemy while remaining civilized? This preoccupation with savage warfare and the threat it held as a contaminant for civilized forms of violence is indicative of the anxiety writers like Smith had to grapple with. They clearly believed that Indian warriors were skilled and effective, but they also

⁷¹ Smith, *Treatise*, 2.

⁷² *Ibid*, 10.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 46.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 4-5.

believed that Indians were racially distinct, primitive, and unable or unwilling to conform to the ideals of Euro-American civilization. As a result, imitation could only go so far lest the settlers become the very thing they fought against.

The narratives written by both Smiths, while intended to specifically address tactical deficiencies in Indian fighting, were published outside formal military channels. It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that literature began to emerge addressed specifically to the US military. In 1859 Captain Randolph Barnes Marcy wrote “The Prairie Traveler” which was intended to prepare graduates of the US Military Academy at West Point for frontier service and serve as a guide for settlers traveling overland to the west. Andrew Birtle, who has made an extensive survey of US military literature focused on counterinsurgency, calls it “perhaps the single most important work on the conduct of frontier expeditions published under the aegis of the War Department.” Marcy’s text aimed to correct what he perceived to be deficiencies in the training of army officers, who were well prepared in the European tradition but unready for the fighting they were likely to face on the frontier. In his introduction Marcy argues that “the education of our officers at the Military Academy is doubtless well adapted to the art of civilized warfare, but cannot familiarize them with the diversified details of border service.” Even as Marcy worried about the cadets’ readiness to face Indian enemies, he, similarly to Smith, warned that exposure to frontier violence would corrupt white soldiers. Marcy writes that the “restless and warlike habits of the nomadic tribes renders the soldier’s life almost as unsettled as that of the savages themselves.”⁷⁵ Here the word “settle” takes on a double meaning, as soldiers’ efforts in the service of settlement threaten to *unsettle* their differentiation from Native people.

⁷⁵ Randolph Barnes Marcy, *The Prairie Traveler: A Hand-Book for Overland Expeditions*. (Denver: N. Mumey, 1959), xi.

Marcy frames his concerns in terms of a civilized / savage binary, but also discusses irregular warfare and the unique problems it presents for expansionist empires. Calling standard training inadequate for Indian warfare Marcy describes a range of practices, including how to march through enemy territory, how to prevent Indians from stampeding horses, how to avoid ambushes, and the necessity of using Indian scouts against other Native peoples. For Marcy the problem was how to fight an enemy “who is everywhere without being anywhere,” a phrase that has become something of a counterinsurgency axiom.⁷⁶ Indian warfare posed particular problems for Marcy, writing that “with such an enemy the strategic science of civilized nations loses much of its importance, and finds but rarely, and only in peculiar localities, an opportunity to be put in practice.”⁷⁷ For Marcy the problem of the Indian War is both ideological and tactical: its deviation from the civilized norm makes it difficult to prosecute and threatens the racial integrity of the settler-colony by encouraging “savagery” in all participants. In the end most of Marcy’s advice involves vigilance, careful attention to the movement of troops, and treating all Indians as potentially hostile in order to avoid ambush. His text is one of the most thorough guides to “Indian Fighting” produced by someone affiliated with the US military, particularly before the Civil War. With Marcy we see an increasingly tactical tone, albeit one embedded in the racialized approach to violence that he inherited from earlier writers. These wars were the exception to traditional training, but in the decades after the Civil War the exception became the rule. The upheaval of the Civil War would push officers to build on Marcy’s text and increasingly put Native populations at the center of military strategy.

⁷⁶ Marcy, *The Prairie Traveler*, xi.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

The Civil War

The Civil War resides uneasily in the middle of this section. It functions as a pivot point, inaugurating the development of a far more cohesive set of tactics that the US military used in wars with Native people. Most histories of the US military consider the late-nineteenth century Indian Wars in relation to the Civil War, often as an extension of the Civil War's more extreme elements. That chronology obfuscates the longer history of conquest and the ways in which the Civil War made visible practices that had long been normalized in the wars of colonial conquest. Ultimately the Civil War was neither an interlude from colonization nor a blueprint for the conquests that would follow. Representations of Native people as archetypal guerilla fighters helped Union and Confederate soldiers to make sense of the perceived excesses of their opponents. And while the actions of (in)famous generals like Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan did not invent an entirely new mode of "total war" that was targeted at Native people in the war's aftermath, they did bring to the forefront a mode of "population-centric warfare" that had always quietly undergirded the military expansion of the United States.

By the time the North and South were engaged in the Civil War Indians were firmly embedded in the US imaginary as guerilla warriors or elusive insurgents. The earliest British colonists were constantly frustrated by the hit-and-run tactics of their Native enemies, calling them "more wolves than men" that fought in a "secret, skulking manner."⁷⁸ The figure of the violent, elusive Indian would be proliferated in early American literature, and by the time of the Civil War was a common image, a tool to critique the tactics and behavior of enemy soldiers.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Patrick M. Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics among the New England Indians* (Lanham: Madison Books, 1991), 24.

⁷⁹ For an extensive study of the figure of the Indian in early American literature see Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).

For example, reports from the Union occupation of Missouri stated that Confederate guerillas were “committing atrocities more inhuman than those of Indian savages.”⁸⁰ Confederate guerilla activity was a consistent problem for Union forces, and the long history of warfare against Native peoples provided a ready template to characterize guerilla violence (and justify harsh union responses).

When George Crook, a veteran Indian fighter who served in the Pacific Northwest before the war, took command of a regiment in West Virginia, his troops were happy to have an experienced guerilla fighter in charge. One soldier wrote that “Colonel Crook is a regular Old Indian fighter,” while another predicted that Crook would turn the tables on the rebels, “he having been practising those warlike arts for over ten years among the Indians on our western frontiers.”⁸¹ The country was, according to Crook, full of “bushwhackers” and in his autobiography he wrote that “being fresh from the Indian country where I have more or less experience with that kind of warfare, I set to work organizing for the task.”⁸² With an experienced Indian fighter for a leader, and with a rising tide of anti-guerilla sentiment, Crook’s troops began shooting captured Confederate guerillas rather than sending them to military prisons, the official record usually reporting an accidental discharge of a gun, or a fall resulting in a broken neck.⁸³ Crook seems to have approved of this take-no-prisoners approach, writing that “in a short time no more of these prisoners were brought in.”⁸⁴ Guerillas were situated

⁸⁰ United States War Dept., *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1863), 29.

⁸¹ Kenneth W. Noe, and Shannon H. Wilson, eds. *The Civil War in Appalachia: Collected Essays* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 114-115.

⁸² George Crook, *General George Crook, His Autobiography* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), 86-87; Christopher J. Einolf, *America in the Philippines, 1899-1902: The First Torture Scandal* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 29-31.

⁸² Crook, *General George Crook*, 87.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 29-31.

⁸⁴ Crook, *General George Crook*, 87.

outside of the protections offered to enemy soldiers under the rules of war, and, through comparison to Indians, rendered as the savages against whom exceptional violence could be deployed. The report on Missouri guerillas in the 1863 annual report of the Secretary of War argues that “Most of these bands are not authorized belligerents under the laws of war, but simply outlaws from civilized society... They usually hide themselves in the woods, and being well mounted, move rapidly from one point to another, supplying themselves by the way with provisions and fresh horses.”⁸⁵ The figure of the uncivilized “belligerent” striking from concealment and hiding in the woods would have been familiar to a nineteenth century writer, as those were the terms in which Native warfare was discussed from the earliest colonial conflicts.⁸⁶ The language of irregular or guerilla warfare in the United States has its origins in characterizations of Native violence.

Union officers were not the only ones to use Native people as the basis for critique of their enemies. Confederate general Wade Hampton chastised W.T. Sherman’s march through Georgia by arguing that even Native people spared female captives, who Hampton accused Sherman’s troops of assaulting. Hampton wrote that “the Indian scalped his victim regardless of age or sex, but, with all his barbarity, he always respected the persons of his female captives. Your soldiers, more savage than the Indian, insult those whose natural protectors are absent.”⁸⁷ In this instance the image of the Indian is used as the ruler against which Union atrocities can be measured. Hampton deploys the figure of the barbaric Indian but argues that Sherman’s foraging parties go even further in their depredations than Native warriors. His reference to “their natural

⁸⁵ United States War Dept., *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1863), 29

⁸⁶ For example, see Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Knopf, 1998).

⁸⁷ United States War Dept., *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1865/66).

protectors” evokes southern patriarchal ideals that were similarly used to justify violence against black men. The related accusation that Native men routinely assaulted white female captives was a central feature of captivity literature from the period of British settlement. Hampton turns that stereotype on its head in order to portray Union soldiers as the epitome of savagery in war. Just like the reports on Missouri guerillas, the figure of the Indian was readily available as a measure of what was acceptable in warfare. The specific target of Hampton’s criticism—Sherman and his march through the Deep South—is perhaps the most enduring example of the brutality of the Civil War. And the tactics that Hampton critiqued, the population-centric warfare that sought to deprive southern noncombatants as much as defeat Confederate soldiers, wedded the burgeoning biopolitical tendencies of nineteenth century state power to the sort of military violence the US Army had typically reserved for Native people.

In 1864 William Tecumseh Sherman ordered his troops moving through Confederate Georgia to “enforce a devastation more or less relentless” against soldiers, guerillas, and civilians that resisted the Union army.⁸⁸ The so-called “march to the sea” sent a Union army of 65,000 men tearing through Georgia and South Carolina, living off the land and destroying rails, mills, and other economic and civil targets. Although not a contemporary term, many historians now recognize Sherman’s southern campaign as an early example of “total war” by the US Army, a war targeted not only at enemy soldiers but also resources and infrastructure crucial to civilian life. Historians have analyzed the Civil War as a precursor to the mechanized world wars of the twentieth century.⁸⁹ This total war was waged against entire populations, the complete

⁸⁸ John Bigelow, *The Principles of Strategy: Illustrated Mainly from American Campaigns* (Philadelphia: Lippincott), 100.

⁸⁹ Lance Janda, “Shutting the Gates of Mercy: The American Origins of Total War, 1860-1880,” *The Journal of Military History* 59, no. 1 (January 1995): 7-26.

destruction of enemy societies and their war-making capability.⁹⁰ Sherman argued that “we are not only fighting hostile armies, but a hostile people, and must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war.”⁹¹

Sherman wasn't the only Union general to embrace the “hard hand of war.” Ulysses S. Grant, as commanding general, orchestrated the transition of Union strategy away from one of conciliation towards southern civilians and towards a more punitive approach intended to damage confederate morale and hasten the war's end.⁹² Rather than relying on supply trains Grant authorized Union armies to forage and acquire food and supplies from the Confederate territories they moved through, and to destroy elements of Confederate infrastructure crucial to the war effort. Similarly, General Philip Sheridan razed the Shenandoah Valley in 1864, destroying food production in a region crucial to the Confederate supply effort.⁹³

These practices were a break with what Russel Weigley calls “the conservative military tradition of West Point.” According to this view Grant, Sherman and Sheridan did not invent a completely new mode of warfare, but they did “rediscover it in their own time,” as Lance Janda argues.⁹⁴ Total war was a departure from the European practices of warfare studied in the educational institutions of the US military in the nineteenth century. These traditions governing conflict emphasized the laws of civilized nations and the restraint placed on armies with regard to civilian populations. In civilized war, in contrast to so-called “savage war” of “barbarous armies,” protection of enemy civilians was the rule.⁹⁵ According to this view the tactics of

⁹⁰ Russell Frank Weigley, *Towards an American Army; Military Thought from Washington to Marshall* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962)

⁹¹ Weigley, *Towards an American Army*, 78.

⁹² Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 3.

⁹³ Weigley, *Towards an American Army*, 81.

⁹⁴ Janda, “Shutting the Gates of Mercy,” 8.

⁹⁵ Francis Lieber, *Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States, in the Field* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1863), Code 24.

Sherman and others were a departure from the military tradition of their time. Sherman's devastating marches and Sheridan's razing of Virginia left an enduring mark on the US army – Janda argues that “by the time of Lee's surrender at Appomattox, an entire generation of Army officers had been exposed to the philosophy of total war.”⁹⁶ Sheridan, in his tours of the German army in the 1870's, went so far as to criticize the Germans for being too soft on the French. He told Bismarck that “you know how to hit an enemy as no other army does, but you have not learnt how to annihilate him. One must see more smoke of burning villages, otherwise you will not finish off the French.”⁹⁷

By 1870 Sheridan was intimately familiar with the “smoke of burning villages.” In the same decade Sheridan was encouraging the German army to burn French villages he was in charge of operations that burned numerous Native villages on the southern plains. This was probably his immediate reference point, as his tour of Europe came right after that devastating campaign. As revolutionary as Weigley argue these Civil War tactics were, their influence on the violence of settler-colonialism has been fleetingly recognized. Janda argues that only a handful of scholars have noted the similarities between the methods used to defeat the South and those used against Native peoples, instead emphasizing the influence of total war on the world wars of the twentieth century. However, three of the most important officers in the development of total war during the Civil War, Grant, Sherman and Sheridan, were three of the most influential architects of the military policies carried out against Native peoples.

Top Union officers may have transitioned from the Civil War to frontier postings, but there was a marked difference in how they discussed their wars with native people. Sherman's

⁹⁶ Janda, “Shutting the Gates of Mercy,” 20.

⁹⁷ Basil Henry Liddell Hart, *The Revolution in Warfare* (Greenwood Publishing Group, 1980), 61; Ian Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and Their Opponents since 1750* (Routledge, 2004), 31.

“hard hand of war” was even harder when directed at Natives. Attempting to justify his order to expel civilians from Atlanta in 1864, Sherman wrote that “I knew that the people of the South would read in this measure two important conclusions: one, that we were in earnest; and the other, if they were sincere in their common and popular clamor ‘to die in the last ditch,’ that opportunity would soon come.”⁹⁸ Two years later, in response to the US army’s defeat at the Fetterman Fight in 1866, Sherman declared that “we must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux, even to their extermination, men, women, and children.”⁹⁹ In both instances Sherman’s rhetoric is aimed at populations rather than armies. However, it is crucial to emphasize the differences that a colonial context exercised on military policy. The word extermination does not show up when northern generals discuss Confederate noncombatants. Indeed, this is where some of the criticism of the idea that the Civil War was the origin of “total war” comes from. Mark Neely argues that the idea of total war originates in the twentieth century and was focused on tactics, like strategic bombing, that eroded the boundary between civilians and combatants. In Neely’s view Sherman and Sheridan preserved this boundary in their southern campaigns. He argues that “the essential aspect of any definition of total war asserts that it breaks down the distinction between soldiers and civilians, combatants and noncombatants, and this no one in the Civil War did systematically, including William T. Sherman.”¹⁰⁰ Others have argued that the idea that the US Civil War was the first instance of total war is an expression of American exceptionalism. The Civil War becomes the “fulcrum of world military history” rather than one of many nineteenth century conflicts, such as those

⁹⁸ William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1875), 112.

⁹⁹ Janda, “Shutting the Gates of Mercy,” 7.

¹⁰⁰ Mark E. Neely, “Was the Civil War a Total War?” *Civil War History* 50, no. 4 (2004): 434–58, 458.

waged by Napoleon, that were enormous in scale and devastating to armies and nations.¹⁰¹ Neely concludes his essay by arguing that “it required airplanes and tanks and heartless twentieth-century ideas born in the hopeless trenches of World War 1 to break down distinctions adhered to in practice by almost all Civil War generals. Their war did little to usher in the shock of the new in the twentieth century.”¹⁰²

Neely may be correct that Sherman and Sheridan failed to step outside of the boundaries of civilized war in their southern campaigns. However, the erosion of distinctions between combatants and civilians did not require the trenches of World War 1. It was in place before the Civil War and built into the process of settler-colonialism. Scholars like Lance Janda draw a line from the Civil War to the late-nineteenth century Indian Wars and argue that the extreme violence carried out against Native peoples at places like Camp Grant, Washita, and Wounded Knee were extensions of the policies carried out in Georgia, Virginia and South Carolina. Others counter that attacks on noncombatants and the means to sustain life have been a consistent feature of wars fought between US soldiers and Native peoples, from the war of independence, to the Seminole Wars, to Civil War era massacres at Bear River and Sand Creek. This line of thinking emphasizes that race is a crucial differentiating factor between the Civil War and wars against Native people, with the belief in “savagery” serving to justify acts that would be unacceptable if carried out against white southerners.

A third interpretation of the relationship between the Civil War and the Indian Wars emphasizes military law, particularly General Order 100, the Lieber Codes developed by Prussian military theorist Francis Lieber. In an effort to control the treatment of non-combatants

¹⁰¹ Wayne Wei-Siang Hsieh, “Total War and the American Civil War Reconsidered: The End of an Outdated ‘Master Narrative,’” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 1, no. 3 (2011): 394–408.

¹⁰² Neely, “Civil War,” 458.

in occupied Confederate territory these codes established policies for prisoners and for defining the difference between combatants and civilians. John Fabian Witt argues that the Lieber Codes contained both constraints on the excesses of war and authorizations for total war tactics like property destruction, civilian relocation, and other tactics explicitly aimed at noncombatants. The code “was not merely a constraint on the tactics of the Union. It was also a weapon for the advancement of Union aims,” representative of a tension in the laws of war between constraints on violence and vindication of national policies.¹⁰³

The Lieber Code distinguished between the practices of civilized soldiers and “barbarous armies,” protecting uniformed combatants but harshly punishing guerillas, insurgents, and those fighting beyond the constraints of civilized warfare. In codes 20-22 Lieber notes that the rise of war between nation states places entire populations in the category of “enemy,” while arguing that civilized war still demands they be spared as much privation as possible. In code 24 Lieber notes that these protections rarely apply with “uncivilized people,” and warns that the line between “barbarous armies” and the civilized world can be eroded through “unjust retaliation.” The consequence would be a slippage towards “the internecine wars of savages.”¹⁰⁴ Witt argues that the Lieber codes offered a legitimation of the tactics used in the Indian Wars. He quotes Philip Sheridan, who defended his practice of burning Native villages by arguing that “during the war [Civil War], did anyone hesitate to attack a village or town occupied by the enemy because women or children were within its limits? Did we cease to throw shells into Vicksburg or Atlanta because women or children were there?”¹⁰⁵ Witt’s formulation is useful for showing how the modern world’s first codified “rules of warfare” contained mechanisms that legitimated the

¹⁰³John Fabian Witt, *Lincoln’s Code: The Laws of War in American History* (New York: Free Press, 2012), 4.

¹⁰⁴ Frances Lieber, *Instructions*, Codes 20-28.

¹⁰⁵ Witt, *Lincoln’s Code*, 337.

violence of US settler colonialism. However, there is a large difference between shelling or attacking a confederate town with the explicit goal of minimizing civilian casualties, as Union generals did, and attacking Native villages with the goal of killing women, children, and elders, in addition to burning supplies crucial for the sustenance of life. The Lieber Codes may have offered a means to justify Indian War tactics, but those tactics routinely exceeded the boundaries of the law, an excess driven by race, that the law cannot contain or justify.

The campaigns of Sherman and Sheridan did not suddenly make it permissible to target Native civilian populations with military violence.¹⁰⁶ In this sense total war was not a Civil War innovation that was then exported to the plains. However, the increasing attention paid to the materials that sustain life and “populations” as viable military targets did exert an influence on the US military. As the army moved west and generals like Sherman and Sheridan began planning campaigns to subjugate Native nations, they were practiced in adapting military tactics to population-centric warfare. Every aspect of Native life, down to food, clothing, and shelter, was included in the crosshairs of military campaigns. Few things highlight this better than the practice, which became standard, of gathering, cataloging, and burning the contents of Native villages that were captured. As Buffalo robes and tent poles were marked down in ledgers and then destroyed the military was rendering visible and quantifiable the process of destroying independent Native life. The Officers that oversaw these practices saw themselves, without contradiction, as both destroyers and protectors, replacing Native independence with US dominance.

¹⁰⁶ As others have noted, these hard measures had been a hallmark of conflicts between European settlers and Native peoples from the very beginning. See Wayne E. Lee, “Mind and Matter-Cultural Analysis in American Military History: A Look at the State of the Field.” *The Journal of American History* 93, no. 4 (2007): 1116–42, 1128.

A Blueprint for the Indian Wars

In 1866, only a year after the Civil War, Marcy published a follow up to *The Prairie Traveler*, a memoir titled *Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border*. He dedicated it to “a fast vanishing age,” and although it struck a more romantic and narrative tone it repeated many of the warnings found in his more prescriptive writing. As the Army transitioned from the Civil War he cautioned that “the modern schools of military science are ill suited to carrying on a warfare with the wild tribes of the plains.” This was because savages acknowledged “none of the ameliorating conventionalities of civilized warfare. Their tactics are such as to render the old system almost wholly impotent.” It’s hard to imagine the carnage of the Civil War as “ameliorating,” but Marcy’s language is just one example of the ways in which US military writers cordoned off the Indian Wars into an exceptional space. These wars were “uncivilized,” hence subject to a different set of rules and a different approach. Looking to another colonial empire, Marcy found inspiration in the French occupation of Algiers. He studied the writings of French officers and in a moment of inter-imperial racialization, noted similarities between Arab fighters and Native warriors, going so far as to argue that “their manner of making war is almost precisely the same, and a successful system of strategic operations for one will, in my opinion, apply to the other”¹⁰⁷ Drawing similar conclusions to the French, who had studied the tactics of Turkish soldiers, Marcy recommends surprise attacks as the only way to counter Native mobility. Ideally these surprise attacks would occur at night, with columns of soldiers quietly positioning themselves around a Native encampment and charging on a sudden signal. In somewhat dry tones Marcy describes how enemy Indians would be likely to “lose their presence of mind” in response to a sudden onslaught of gunfire and horses.¹⁰⁸ And that was just what US Army generals and settler-

¹⁰⁷ Randolph Barnes Marcy, *Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border*. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1866), 67-69.

¹⁰⁸ Marcy, *Thirty Years*, 74-75.

militias would do in the decades after the Civil War, at places like Sand Creek, Washita, Marias, and Camp Grant. This emphasis on attacking Native villages directly would become more explicit in the following decades.

In 1881 Edward S. Farrow, an instructor at West Point and former commander of Indian Scouts, published *Mountain Scouting: A Handbook for Officers and Soldiers on the Frontiers*. Interestingly, Farrow had been one of the graduating cadets in the audience during Sherman's commencement speech at West Point in 1876 which opened this chapter. In his introduction to a published edition, historian Jerome Greene writes that the book was "something of a phenomenon, for treatises dealing with the formal methodology of Indian warfare are virtually nonexistent."¹⁰⁹ Farrow's book moves closer to being an explicit handbook for a sort of proto-counterinsurgency. Like his predecessors Farrow is impressed by the military prowess of Native people but only to the extent that it justifies their conquest. He offers a range of advice similar to that found in Marcy's *Prairie Traveler*, focusing on the materials, landscapes, ecology, and survival strategies useful for soldiers in the field. However, when Farrow arrives at the section focused on Indian fighting he warns that "strategy loses its advantages against an enemy who accepts few or none of the conventionalities of civilized warfare."¹¹⁰ Farrow even uses a metaphor that has since become an enduring trope of counterinsurgency theory, writing that the Indian "is like the flea, 'put your finger on him and he is not there'".¹¹¹ Farrow seems to be specifically addressing Army soldiers, pointing out that their training in the conservative European tradition will only take them so far once they head west. In reality, different Native

¹⁰⁹ Frank N. Schubert, *Other Than War: The American Military Experience and Operations in the Post-Cold War Decade* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2013), endnote 31.

¹¹⁰ Edward Samuel Farrow, *Mountain Scouting: A Hand-Book for Officers and Soldiers on the Frontiers* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 239.

¹¹¹ Farrow, *Mountain Scouting*, 239.

nations had sophisticated and long-standing military traditions, training, tactics, and conventions.¹¹² They were certainly different than those of the US Army, but the stubborn refusal to confer an organized military legitimacy to Native warriors grew out of the impulse to position them as insurgent to US authority. Painting Native warfare as chaotic and barbaric was another way to delegitimize Native sovereignty.

In terms of tactics, Farrow outlines a series of strategies that became increasingly common in the years after the Civil War. These strategies made Native populations the focus of military campaigns, dispensing with attempting to defeat Native warriors in the field and instead focusing on destroying Native villages. He advises against offensive maneuvers that try to chase down Indian warriors, whose horsemanship and maneuverability was usually superior to that of US soldiers. Instead Farrow recommends attacking when noncombatants are present, writing that “at no time are Indians so helpless to make resistance as while moving their families and camps.” Additionally, these attacks should achieve the element of surprise, as “the Indian is least prepared to resist an attack made during that uncertain period between darkness and daylight.”¹¹³ Farrow specifically recommends the winter campaign, used to devastating effect by Philip Sheridan on the southern plains in the 1868-69. Campaigning in the winter eliminated the main advantage of Native fighters, their mobility, and offered the military a desirable target, immobilized groups of Native families. Farrow writes that a commander that can orchestrate a surprise attack in the midst of “cold winds, rain or snow, is surely a good *Indian fighter*” (emphasis his).¹¹⁴ By devising tactics aimed at catching villages unawares Sheridan and other officers practiced what has become an enduring feature of US counterinsurgency: making

¹¹² Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire*, 64-65.

¹¹³ Farrow, *Mountain Scouting*, 241.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 248.

noncombatants and the material resources that sustain life the focus of military strategy. This allowed the military to pursue its objective of destroying the ability of Native people to resist, often forcing submission to confinement on reservations. In this mode of warfare a pitched battle and the distribution of government beef could function as mutually reinforcing strategies. As the Indian Wars became increasingly violent, particularly towards noncombatants, the boundary between war and peace grew increasingly blurry.

Of the late-nineteenth century professional documents produced by the military, John Bigelow Jr's *The Principles of Strategy* was arguably the most prominent to include a section on Indian fighting.¹¹⁵ Russel Weigley calls Bigelow's work "the first complete textbook on strategy specifically calculated to meet the needs of the American service."¹¹⁶ Drawing from American examples instead of European ones, particularly from the Civil War, Bigelow set out to create a working manual of tactics and strategy specifically for the US military. Like Farrow, Bigelow highlights the value of surprise attacks on Indian villages. Noting the superior mobility of Indian fighters, he emphasizes the importance of the nighttime march so that troops can catch Indian encampments unawares. These nighttime marches were intended to set up devastating dawn cavalry charges: "Having reached the hostile camp, they silently surround it; and in the morning, as soon as it is light enough to aim, they summon their wily enemy to surrender."¹¹⁷ In Bigelow's narrative these nighttime marches culminated in a call to surrender, which cannot be attributed to naiveté or ignorance, as Bigelow was well aware of what typically happened when US soldiers caught a Native encampment unawares. In reality American troops were far more likely to charge the camp without warning, firing at anyone and anything that moved. General George

¹¹⁵ Peter Paret, Gordon A. Craig, and Felix Gilbert, eds. *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 439-440.

¹¹⁶ Weigley, *Towards an American Army*, 94.

¹¹⁷ Bigelow, *The Principles of Strategy*, 104.

Custer's report of the attack on Black Kettle's Cheyenne village along the Washita River in 1868 paints a clear picture of what was more likely to happen after one of these nighttime marches. Having reached the camp Custer split his command into four columns with orders to attack at dawn. He would later report that "there was never a more complete surprise. My men charged the village and reached the lodges before the Indians were aware of our presence."¹¹⁸ Here was Bigelow's advice in practice, minus the call to surrender. This tactic left hundreds of Cheyenne dead, wounded, or captured, including women, children, and the elderly. And it achieved this goal by focusing on Native populations as units to be surprised, attacked, captured, and driven onto reservations or left dead on the field to be buried by their escaped relatives. Bigelow was well aware of this, elsewhere emphasizing the effectiveness of destructive surprise attacks in an essay about the campaign against Apache leader Victorio.¹¹⁹ These surprise attacks were the rule, not an exception, and the same goes for the levels of indiscriminate violence they resulted in.

Military historians read Bigelow's *Principles of Strategy* as an early endorsement of total war in a US military textbook. Because Bigelow set out to write his book using American examples he spent a great deal of time on the Civil War, particularly the campaigns of Sherman, Grant and Sheridan. Breaking from the conservative European tradition that viewed the decisive defeat of the enemy army as war's objective, Bigelow included a section titled "The People as a Military Objective." In it he wrote that "war is brought home to a hostile people by depriving them of their civil and political rights and privileges, or of the comforts and conveniences, and perhaps the necessities, of life; by injuring their business, or by detracting in any other way from

¹¹⁸ "Report of Operations of the Command of Brevet Major General George A. Custer from December 7th, to December 22nd, 1868," Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

¹¹⁹ Theophilus Francis Rodenbough and William Lawrence Haskin, *The Army of the United States: Historical Sketches of Staff and Line with Portraits of Generals-in-Chief* (Maynard: Merrill, 1896), 295-296.

their individual welfare.”¹²⁰ The Union assault on Confederate infrastructure was certainly aimed at the rebel army, but it was also aimed directly at the southern people. Bigelow emphasizes the difference, which he argues is significant. For example, he separates Sheridan’s burning of the Shenandoah Valley, which was intended to destroy resources specifically intended for the Confederate army, and Sherman’s march to the sea, which was intended to deprive southerners generally.¹²¹ Grant and Sherman believed that residents of the Deep South were unaware that the war’s momentum was swinging towards the Union, and sought to encourage them to “submit without compromise.”¹²² Sherman’s subsequent march through Georgia and South Carolina forcefully brought the war home to the southern population and was aimed at convincing them to withdraw support from the rebel army. For Bigelow it was a radical departure for generals to view noncombatant populations as a unit to be targeted and defeated by an army. However, in the context of settler-colonialism this was neither radical nor new. Warfare against Native people had almost always been targeted at populations rather than armies.

Bigelow certainly did not consider Confederate civilians and Native peoples to be equivalent. Part of the reason that conflicts with Native people make up a comparatively smaller portion of his writing is because, like his peers, Bigelow positioned colonial violence at the edges warfare. In an essay for the *Journal of the Military Service Institution* Bigelow calls the soldiers employed against Native peoples “an army of occupation,” controlling Native people and keeping them restricted to their designated areas. He calls Native warriors “trespassers and marauders,” stripping them of any legitimate military designation and constructing them as insurgents, lacking a preexisting sovereignty. This foreshadows similar definitional moves

¹²⁰ Bigelow, *Principles of Strategy*, 228.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 229.

¹²² Weigley, *Towards an American Way of War*, 97.

common to other US counterinsurgency operations, emphasizing Bigelow's writing as a precursor for US counterinsurgency theory.

Bigelow's general instructions on Indian warfare do not deviate greatly from Farrow or the actual campaigns of Sheridan on the southern plains or George Crook on the northern plains. Overall Bigelow lists three distinct modes of operations against Indians: to chase them, to surprise them, or to wear them out, with the chase usually proving a futile exercise against highly mobile Native warriors.¹²³ Like other writers Bigelow recommends surprising Native villages to take away their mobility, allowing the Army to bring devastating and often decisive force to bear. And, like Farrow, he is largely unconcerned about the potential for violence against noncombatants structurally built into this strategy. He includes only one specific example of Indian fighting, the campaign that resulted in the final surrender Apache leader Goyahkla, otherwise known as Geronimo, in 1886. Attributing the "wearing out" method to the army's success in capturing Geronimo, Bigelow writes that it aimed to generate a "mental weariness from constant watching and devising and planning, and their final despair of ever thoroughly resting, or returning to wives, children, and sweethearts, unless as prisoners."¹²⁴ The US Army's continuous four-month pursuit forced Goyahkla to surrender for the last time. This sort of strategy is indicative of an advanced stage of settler-occupation where Apache resistance takes place within and among settled areas, rather than in territory largely under Native control. To be sure, Goyahkla and other Apache leaders' repeated flights from reservation confinement were expressions of Apache independence. But, even more so than earlier campaigns, the advance of settler-colonialism in the southwest allowed for Apache violence to be painted as banditry or lawlessness, an insurgent violence against what was believed to be an already coherent settler

¹²³ Bigelow, *Principles of Strategy*, 149.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

state. They were operating within and between the national boundaries of the US and Mexico. In this landscape Apache land was largely invisible to settlers and soldiers, although it was certainly visible to Apache people, whose defense of that land was instead painted as an insurgency.

Despite his focus on running Apache resistance into a state of exhaustion, Bigelow ends the chapter with an additional conclusion. He argues that the success of the campaign was due to Miles' decision to remove almost the entire Chiricahua tribe to a military compound in Florida 2000 miles away.¹²⁵ More specifically, the Chiricahua noncombatants were removed to a *prison*, a tactic that had been used against Native warriors and leaders but here was used against a large number of noncombatants. The relocation of an entire population of Apache people to an extended period of legal and carceral limbo may be giving you “imperial déjà vu,” a phrase Anne McClintock uses to describe continuities across different phase of US history.¹²⁶ The forced relocation of Filipinos, the “strategic hamlets” of Vietnam, and the incarceration of “detainees” at Guantanamo bay resonate out from the removal of Apache peoples – neither prisoners of war nor prisoners of the state, whose exceptional status placed them outside the laws of the US but certainly not outside its power. Bigelow's writing sets this down as a *tactical innovation*. It seems to be an innovation that casts a long shadow.

The nineteenth century military incorporated Indian fighting into its professional, tactical, and educational practice to a very limited extent. This section has presented a snapshot, but it is a snapshot without an extensive body of literature outside of the frame. Although limited, what military theorists and soldiers wrote about wars with Native people became increasingly coherent as the nineteenth century passed. Early writers largely relied on racialized depictions of Native

¹²⁵ Bigelow, *Principles of Strategy*, 151.

¹²⁶ Anne McClintock, “Paranoid Empire: Specters from Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib,” *Small Axe* 13, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 50–74, 51.

people as savages, offering little in the way of concrete tactical advice. They drew on a discursive tradition of noble savages and barbarous Indians, relegating Indian fighting to the uncivilized spectrum of warfare. However, Native resistance was no small obstacle to US settler-colonialism. In the decades after the Civil War officers and theorists began to piece together a clear program of violence that added a strategic coherence to an already-intact set of colonial ideologies. It was not enough to beat Native warriors in the field; the US Army had to destroy Native resistance and forcefully incorporate them within the state, if not eliminate them entirely. The object of war could not be Native armies – it had to be Native peoples. These later writings offer an early glimpse of a burgeoning counterinsurgency practice, a mode of warfare that structurally denies the sovereignty of the enemy and aims at both their elimination and/or incorporation. The remainder of the chapter will complete the picture of how the US military viewed war with Native peoples by looking beyond strategic or tactical literature. What has been presented here is only one half of the story. The other half resides in the public debate over the “Indian Question,” a debate US military officers participated in eagerly.

“Duties Foreign to their Military Training”: Militarized Biopolitics and Continental Expansion

I really think it is important that the idea that the Army only exists to keep the Indians in order should be pushed aside with a strong hand. It is fatal to any proper study and preparation, and before long the echo will return to plague us from Congress, for the Indian question will not last forever.

- *Extract from a letter of an Officer of Engineers, February 18th, 1883, Journal of the Military Service Institution Volume 4*

In the years after the Civil War the US military turned its attention west to territories experiencing increasing pressure from settlers. Frontier violence had always been an occupation of the armed forces but the post-war years saw an intensified series of conflicts fought over lands that had previously been lightly settled, if at all. Indeed, the territories fought over after the war

laid bare the illusion of imperial geography. As much as the country projected a cohesive, coast-to-coast national boundary in 1866, the reality on the ground was that tribes like the Lakota, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, Apache, and others still controlled large sections of the continent. This was not simply “Indian Territory” created and granted to tribes already defeated by the government; it was *Indian* territory, where tribal control was still very much intact. As these territories were invaded by the Army and settlers the “Indian problem” became more and more pressing, and the military offered a number of solutions. This post-war discourse demonstrates the US military’s growing preoccupation with governing populations, forced by the demands of settler-colonialism to take on a more expansive role than simply defeating enemy fighters. The discussion among these top generals illuminates what they believed the problems of the “Indian question” to be, which will help us to understand their proposed solutions.

Top officers argued consistently and vociferously that Indian Affairs be transferred back under military control. Originally created by Secretary of War John C. Calhoun in 1824, the Indian Bureau was moved from the War Department to the Department of the Interior in 1849, a telling referendum on the shifting view of Native sovereignty.¹²⁷ Often and with increasing urgency following the Civil War Army officers argued that they could more efficiently, more humanely, and more effectively manage Indian Affairs. As the Army moved west in ever-greater numbers top officers began calling for Indian Affairs to be transferred back under military control. In the introduction to the annual report for 1866-67, General Ulysses S. Grant argues that the Indian bureau be moved back to the War Department from the Department of the Interior for reasons “both obvious and satisfactory.” Grant wrote that “it would result in greater economy

¹²⁷ Robert Wooster, *The Military and United States Indian Policy, 1865-1903* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 77-78.

of expenditure, and, as I think, diminution of conflict between the Indian and white race.”¹²⁸ In that same report General W.T. Sherman made a similar argument, noting that the military was in charge of surveillance, punishment, and violence, but not the day-to-day management of Indian affairs. For Sherman, the military’s role as the source of violence made it the logical institution to oversee Indian affairs. Sherman wrote that “Indians do not read, and only know of our power and strength by what they see, and they always look to the man who commands soldiers as the representative of our government.”¹²⁹ Sherman’s argument was that the threat of overwhelming violence, embodied in the military, was the most potent and effective way to govern Native people. However, as much as Sherman championed a firm military hand in Indian affairs, he spent just as much time in the annual reports discussing non-military elements of Indian affairs. Sherman and other officers sometimes complained of their expanded duties, but they consistently demanded the right to those expanded duties, and their writings indicate that they viewed elements of governing as a central part of the Indian wars, a broad understanding of the military’s role in the colonial process.

As debates over the “Indian Question” intensified the military positioned itself as the main institution tasked with managing the consequences of settler-colonialism. In his introduction to the 1869/1870 annual report Sherman argued that

While the nation at large is at peace, a state of quasi war has existed, and continues to exist, over one-half its extent, and the troops therein are exposed to labors, marches, fights, and dangers that amount to war. Were the troops withdrawn, or largely diminished, in Texas, the Indian country, in Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, Idaho, or Alaska, as well as in some parts of our southern States, I believe a condition of things would result amounting to anarchy¹³⁰

¹²⁸ United States, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1866), 20.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ United States, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1869), 24.

Sherman's statement came amidst discussion of a reduction in the "peacetime" post-Civil War military. Supporters of Reconstruction and officials concerned about frontier violence argued for a large army, while fiscal conservatives and opponents of reconstruction wanted a dramatically reduced armed forces. Following the end of the war and the demobilization of the volunteers the Army was dramatically reduced in size from Civil War levels, with legislation in 1866 setting the size of the regular army to about 54,000 and an 1869 act reducing Army size to 37,000.¹³¹ This was a larger regular army than the pre-war number (18,000), but the increasing pressures of settler-colonialism rendered it inadequate in the eyes of the Army's top officers.¹³² In his report Sherman argues that every single regiment in this reduced army is on duty, with none in reserve. His warning that a state of "anarchy" would ensue should western troops be reduced further was provoked by increasing settlement, the expansion of the railroad, and the proliferation of mining and agricultural interests that were all threatened by "nomadic Indians."¹³³ Generals like Sherman tended to imagine that US civil society was always-already present, and that Native resistance was a disruption of a cohesive state, rather than an attempt to maintain sovereign spaces free from settlement. This produced a sense of defensiveness and growing concern as Sherman and others were tasked with protecting settlers who demanded (and imagined) Native-free spaces. Indeed, the reports by Sherman and his colleagues in the years after the Civil War border on crisis. Officers found themselves scrambling to meld a variety of imperial practices into a cohesive Indian policy.

The annual reports of the secretary of war for the years after the Civil War's end in 1865 quickly center the threat of Native violence. For each year the top ranking generals in each

¹³¹ Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 12-15.

¹³² *Ibid*, 13.

¹³³ *Ibid*.

district provide a report on the activities in their region, and the generals stationed west of the Mississippi paint a picture of widespread conflict with Native people. In the report for 1866/67 General H.W. Halleck wrote that “the Apache is the bitter enemy to all white settlers” and that “there is no hope for peace in that country till he is destroyed or thoroughly conquered.”¹³⁴ That same year General C.C. Augur argued that if he responded to every civilian call for protection he would need 100,000 cavalry in his section of the plains alone (the 1866 act which fixed the army’s size included provision for ten cavalry regiments, or roughly 10,000 cavalry troops total in the entire army).¹³⁵ He reported that “each little settlement along our five thousand miles of frontier, wants its regiment of cavalry or infantry to protect it against the combined power of all the Indians.”¹³⁶ General W.T. Sherman reported that Indians “in nomadic and predatory bands, infest the whole country described, sometimes in one place and then in another.” He argues that they are universally regarded as hostile by frontier settlers, which in turn demands a constant military presence. This sense of precariousness shows that although the post-war US claimed the interior of the continent, many of those spaces were still under Native control. The often frantic calls for protection coming from settlers and territorial governors reframes their invasion into a defensive posture. Rather than violating the integrity of Native territory, settlers positioned themselves as victims of hostile Indian aggressions, demanding military protection.¹³⁷

The irony, for Sherman, is that “these Indians are construed as under the guardianship and protection of the general government,” resulting in a disconnect between military policy on the ground and federal policy in Washington. Similarly to his peers Sherman calls for military

¹³⁴ United States, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1866, 31-32.

¹³⁵ Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 11.

¹³⁶ United States, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1867), 67-68.

¹³⁷ “Letter to William Tecumseh Sherman,” June 14, 1867, William Tecumseh Sherman Papers, Box 21 Reel 12, Library of Congress.

control of Indian affairs, arguing that “the Indians should be controlled by the military authorities, and that the commanding officers of the troops should have not only the surveillance of these Indians, but should supervise and control the disbursement of moneys and distribution of presents to the tribes under past and future treaties.”¹³⁸ Sherman would get his wish in 1868 when congress gave him final approval for all expenditures for Indian appropriations. The *New York Daily Tribune* predicted this “will settle for all time the vexed Indian question in a manner to redound to the full glory of the republic, the highest interests of the people and of the Indians, at a much less cost of the treasure and reputation than to fight them a single week.”¹³⁹ This prediction was wishful thinking, but it does demonstrate that Indian Affairs was popularly viewed as simultaneously military and civil in nature. Putting Sherman in charge of appropriations was a result of the 1868 Indian Peace Commission which made a broad survey of Indian policy and toured much of Indian Country, meeting with tribes and attempting to secure peace agreements. Responding to the tide of violence on the plains, the peace commission began to put into place the policies that would be formalized during the presidency of Ulysses S. Grant, the “peace policy” which sought to settle all Indians on reservations and declare those outside “hostile,” creating peace on the reservation and war everywhere else. In their final report the Indian Peace Commission attempted to resolve the conflict between military and civil control of Indian policy. They wrote that

To determine this properly we must first know what is to be the future treatment of the Indians. If we intend to have war with them, the bureau should go to the Secretary of War. If we intend to have peace, it should be in the civil department. In our judgment, such wars are wholly unnecessary, and hoping that the government and the country will

¹³⁸ United States, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1866), 20.

¹³⁹ “Congress, by Inserting a Provision in the Indian Appropriation Bill...” (*New York Daily Tribune*, July 22, 1868), William Tecumseh Sherman Papers, Box 23, Reel 13, Library of Congress.

agree with us, we cannot now advise the change. It is possible, however, that, despite our efforts to maintain peace, war may be forced on us by some tribe or tribes of Indians.¹⁴⁰ To resolve this problem, they recommended that during wartime “civil jurisdiction shall cease and the military jurisdiction begin.”¹⁴¹ However, this differentiation would prove impossible in practice, as the military consistently assumed authority over matters that could be defined as civil. This was the result of both governmental inadequacies and the impossibility of defining the “state of war” – if “civilizing” processes such as agriculture were intended to defeat Indians, should they really be defined as “civil”?

Returning to the passage that opened this section, Sherman’s characterization of the frontier in 1869/70 as “a state of quasi war” threatening to dissolve into anarchy betrays the unstable boundaries of the settler-colonial project. Sherman laments the strain on his officers, noting that “many of the officers have been required to perform, at great personal risk, the duties of Indian agents, governors, sheriffs, judges and inspectors of elections, &c, &c, duties foreign to their military training, and they have done this duty without a murmur and with marked intelligence.”¹⁴² Two years later in an essay published on “The ‘Indian Question’” Sherman would report that, as a result of Grant’s peace policy, the middle ground between war and peace made the army’s job more difficult. He argued that “the Army has a much more difficult task now than if we were actually at war and could anticipate depredations and follow the perpetrators to their very camps.”¹⁴³ The Native people under Sherman’s supposed control, in this case the Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Lakota on the southern plains, inhabited a grey area where their incorporation into the mechanisms of American government

¹⁴⁰ “Furman: Indian Peace Commission Report (1868),” accessed January 17, 2019, <http://history.furman.edu/~benson/docs/peace.htm>), 102.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² United States, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1865), 24.

¹⁴³ Peter Cozzens, *Eyewitnesses to the Indian Wars, 1865-1890: The Army and the Indian* (Mechanisburg: Stackpole Books, 2001), 120-126.

created a state of not-quite war. Unsure as he is about the actual state of war, Sherman is crystal clear that the military is centrally involved, even involved beyond their capacity as soldiers. These duties involved regulating Native life rather than defeating Native people on the battlefield, and Sherman wasn't the only officer to worry about this expansion of his mission. At a lecture on "The Indian Question" in 1878 General John Pope similarly argued that "exactly what constitutes peace and what is a condition of war is not clearly defined."¹⁴⁴ Pope, one of the most scathing critics of Federal Indian Policy, worried that he had "no authority over treaty Indians at peace" and in the Army annual report for 1866/67 predicted that heightening tension on the Ute reservation would lead to eventual extermination as the result of the broken Indian system.

Pope's criticism of federal Indian policy situated the military between encroaching settlers and angry Natives in a system devised by officials out of touch with realities on the ground:

But one result can follow from such relations between whites and Indians: day by day the difficulties and broils increase; all crime committed in the whole country around is charged by the whites upon the Indians on these reservations, until, after outrages and murders on both sides, and great suffering both to whites and Indians, it is finally found absolutely necessary to remove the Indian to another reservation more remote, where, in time, the same causes produce the same results, until the Indian tribe is totally exterminated after something like the extermination of the early settlers. It would be difficult to devise a system which could work more wrong and inhumanity to both races.¹⁴⁵

Pope's comments lead into a series of prescriptions for the Indian question. His recommendations are idiosyncratic in that he recommends removal back east, where Native people can be "placed where he can be subjected, under the most favorable conditions, to the influences of Christianity and civilization, and be taught to labor and to support himself."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Cozzens, *Eyewitnesses to the Indian Wars*, 126.

¹⁴⁵ United States, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1866, 26.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

However, key similarities can be found in Pope's statement to that in the writings of other military officials. Firstly, the word "extermination" is found throughout discussion of the "Indian question," both as a consequence to be avoided, a goal to be attained, or an inevitability to be mediated and lamented, but not interrupted. For Pope (and others) only careful regulation of Native life can prevent this predicted genocide. Of course, that regulation was rooted in policies aimed explicitly at eliminating Native independence and culture. One of the main targets was the quickly-shrinking herds of bison that inhabited the American plains.

Perhaps no other policy exemplified the convergence of biopolitical control and military strategy than the relationship of the Army to the bison herds that were crucial to Plains Indian culture and subsistence. Sherman publicly argued that "the quickest way to compel the Indians to settle down to civilized life was to send ten regiments of soldiers to the plains, with orders to shoot buffaloes until they became too scarce to support the redskin."¹⁴⁷ Sherman and other officers that called for the elimination of the buffalo were aware that their military campaigns had to force a change at the cultural and social level in Native communities. This made the buffalo a viable military target – indeed, Sherman, Sheridan, Schofield and other officers all argued for the military to commit itself to the elimination of the herds. Sherman argued to Sheridan that "I think it would be wise to invite all the sportsmen of England and America there this fall for a Grand Buffalo hunt, and make one grand sweep of them all. Until the Buffalo and consequent[ly] Indians are out [from between] the Roads we will have collisions and trouble."¹⁴⁸ Schofield viewed the buffalo as a key element in the "Indian question," writing that "I wanted no other occupation in life than to ward off the savage and kill off his food until there should no

¹⁴⁷ David D. Smits, "The Frontier Army and the Destruction of the Buffalo: 1865-1883," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (1994): 313–38, 317.

¹⁴⁸ Sherman to Sheridan, 10 May 1868, The Papers of Philip H. Sheridan, microfilm reel no. 17, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

longer be an Indian frontier in our beautiful country”¹⁴⁹ These sorts of tactics would become a standard in US counterinsurgency practice. Only a few decades later in the Philippines general J. Franklin Bell committed himself to the widespread destruction of food supplies outside the control of US forces, arguing that if Filipino *insurrectos* were deprived of food they would have no choice but to accept US control. This was the same logic behind the desire to eliminate the bison, which was intended to draw Native people onto the reservation where their access to food would be subject to military and government control.¹⁵⁰

In a rare instance of nineteenth century comparison between the Civil War and the Indian Wars, the June 26th, 1869 issue of the *US Army and Navy Journal* compared the destruction of the buffalo to the war on confederate guerillas. Referencing the mobility and elusiveness of Native fighters, the journal argued that “suppose his warfare is of the guerilla sort – that he has no ‘base,’ no line of preparations or defence, no strategic points to defend, no important depots of stored munitions or provisions. You are in a manner forced to [attack] his depredations simply by making it impossible for him to exist in the country he operates.” The *Journal* was advocating attacking the means to sustain life rather than the actual lives of individual enemy fighters, which would necessarily result in an indiscriminate sort of violence for all Native people deprived of their primary source of food. Just as Sheridan had attacked confederate food supplies in Virginia in 1864, the *Journal* advocated for a similar set of tactics in Sherman’s campaign on the southern plains: “And the buffalo is the Indian’s *supplies* – it is to him what the grain of the Shenandoah Valley was to the *soi-disant* “farmer” that always had a gun handy by the hay-stack, or a saddle ready to throw on the grazing horse, in aid of JACKSON or JUBAL EARLY, as he came sweeping down from Lynchburg toward harper’s Ferry.” If the army could deprive the insurgent

¹⁴⁹ Smits, “Buffalo,” 316.

¹⁵⁰ “Buffalo,” *United States Army and Navy Journal* (June 26, 1869).

peoples of their livelihoods and sustenance then their resistance would crumble. The war on the bison was both military and civil, biological and tactical. It embodied the Army's claim that "savages can only be governed by a military system. Their first step toward civilization must be through military discipline."¹⁵¹

Euthanasia Politics and the Indian Question

This chapter has charted an increasingly coherent set of policies put forward by officers and military theorists with regard to wars with Native people. By the 1880's officers were saying relatively similar things, at the core of which was what I have called a politics of euthanasia. The military had become an institution of colonial governance, no longer simply expanding the United States' borders but rather attempting to control entire populations. In the nineteenth century Indian people were widely understood to be "problems" and "questions." The problem was that increasing demands for land made Native people an obstacle to be overcome or resolved in the eyes of the US government and settlers. Once the policy of removal was no longer viable, particularly after the Civil War, this "Indian Problem" intensified as settlers and the US military clashed with powerful tribes in the center and southwest of the continent. The question that accompanied the Indian problem was whether Native people would continue to survive once the "problem" was resolved. Should they be assimilated into Anglo-American society? Were they doomed to extinction? Should they be allowed to quietly disappear, or should the US Army commit itself to a program of extermination? These outcomes (and more) were widely debated in print, in the government, and in American society at large. Essays and articles were published in droves, bearing titles like "Our Indian Question" or "The Indian Problem." These texts offer a window into nineteenth century mentalities regarding Indian affairs, particularly the distressingly

¹⁵¹ "Buffalo," *United States Army and Navy Journal* (June 26, 1869).

casual way in which commentators considered the elimination of entire ethnic groups as a very real (and often desirable) outcome of American settlement. Constructing Native people as questions and problems rendered the eventual triumph of US expansion predetermined. It wasn't a question of *whether*, but a question of when, how, and in what form US colonialism would eclipse Native independence. In almost all of those projected scenarios the US military played a central role.

Officers in the US Army were some of the most prominent writers on the “Indian question.” Journals, essays, public speaking events, and letters are full of their recommendations, complaints, and predictions regarding Indian policy. These officers articulated a vision of an imperial military: always fighting but not-quite-at war, invested in managing life and producing death, ambivalent about the continued existence of colonized people but committed to their incorporation within the state. At the core of this debate lay a gruesome contradiction: officers who debated the Indian Question consistently demanded changes and reforms to Indian policy, while simultaneously believing that Native people were living a doomed existence. These sorts of arguments were widespread and formed the basis on which military policy towards Native people was established – a *terminal* policy that looked towards what was believed to be the inevitable end to a Native presence. This “Indian Question” was a pervasive nineteenth century discourse. Lucy Maddox has called the ideological impasse generated by the “Indian question” an “impassable stone wall” in which civilization or extinction is the only option for Native people.¹⁵² However, the way the “Indian Question” manifested in the thinking of many US military officers was less a stone wall than grim prophecy: Indians were doomed, period. In the interim the military could try to both govern them when possible and attack them when deemed

¹⁵² Lucy Maddox, *Removals: Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Politics of Indian Affairs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 30-31.

necessary. It was less a question of either/or and more a question of management – managing extinction or acting as agents of euthanasia.

Almost all discussion of the “Indian question” was grounded in the possibility of Native death. No matter the political persuasion or orientation of the author it was at least a possibility that Indian people were headed towards extinction, whether through direct or indirect means. These predictions of or calls for extermination were often combined with nostalgia or regret. In a lecture for a British audience at Bristol in 1875, Henry B. Carrington, a former Army officer who lost favor after his defeat by Crazy Horse and Red Cloud at the Fetterman fight, spoke on “The Indian Question.” Aligning himself with his audience’s “Anglo-Saxon fathers,” Carrington argued that “On the one hand, all passions are stimulated to annihilate the savage as a beast because he tears and tortures in the throes of his death struggle; on the other hand, we yearn for his rescue from that oblivion which buried his earlier ancestors, because we feel that his destinies, like his possessions, are in our hands.”¹⁵³ However, Carrington states later that, for Native people, “an inevitable doom is surrounding heart and home.” In increasing white settlement Carrington “read the ever-present premonition – passing away. We turn up the American mounds and in vain seek for some conclusive record as to the antecedents of the red man. We are upon the verge of the disappearance of the red man himself.”¹⁵⁴ How Carrington, who had literally been run off the northern plains by Lakota and Cheyenne warriors, could predict the “verge of disappearance” is unclear. Indeed, one year later in 1876 some of those same warriors who had beaten Carrington’s soldiers would hand Custer his defeat at the Little Bighorn. But in Carrington’s imperial imaginary US continental domination is inevitable, producing a simultaneous desire for elimination and preservation. This is the military problem at

¹⁵³ Henry Beebee Carrington, *The Indian Question* (Boston: De Wolfe & Fiske, 1884), 5.

¹⁵⁴ Carrington, *The Indian Question*, 14.

the core of empire, in which a drive to govern is balanced against a drive to eliminate opposition. This drive is intensified in the context of settler-colonialism: writers like Carrington want the native “gone” – killed or removed from the land, devoid of competing political sovereignty, or incorporated as subjects of the state.

Sometimes writers on the “Indian Question” would forcefully advocate for improvements to federal Indian policy while simultaneously maintaining that Native people were doomed. Francis Lieber, author of the text that influenced the development of the modern “rules of war,” wrote that “the fighting and slaying of the Indians is terrible to me; but their gradual extinction I consider desirable, and the quicker the better.”¹⁵⁵ Lieber’s code of military ethics has left a profound impact on warfare.¹⁵⁶ Staunchly opposed to slavery and committed to the development of humane regulations in combat, he nonetheless advocated for the extinction of Indian people. This short statement contains one of the basic contradictions found in much of the discussion of the Indian question. Lieber discusses the “gradual extinction” of Indian people while hoping that it happens as quickly as possible. “Gradual extinction” refers to a belief in the incompatibility of Native people with modernity. The forward progress of civilization, so the theory went, would pass Native people by, leaving them without a place in the modern world. This was viewed as inevitable and neutral – it would happen regardless of what form Federal Indian policy took. However, Lieber also advocates for a fast extinction, “the quicker the better,” which hints at material practices aimed that that goal. The result of this sort of thinking was a range of approaches that took Indian extinction as the outcome, only debating the policies to be enacted in the interim. This belief in the neutrality of Indian extinction is a core element of the “Indian

¹⁵⁵ “Life and Letters of Francis Lieber,” *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* Volume 3 (1882), 300.

¹⁵⁶ “Life and Letters of Francis Lieber,” 300.

Question” as it appeared in print. If extinction was inevitable, commentators could portray their policies as humanitarian even as those very policies accomplished the goals of removal, elimination and land appropriation. However, no matter how benevolent any given perspective on the “Indian Question” claimed to be, it was a consistent fact that the threat of military force lay behind the recommendation offered. The “Indian Question”—as something premised on Indian people dying—was fundamentally a militarized discourse.

No set of sources documents this position better than a collection of essays published in one of the era’s main military journals. In the second (1881) volume of *the Journal of the Military Service Institution* the annual essay contest question focused on “Our Indian Question.” The journal published 5 answers to the prompt, and selected the entry by Brevet Major General John Gibbon of the Seventh Infantry as the winner. Viewed collectively, this group of essays offers one of the most comprehensive glimpses of how the US military viewed the “Indian problem,” and what different officers viewed as solutions to the “Indian question.” Gibbon, who five years earlier had rescued the survivors of Custer’s defeat at the Little Bighorn, was selected by the committee for providing “by far the most valuable suggestions for the solution of “The Indian Question” as it stands to-day.”¹⁵⁷ The judges emphasized Gibbon’s “practical solution” in awarding him the prize, edging out the literary abilities of Lieutenant C.E.S. Wood and the historical research of Captain E. Butler. What were the practical solutions Gibbon offered to resolve this so-called “Indian Question”? Gibbon argued that the United States, led by the Army, should make every effort to “smooth the downward road of this doomed race.”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ “Our Indian Question.” *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* Volume 2 (1882), 223.

¹⁵⁸ “Our Indian Question,” 120.

It was a common refrain in the nineteenth century for US citizens to argue for the extinction or assimilation of Native people.¹⁵⁹ For every call for the destruction of Native people was a call for Christianizing, civilizing, and “uplifting,” personified by Col. Pratt’s infamous call to “kill the Indian and save the man.” What is striking about Gibbon’s essay, and the other top essays in the contest, is that they do not articulate this as a binary but as a process, wherein they manage the extinction rather than attempt to preempt it. When Gibbon argues for a policy that can “smooth the downward road of this doomed race” he constructs the problem as a humanely managed extinction, not extinction *or* assimilation. Almost all of the authors argue that Native people are doomed to disappear, but they also argue that the military and civilian government has an obligation to craft a better Indian Policy to manage that disappearance. Each essay emphasizes the need to govern Native people, to “govern by force” as the essay by Thomas Woodruff puts it.¹⁶⁰ The essays operate in a grey area uniquely colonial, and demonstrate that the calls for extermination and incorporation could be contained in the same policy.

John Gibbon’s 1st prize essay offers no ambiguity on the potential for continued Native life. “*The Red Man is bound to disappear from this continent. Philanthropists and visionary speculators may theorize as they please about protecting the Indian against the encroachments of the white man and preserving him as a race. It cannot be done.*”¹⁶¹ Gibbon’s essay, offering a solution to the “Indian question,” takes as its foundational premise that Native people are doomed. He argues that “no one will deny that the red man as a race on this continent is doomed to destruction” and as such “it is scarcely worthwhile to reason upon any other basis.”¹⁶² For Gibbon the question is one of management – how can the US manage Native life towards what

¹⁵⁹ Maddox, *Removals*, 30-31.

¹⁶⁰ “Our Indian Question,” 223.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, 106.

¹⁶² *Ibid*.

Gibbon views as a foregone conclusion. At the core of Gibbon's proposal is military control of Indian affairs. He argues that the army would be a more efficient and more humane supervisor of reservations, annuities, and government programs. Further, Gibbon argues that Indian Affairs are, at their core, military, for they carry the constant threat of violent outbreak. The result is civic administrators making military decisions, which Gibbon criticizes.¹⁶³

While advocating for military control of Indian Affairs Gibbon sketches an early description of the problems and policies of the "small war" or counterinsurgency. Arguing against the notion that the military exists only to fight, he writes that the best soldiers are also peace makers, "he who fights only when he must." Dissenters had consistently argued that the military was an inappropriate home for Indian affairs due to its focus on violence, but Gibbon sketches a much broader set of goals for the military. He argues that "the peculiar kind of Indian warfare in our country" is uniquely difficult. His description, quoted at length, functions as an almost textbook description of guerilla warfare.

For in this, very few of the recognized rules of warfare are applicable, and the struggle degenerates into a series of operations in small detached parties in which exceedingly hard work and occasionally desperate encounters are the characteristics. In all of these the enemy has as a rule an immense advantage. He is operating in a country every foot of which is well known to him. He is a better shot, better rider, more easily subsisted, and more inured to fatigue than the mass of our men can by any possibility ever be.¹⁶⁴ Gibbon's descriptions of the difficulties of Indian warfare are consistent with what other military writers from the period had to say. "Civilized war" in the tradition of West Point had a difficult time adapting to the mobility, diffusion, and tactics of Native fighters. Given the difficulties, Gibbon writes that most soldiers would much prefer a state of peace to a state of war, but he also argues that the activities he groups under the category of "peace" are a more effective mode of handling the Indian question. He writes that "more progress has been made toward civilization

¹⁶³ "Our Indian Question," 112.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 117.

with these captured Indians under military charge than in any other case.” Once the army has control of Native warriors, according to Gibbon, they are treated kindly, fed, sheltered, and subject to a fair system where the “power to punish” is in the same hand as the power to reward.¹⁶⁵ Remember, Gibbon’s end point is the elimination of Native people. He views that outcome as inevitable. But in order to resolve the temporary Indian “problem” he advocates military governance, grouping a range of civil practices under the military’s “Indian fighting” program. He calls these “civilizing” measures, but leaves no ambiguity about the long term consequences. A lack of reforms to Indian affairs “prevents us from doing what little we should do to smooth the downward road of this doomed race, once so numerous and powerful on this continent...”¹⁶⁶ Gibbon’s vision of Indian fighting is about managing Native death through the provision of life. The defeat of Native fighters in open warfare is only one element in a military program that imagines a future with no autonomous Native people. It was a program of military euthanasia.

The runner up essays in the JMSI essay contest hit many of the same points as Gibbon: Indians are still savages, noble yet doomed. Lieutenant C.E.S. Wood writes that “humanity may delay it but the end is beyond human control” in a section titled “Ultimate destiny – Extinction.”¹⁶⁷ Even Nelson Miles, who seeks “a practical and judicious system by which we can govern one quarter of a million of our population” calls Native people a “subjugated, doomed race.”¹⁶⁸ Captain E. Butler, like Gibbon, believes that the Indian question is about managing Native death. He argues that

Since the foundation of this Government the Indian has fought against his own improvement and elevation. And if he continues to do as he has done—as his

¹⁶⁵ “Our Indian Question,” 118.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 120.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 133.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 281.

ancestors did before him—his extinction is certain. It is but a question of time; and all the United States can do is to make his passage out of contemporary history as little painful as possible. In the struggle between civilization and barbarism, the former is always victorious in the end.¹⁶⁹

Butler's haunting call "to make his passage out of contemporary history as little painful as possible" gets to the heart of this euthanasia politics. Like the others Butler calls for the return of Indian Affairs to the war department, arguing that the disjunction between the war and interior departments had been the cause of the failures of Indian policy. Once back under military control "blood and treasure can be saved by making all military expeditions against hostile Indians so strong that the Indian cannot hope to oppose them successfully. He is quick to understand such an argument—and it is the only one that convinces him."¹⁷⁰ Butler's proposal to unite the sword and the olive branch gets to the heart of how much of the nineteenth century military sought to answer the Indian question and in the process established a blueprint for later campaigns of counterinsurgency. These were not wars to defeat clearly defined armies, but wars aimed at subjugation, which would be followed either by incorporation or extinction. This is what makes the counterinsurgency so unique in warfare. The provision of food and supplies, the creation of schools or housing, and attempts at "uplift" and "civilizing" are viewed, explicitly, as tactical measures. They are part of the military's arsenal. As Lieutenant Thomas Woodruff put it in his essay submission, Indians should be "governed by force," governed and regulated through military institutions and military means.¹⁷¹ Elements might include schooling, agricultural training, or other elements of life, but there should be no doubt that this is a military practice, backed up by violence and conducted as a war on Native people.

¹⁶⁹ "Our Indian Question," 219.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 220-221.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 302.

Conclusion

The War on Terror has forced the US military to pay increasing attention to counterinsurgency operations as “asymmetric” war continues to replace the “big wars” of the twentieth century. It is telling that in this era of counterinsurgency US military theory has returned to the “Indian wars” as one of the earliest experiences with guerilla war from which to draw on. Spurred by the difficulties in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, these writers look backwards to try and understand the present. For example, in his article “Winning the War of the Flea: Lessons from Guerilla Warfare,” Lieutenant Colonel Robert M. Cassidy argues that the US military has failed to incorporate lessons from past successful counterinsurgency operations. He writes that “without some sense of historical continuity, American soldiers will have to relearn the lessons of history each time they face a new small war.”¹⁷² Cassidy’s concern about strategic continuity echoes what military theorists were saying in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but unlike those writers the modern US military is no longer engaged in conflicts with Native people.

Cassidy echoes the majority of military historians who believe that the nineteenth century US military had little-to-no codified doctrine or institutional memory on which to plan campaigns against Native people. Lacking a formal policy, he argues that they adopted tactics on the fly, creating a number of “counterinsurgency lessons” that the modern military can learn from. This chapter has shown that, although this was certainly the case in the early 1800’s, the second half of the century saw this strategic incoherence erode as officers and military theorists cobbled together a program of biopolitical violence that took aim at entire Native populations. The surprise attack and the reservation functioned as mutually reinforcing strategies that could

¹⁷² Robert M. Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror: Military Culture and Irregular War* (Westport, Praeger Security International, 2006), 42.

accomplish the elimination, confinement, or incorporation of Native peoples within the state. Much of this story has remained elusive due to its location in public debates over “the Indian question,” the venue in which military officers elaborated on their policies with regard to Native peoples. By the end of the century most officers were saying similar things. They believed that Native people were doomed to disappear, and it was the military’s job to manage that extinction, delaying it where possible and hastening it when Native people resisted. This was a program of military euthanasia in which the army practiced tactics that Cassidy and other contemporary military theorists now view as key counterinsurgency strategies. They blended civil and military practices, targeted populations and the material necessities that sustain their lives, and constructed Native peoples as “insurgents,” rebels against an already-established US settler state rather than independent nations.¹⁷³ Cassidy highlights the blending of civil and military controls in what he calls “pacification efforts” that aim to “provide firm but fair paternalistic governance.”¹⁷⁴ This is what makes the Indian wars such an influential blueprint for the counterinsurgency: they are about sovereignty and government, which the counterinsurgency, by definition, aims to impose.

Despite the difficulty in uncovering it, the US military did, in fact, develop a connected set of strategies for the wars of continental expansion, and they did so during a period of rapid professional development. We can draw a line from 1886 to 2011, from Goyahkla’s surrender to the mission that recycled his nickname as a code-word for Osama Bin-Laden. We can also draw a line from US soldiers waging indiscriminate campaigns against the southern Cheyenne in 1868

¹⁷³ Arguing, in contrast to many historians, that the nineteenth century saw an expansion of the US state, Joseph Genetin-Pilawa traces the imposition of state and federal bureaucracies and legal systems that attempted to control, confine, and regulate Native people. He also demonstrates the limits of these impositions, which were vigorously contested and reformulated by Native people. See C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment: The Fight Over Federal Indian Policy After the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

¹⁷⁴ Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency*, 42.

and the contemporary military theorists that sift through those campaigns to gain insight into the occupations of Iraq or Afghanistan. These are resonances that jump across time. What still needs to be done is to chart the continuities. To what degree did these nineteenth century practices - the pre-dawn charge, the reservation and internment camp, the destruction of scarce resources, and ideologies of military euthanasia - become embedded or normalized in US military practice. Have they influenced US military violence in the Philippines, Haiti, Cuba, Korea, Nicaragua, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere? The “Indian Wars” may have been the first and longest counterinsurgency waged by the US military, but it was far from the last.

Chapter 2. Beyond Total War: Settler-Colonialism and Military Strategy on the Southern Plains, 1868-1870

Introduction – “It is Not the White Man’s Way to Make War on Women and Children”

On December 11, 1868, several Kiowa, Kiowa-Apache, and Comanche chiefs met with W.B. Hazen, the US Army general in charge of Indian Affairs on the southern plains. This was not a friendly meeting. The chiefs represented those bands allied with the victims of George Armstrong Custer’s recent attack on the Cheyenne along the Washita River in present day Oklahoma. They had come to Fort Cobb on behalf of the surviving Cheyenne to assert their peaceful intentions, with Wow-a-wie of the Comanche arguing that “the Indians are not warlike; only the soldiers are making war.” Hazen dismissed these claims and blamed Native violence for the recent hostilities. He accused them of killing settler women and children and sternly told the assembled chiefs that “it is not the white people’s way to make war on women and children.”¹⁷⁵

It is not the white people’s way to make war on women and children. How strange that must have sounded to these men who had witnessed the aftermath of Custer’s attack, in which the number of women and children killed or wounded outnumbered that of men.¹⁷⁶ Custer had also taken 53 women and children prisoner after destroying all the food and lodges in the camp, leaving the survivors to flee through the winter snow with only the clothing on their backs. How was this not making war on women and children?

¹⁷⁵ W.B. Hazen, “Indian ‘Talk’ with Chiefs of the Kiowas and Comanches,” Container 72, Reel 76, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁷⁶ Jerome A. Greene, *Washita: The U.S. Army and the Southern Cheyennes, 1867-1869* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 136

Hazen predicted more violence in the future if Native resistance continued. He reminded the chiefs that General Philip Sheridan had promised he was “going to kill all their horses, capture women and children, and make them so poor they could not fight again.” Sheridan had more than delivered on that threat, and Hazen warned them that “winter is the white man’s time for war, and the fight the other day was the first touch, and they are getting ready again.”¹⁷⁷ Ten Bears of the Comanche was having none of it. “You are talking two ways,” he responded to Hazen. “If you want the Texas trouble stopped, move the people away. They commenced first, and we have no love for them; it is our country; it belongs to us.”¹⁷⁸ In the meeting Hazen had tried to portray the tide of settlement spreading over the plains as inevitable. Puncturing Hazen’s vision of manifest destiny, Ten Bears placed the blame for the tensions and violence squarely on the settler-invaders. The chiefs claimed that there would be no trouble in Texas if the territorial integrity of Native people was respected. However, their arguments were ignored and the conference concluded. In a letter reflecting on the conference Hazen doubted the sincerity of the chief’s desire for peace. He recommended to his superiors that the only hope for an end to the conflict was an unrelenting military campaign.

Hazen was neither uninformed nor stupid. He understood the difference between a warrior and a noncombatant. So why would he tell the chiefs that white people did not make war on women and children? We should resist the urge to dismiss Hazen’s speech as posturing or a disingenuous attempt to blame the victims. It may have been both of those things. But his claim that white people do not make war on women and children came at a moment in the history of the US military when those very issues were increasingly visible. The Civil War had raised hard

¹⁷⁷ W.B. Hazen, “Indian ‘Talk’ with Chiefs of the Kiowas and Comanches,” Container 72, Reel 76, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

questions about the violent limits of modern warfare. Reform minded easterners were increasingly vocal in their opposition to the treatment of Native people by the military.¹⁷⁹ The US had recently adopted an updated “rules of war” in the form of the Lieber Code, and the army was professionalizing fast and trying to embody the civilized ideal of the European military. According to the standards of civilized warfare it would be completely unacceptable to unleash wholesale slaughter on noncombatants in the context of a military campaign. And yet it happened repeatedly, in different regions and to different tribes of Native people. Racial antagonism and the exterminationist rhetoric of Indian hating certainly contributed to these violent episodes, but they were just as often perpetuated by officers and officials invested in incorporating Native people into the state and settling them on reservations. This is not to downplay the frequent genocidal utterances of military officers but to acknowledge that incorporation was often accompanied by a violence equal to that of elimination. To unpack Hazen’s confusing claim requires a broader view of the so-called “Indian Wars” that attends to the multilayered violence of settler-colonialism. Hazen may have believed that what he considered “war” was not targeted at Native noncombatants, but he certainly considered them targets of the colonial process. And that meant military violence.

Too often the history of the Indian Wars is told as a series of exceptional tragedies: Bear River, Sand Creek, Washita, Marias, Camp Grant, and Wounded Knee. These were dramatic incidents that have rightly occupied the attention of scholars, but often as individual disasters. However, the strategic policies the US Army utilized in the decades after the Civil War created the conditions for these sorts of incidents. Strategic decisions have entered historical narratives

¹⁷⁹ Sherman and Sheridan were aware of such complaints and actively took steps to counter them – see Paul Andrew Hutton, *Phil Sheridan and His Army*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 53.

as singular moments of violence, which serves to mask their normality and intentionality.¹⁸⁰ Inflicting large numbers of indiscriminate casualties, the burning of villages, and the destruction of food and supplies became the explicit object of campaigns against Native people. And while these were not brand-new forms of imperial warfare, they did mark a crucial moment in the development of the modern US military. Surprise attacks on Native villages were at the core of military strategy and were enshrined in the few tactical manuals that the army produced in this period.¹⁸¹ There is no better example of this sort of campaign than Philip Sheridan's tenure on the southern plains from 1868-1870. Under Sheridan, what may have been an underlying if little-acknowledged trend in Indian fighting became military doctrine.

The Indian Wars are typically folded into a teleological narrative about the development of "total war." But "total war" falls short of capturing the complicated process of settler-colonial violence. Total war names a specific transcending of Euro-American cultural norms around violence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In contrast, settler-colonialism names a structure of conquest that European invaders brought to North America. Land was central to this process, and Native people had to be removed from that land. Violence against noncombatants has been a consistent feature of settler-colonialism from the earliest days of European occupation, which was always targeted at entire Native populations, an expansive process that included but extended beyond the battlefield.¹⁸² This specific form of colonialism deploys a

¹⁸⁰ The work of Giorgio Agamben and Achille Mbembe influences my thinking on the ways in which exceptional violence that seemingly exceeds the boundaries of the law becomes the norm. Historicized, we can see that the exception existed before the rule with regard to the violence of settler-colonialism in the United States. The excesses of Indian warfare were present from the earliest encounters of the English colonists with their Pequot neighbors, long before there was a US army or a standard of regulations. See A. Mbembé and Libby Meintjes, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11–40, and Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

¹⁸¹ See chapter 1 of this dissertation.

¹⁸² A process that is ongoing, as members of the Standing Rock Sioux nation have faced escalating paramilitary violence in their attempts to defend their treaty rights from intrusion by the Dakota Access Pipeline.

“logic of elimination” in which Native peoples must disappear to make room for settlers.¹⁸³

Military campaigns like the one Sheridan orchestrated on the southern plains cannot be reduced to an application of “total war” as a military tactic. Rather, they were components of a broader process where both the death and forced assimilation of Native people served the goals of a settler society. This meant that the US military took on an expanded social role during the Indian Wars. Most nineteenth century army officers believed that they should oversee all Indian policy. They wanted to run the reservations, oversee the distribution of food and annuities, and force what Indians they could to adopt Euro-American cultural practices.¹⁸⁴ These were not seen as alternatives to active campaigning but as a part of the military’s overall mission. A military history of settler-colonialism thus embraces a range of practices that extend beyond the battlefield. More than total war, Sheridan’s 1868-1870 campaign demonstrates how extreme violence can be deployed in the service of a broader colonial project.

Even the contemporary military has incorporated what it calls the “Cheyenne Wars” into the instructional apparatus of the US Army. The Combat Studies Institute has developed curriculum that examines Sheridan’s southern plains campaign as an example of total war with specific lessons for contemporary soldiers. *The Cheyenne Wars Atlas*, which serves as the core text for a course which involves on-site examination of several southern plains battlefields, argues that “the tactical and operational dilemmas faced by Sheridan’s soldiers are similar to those faced by US soldiers fighting today in Iraq and Afghanistan.”¹⁸⁵ Like Sheridan’s soldiers, the contemporary military often operates within the confines of political and social communities

¹⁸³ This can include everything from ethnic cleansing to forced assimilation. See Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 1, 2006): 387–409.

¹⁸⁴ This conflict between the Indian Bureau and the military was ongoing and often acrimonious. Sheridan and other top-ranking officers complained loudly and frequently that the military should have control over all Indian policy, not just military action.

¹⁸⁵ Charles D. Collins, *The Cheyenne Wars Atlas* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, United States Army Combined Arms Center, 2010).

where the “battlefield” is complex and extends beyond an immediate combat zone. Total war can be a useful way to describe the massive destruction of large scale conflicts like the Civil War and the World Wars. But those struggles, while epic in scale, make up only a part of the US military’s history. Counterinsurgencies, occupations, policing actions, and interventions have been far more frequent, and in the twenty-first century have come occupy one of the core activities of the US armed forces. In these missions the military is called on to govern, control, regulate, and police, not just destroy. It is tasked with incorporating territories, populations, and political entities, or at least exerting a temporary influence. To echo Foucault’s famous phrase, the military is often trying to *make people live*, to make them live a certain way through a combination of violence and other forms of control.¹⁸⁶

The enemy in these conflicts is typically defined as a guerilla, rebel or insurgent; a subject to be corrected rather than simply defeated.¹⁸⁷ In the eyes of a state or colonizing force these “insurgents” are always-already claimed as subjects, interior problems rather than sovereign opponents. This is how the nineteenth century US military viewed their Native adversaries. Sheridan referred explicitly to Native warriors as “guerillas.” But they were unconquered people, independent of US authority rather than insurgent to it. In fact, these warriors were members of Nations recognized by the US as retaining their sovereignty with numerous treaties affirming that fact. But their definition as guerillas or insurgents delegitimized Native resistance and expanded the boundaries of the violence they would face at the hands of the army. Sheridan’s campaign on the southern plains is a definitive and early example of what

See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 136-138, and Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76* (New York: Picador, 2003), 241.

¹⁸⁷ “Guerilla” more often refers to a style of warfare characterized by small parties of irregular fighters, while “insurgent” more explicitly connotes a rebellious political project pursued through military violence. However, when US military officers referred to Native warriors as “guerillas” they were doing more than describing their tactics. They were also delegitimizing Native political standing and placing them outside the boundaries of civilized warfare.

this looks like when exceptional violence is deployed in the service of reform and incorporation, the reform of entire populations and their incorporation into the boundaries of the state. It is an example of how military officials can openly call for the elimination of entire groups of people in the same breath that they argue for the right to oversee the lives of those people.¹⁸⁸ The Indian wars are more than mythological fodder for triumphant narratives of American expansion. These conflicts were central to the development of the modern biopolitical military. They cast a long shadow that solidifies whenever the words “guerilla” or “insurgent” are deployed in the service of empire.

War on the Southern Plains

“Punish the hostile Indians (who are supposed to be not far from here) as severely as they possibly can.”

- General Field Orders Number 10, November 18, 1868

“If the lives and property of the citizens of Montana can best be protected by striking Mountain Chief’s band I want them struck. Tell Baker to strike them hard.”

- Philip Sheridan, 1870

This is a history of the military campaign targeted at southern plains Indians from 1868 to 1870 that took place primarily in what is now Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, and Nebraska. Hazen’s council with the Kiowa, Comanche, and Kiowa-Apache chiefs that opened the chapter takes place in the middle of that story, after the attack on Black Kettle’s Cheyenne

¹⁸⁸ This chapter is focused on the policies and practices of the US military. It is important to remember that Native people had their own practices and traditions in warfare, and that military violence is destructive across cultural and ethnic boundaries. The Native people Sheridan faced on the southern plains had sophisticated and highly developed military cultures. They were raiders and invaders, and taking Native history seriously means acknowledging the moments of expansion and destruction that accompanied inter-Native warfare. However, it also means being attentive to the differences that an ideological and political structure like settler-colonialism invested in the military actions of the United States. Descriptions of plains warfare can be found in John H. Moore, *The Cheyenne, The Peoples of America*, (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996), and Jean Afton, David Fridtjof. Halaas, and Andrew Edward Masich, *Cheyenne Dog Soldiers: A Ledgerbook History of Coups and Combat*, (Denver: University Press of Colorado, 1997).

village along the Washita River in November of 1868. Washita was just one of a series of attacks during a three year stretch in which Sheridan made it his central strategy to seek out and destroy Native villages. The story is thus bookended by Washita on one end and the Marias Massacre on the other, the January, 1870 destruction of a village of smallpox-devastated and friendly Piegan Blackfeet. Washita and Marias were neither isolated nor accidental. The orders that unleashed both attacks were very similar and focused on finding, surprising, and destroying a village of Native people. While each disaster had unique characteristics they also fit into an increasingly coherent set of military policies. The Marias massacre may have resulted in the “wrong” band of Blackfeet being attacked but the overall framework for the violence was consistent with what the army had been doing for three years under Sheridan.¹⁸⁹

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa and Comanche all inhabited the southern Great Plains, that region between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi river characterized by extensive grasslands, extremes of weather and enormous herds of bison. These animals formed what Dan Flores calls “a kind of gigantic organism” spread across the continent that represented an enormous source of food and material goods. Skilled buffalo hunters, these tribes organized around harnessing the huge volumes of thermodynamic energy moving from sunlight into grass and then into the bison.¹⁹⁰ Their mobility, numbers, and martial skills made them an imposing military power in the middle of many overland routes to Oregon and California. The Cheyenne and Arapaho were divided into northern and southern

¹⁸⁹ Both attacks fit roughly into a paradigm that Benjamin Madley sketches in his article “Tactics of Nineteenth-Century Colonial Massacre: Tasmania, California, and Beyond.” Madley argues that most nineteenth century colonial massacres involved four phases: night reconnaissance and the surrounding of the enemy; long range barrages at night or at daybreak; close-range attacks; and finally the execution of non-combatants. See Philip G. Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan, *Theatres of Violence: Massacre, Mass Killing and Atrocity Throughout History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 110-125.

¹⁹⁰ Dan Flores, “Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850,” *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 2, 471; 481.

branches and maintained close ties with the Lakota to the north. By the 1840's they had also made peace with their one-time enemies the Kiowa and Comanche, which meant that four of the strongest tribes on the southern plains were on friendly terms as settler emigration intensified.¹⁹¹ These tribes would be at the forefront of Native military resistance in the decades after the Civil War, spurred in part by the militancy of the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers. By the 1830's a Cheyenne warrior society, the Dog Soldiers, had emerged as a separate band between the Northern and Southern Cheyenne. The Dog Soldiers often opposed the policies of more peaceful chiefs and injected a fierce militarism and staunch opposition to US expansion into plains politics.¹⁹²

In the 1840's tensions rose on the plains as settlers began to move across the continent in larger numbers. Native people faced not only an invading civilization but the potential collapse of the ecosystems they relied on. A series of treaties were signed with plains tribes but the US government's inability to enforce their provisions and a lack of tribal consensus regarding treaty terms resulted in a cycle of conflict.¹⁹³ In 1849 a cholera epidemic killed as many as one half of the southern Cheyenne, and by the 1850's emigration through the plains was taking an extensive environmental toll, exhausting grass, leveling scarce timber, and disrupting wildlife. Bison herds had been facing a variety of pressures in the previous decades and by 1850 were in decline.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ Flores, *Ibid*, 483; Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures," *The Journal of American History* 90, no. 3 (2003), 840.

¹⁹² The Cheyenne fractured into these three groups in the period from 1840-1860. The spread of US territory combined with a range of new trading and emigrant routes influenced the demographic shift. The Southern Cheyenne, the largest group, ranged from Denver south and east into the southern plains. The Northern Cheyenne were closely allied with Hunkpapa and Sans Arc Lakota and resided near the Black Hills. The Dog Soldiers, which had emerged from one of the Cheyenne military societies, was intermarried with Oglala and Brule Lakota and more than the other Cheyenne focused on raiding settlers and traders along emigrant routes in Kansas and Nebraska. See Moore, *The Cheyenne*, 96-108; Afton, *Cheyenne Dog Soldiers*, XVII.

¹⁹³ The treaty of Fort Wise was a sticking point between Dog Soldiers and other Cheyenne leaders. This treaty further restricted the territory the Cheyenne had retained in the Fort Laramie treaty in 1851, moving them to a land base 1/13th the size of the Fort Laramie provisions. See Greene, *Washita*, 27. Many of these treaties remain disputed today. The struggle of the Standing Rock Sioux to resist the Dakota Access Pipeline occurs on lands included in the 1851 and 1868 Fort Laramie Treaties.

¹⁹⁴ The alliance between the Comanche, Kiowa, Kiowa-Apache, Cheyenne and Arapaho may have contributed to bison decline. Kiowa calendars would only include the notation for "many bison" once in the thirty years that

Plains ecosystems and cultures were under increasing threat.¹⁹⁵ In 1859 a gold rush to Colorado intensified encroachment on Cheyenne land, and while a few Cheyenne chiefs agreed to land deals the more militant factions refused to concede territories reserved in previous treaties, touching off longstanding disputes in Cheyenne politics.¹⁹⁶

During the Civil War Colorado territorial officials, particularly Governor John Evans, worked to clear all Indians from the territory. Evans regularly exaggerated the threat posed by Indians to drum up a military response, and he found a willing accomplice in Colorado militia colonel John M. Chivington.¹⁹⁷ In the spring of 1864, Chivington issued instruction to “kill Cheyennes wherever and whenever found.” Chivington moved against both Dog Soldiers and peaceful Cheyenne leaders and Cheyenne retaliations spread across the plains, with Arapaho, Kiowa, and Lakota warriors joining in the raiding and making the routes through Colorado, Nebraska and Kansas increasingly dangerous for settlers. This violence would culminate with the massacre at Sand Creek. At dawn on November 29th, 1864 Chivington’s troops attacked the village of Black Kettle, a Cheyenne peace chief who had received explicit permission from the Army to camp there. Chivington’s troops pounded the village with howitzers and gunfire, ignoring both the white flag and American flag raised above Black Kettle’s lodge. The shooting lasted from dawn until about 2:00 PM and left at least 150 Cheyenne and Arapaho dead.

Chivington’s soldiers proceeded to mutilate the dead before looting and burning the village.¹⁹⁸

followed the peace as the previously unexploited Arkansas Valley herds that had previously inhabited a buffer zone between tribes were hunted. See Flores, “Bison Ecology,” 481-483, and Hämäläinen, “Horse Culture,” 834.

¹⁹⁵ James Sherow attributes grassland deterioration to climate change, increasing human traffic, the disappearance of woodlands that sheltered humans and bison in winter, and the decline in bison and other animals. This would result in what Sherow calls the “domestication” of the grasslands into a managed agricultural environment with greater degrees of human intervention by the late nineteenth century. See James Earl. Sherow, *The Grasslands of the United States: An Environmental History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2007), 59-67.

¹⁹⁶ Greene, *Washita*, 10-14.

¹⁹⁷ Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre Struggling over the Memory of Sand Creek* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 146-147.

¹⁹⁸ Greene, *Washita*, 16-23.

Sand Creek touched off three federal investigations and widespread condemnation but that mattered little for the devastated Cheyenne and Arapaho. Families and kinship structures were permanently damaged, the Council of Forty-Four, the core of Cheyenne government, lost eight of its leaders, and three warrior societies lost headmen. The loss of prominent peace chiefs shifted Cheyenne policies even further towards the militarism of the Dog Soldiers, and Cheyenne and Arapaho anger reverberated throughout the plains. Sand Creek was a disaster, a tragedy, and a flashpoint for military resistance to US settler-colonialism. And while widely condemned by US officials, it was far from the last surprise attack the Cheyenne or their allies would face in the coming years. Just as charging into Native villages in the morning became a standard practice, so too were federal investigations and media outrage in the aftermath of these attacks. It was as if when confronted with the violence of settler-colonialism those who directly benefited were unable to face the reality of dispossession. They were also unwilling to halt the process.

In the years after the Civil War continued pressures from settlers and a series of treaties further eroded the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche and Kiowa land base. Sand Creek had convinced many on the plains that any promise from the government was hollow. As one government official warned negotiators, “an angel from heaven would not convince them but what another ‘Chivington Massacre’ was intended.” Militant factions in these tribes continued to disrupt settlement, and Civil War hero Winfield Scott Hancock led an expedition against the Cheyenne in 1867. Hancock intended to warn Native leaders about the consequences of not maintaining peace but his aggressive advance on a Cheyenne and Lakota village at Pawnee Fork precipitated a stampede. Hancock interpreted the panicked flight as a sign that the Cheyenne and Lakota were going to war, and he sent Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer and the 7th Cavalry in pursuit.

Custer's troops would chase Cheyenne around the Smoky Hill, Platte and Republican rivers for most of the spring without any serious engagements.¹⁹⁹ Their reports of dead settlers, burned stagecoaches, and stolen livestock convinced Hancock to burn the abandoned village at Pawnee Fork, an act that only further enraged the already embattled Cheyenne and their allies. Ultimately Hancock would be blamed for the violence in '67 and '68, a charge he would aggressively deny despite his removal from that command. Hancock took great care to establish a timeline wherein he only burned the village *after* evidence of further Cheyenne violence had been reported. In Special Field Order Number 13 he reported that

As a punishment for the bad faith practiced by the Cheyenne and Sioux who occupied the Indian village at the place: and as a chastisement for murders and depredations committed since the arrival of the command at this point by the people of those tribes, the village recently occupied by them which is now in our hands will be entirely destroyed.²⁰⁰

Hancock refers to the conflict as “the present war,” and this impulse to segregate episodes of violence into specific “wars” – the Indian War of 1867 – contrasts sharply with what Cheyenne people clearly understood to be an ongoing struggle for their land. Sand Creek must have been very fresh in the minds of those Cheyenne and Lakota that fled from Hancock's advance, and their retaliations against settlers in the Smoky Hill country, which they had been fighting to retain for decades, were not “fresh barbarities,” an excuse for Army retaliation in a war started by Native people. Dog Soldier chief Tall Bull articulated as much at treaty proceedings at Medicine Lodge Creek in October of 1867. He told commissioners that “when I signed the treaty at Little Arkansas I intended to live by it; but when we were treated as we were by General Hancock, I became ashamed that I had consented to the treaty. I became blind with rage, and

¹⁹⁹ Greene, *Washita*, 24-32.

²⁰⁰ “Reports of Major General W.S. Hancock upon Indian Affairs with Accompanying Exhibits,” Container 82, Reel 85, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress.

what I have done since, I am not ashamed of.”²⁰¹ Ultimately the Medicine Lodge Creek treaty would establish two reservations in Indian Territory, one for the Kiowa, Comanche and Kiowa-Apache, and another for the Cheyenne and Arapaho. A tenuous peace would prevail in the winter of 1867-'68, but delays in approval of the treaty and provision of promised goods brought old tensions to the surface.²⁰²

Winter Weaponized

Philip Sheridan took charge of the Department of the Missouri on February 29, 1868. There was never any doubt in what his duties would consist of when he assumed control. Native resistance in the region had intensified in the years after Sand Creek. For many Cheyenne the massacre had confirmed the militant stance taken by factions unwilling to concede any more land. Tribal politics increasingly gravitated towards the Dog Soldiers and away from council chiefs like Black Kettle. In a military inquiry that followed Sand Creek a trader familiar with the Cheyenne reported that the Dog Soldiers no longer “claim any connection to Black Kettle’s band whatever.”²⁰³ Cheyenne warriors had proved particularly adept at striking military and civil infrastructure, carrying off livestock and endangering overland routes to the west. A fresh wave of raiding in 1868 provoked a predictably hysterical response. In September of 1868 acting Governor Hall of Colorado wrote to the Secretary of War and frantically called for more troops, claiming that “the Indians have again attacked our settlements in strong force, obtaining possession of the country to within twelve miles of Denver. They are more bold, fierce, and desperate in their assaults than ever before. It’s impossible to drive them out... they are better armed, mounted, disciplined, and better officered than our men.” Hall’s telegram should be read

²⁰¹ Greene, *Washita*, 36.

²⁰² *Ibid*, 38-31.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 27.

with a grain of salt. Impassioned declarations of imminent doom were a common feature of the frontier and had more to do with trying to portray settlers as helpless victims rather than invaders.²⁰⁴ However, Hall's agitation can also speak to the effectiveness of Native militarism.²⁰⁵

The ability of Native warriors to function in highly mobile strike forces made it difficult for the US Army, stationed in a series of forts, to respond in time to attacks. There was no way for the Army to police an entire region. Further, Native militancy was not universal. At no point were all Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, or Comanche actively engaged in conflict with the US. Oftentimes in a single village there was no consensus, as peace-inclined chiefs frequently complained of an inability to curb the raiding of their younger men.²⁰⁶ This made it difficult to identify and differentiate between militants and those interested in maintaining friendly relations with the US. Of course, regardless of their political persuasion every Native person on the plains was a living, breathing impediment to settlement. Army complaints that a few bad apples made it harder on peace-inclined Indians hid the fact that peace-inclined Indians were consistently targeted with violence, and that land acquisition would continue regardless of whether Native military resistance continued.

Sheridan thus faced a dispersed and highly mobile population of Native people that were extremely angry and effective in their preferred mode of warfare. This was an entirely heterogeneous region with multiple political factions and a diffuse political structure. Sheridan's strategic response aimed to simplify these categories and collectively punish Native people. Much of this had to do with conceptualizing Indians as an insurgent guerilla force, rather than

²⁰⁴ Philip Joseph Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 50.

²⁰⁵ "Telegram from Acting Governor Hall of Colorado, Complaining of Indian Outrages and Asking the Interposition of the Military," September 24, 1868, Container 72, Reel 76, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress.

²⁰⁶ "Report of Brevet Major General W.B. Hazen as Superintendent of Indians, for Southern Indian District from September 13th to November 10th, 1868," Container 72, Reel 76, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress.

sovereign nations resisting the invasion of their territory. In a letter to Sherman dated October 10, 1868 Sheridan reports that he sent Custer to chase down “the small parties of Indians now operating as guerillas” near Fort Harker. Sheridan viewed Indian people as wards of the government—doomed wards unless they could be forced to accept the reservation regime.²⁰⁷ Defining opposition as an insurgent guerilla war reframes a conflict over territory into a policing action aimed to correct a resistant population. In this context Native resistance took the form, from Sheridan’s perspective, of an insurgency against the already-established fact of US rule. The Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa and Comanche had to be corrected; not only the warriors, but the entire population. As it has in most guerilla wars, this meant targeting the populations in which the so-called insurgents lived. The war on the southern plains was not expanded into a total war. Instead, Native warriors were defined as guerillas, their sovereignty was denied, and their land base was targeted for appropriation. The expansive violence they faced thus emerged from their designation as less-than-sovereign. Native people’s way of life, their material possessions, their land, and their lives were all legitimate targets.

Much of Sheridan’s strategy focused on the material status of the Indians – their supplies, food, shelter, and livestock. In September of 1868 Sheridan argued that “these Indians require to be soundly whipped, and the ringleaders in the present trouble hung, their ponies killed, and such destruction of their property as will make them very poor.”²⁰⁸ We can hear echoes of Sheridan’s statements on the Civil War and his rationale for targeting food and infrastructure, but there are important differences as well. In the Civil War Sheridan targeted materials and food to force an early end to the war, to decrease the entire confederacy’s ability to

²⁰⁷ “W.T. Sherman to P.H. Sheridan, October 15th 1868,” October 15, 1868, Container 75, Reel 80, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress.

²⁰⁸ “Report of Operations of the Campaign against Indians in the Department of the Missouri in the Winter of 1868 and 1869,” Container 75, Reel 80, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress.

wage and sustain war both materially and emotionally. On the southern plains Sheridan targeted property and animals for destruction because it enabled Native life independent of US control. This may seem like splitting hairs, but as much as “lost cause” histories may try to portray the Civil War as an invasion it was never a systematic and ongoing conquest sustained into the present day. Material resources allowed Native people to fight wars of resistance and fractured the illusion of an already-settled United States that the reservation system sought to inaugurate. Sheridan argued that “they are now so independent that whether we shall have our people murdered, our mail lines and lines of communication interrupted... depends on the mere whim of the savages.”²⁰⁹ A month later Sheridan would report to Sherman that “I am exceedingly glad that the Peace Commission resolved at their late meeting that Indian tribes should not be dealt with as independent nations. They are wards of the government.” Sheridan notes that only a remnant of the “great nations of the Indians” remain and “the same fate awaits those now hostile, and the best way for the government is to now make them poor by the destruction of their stock, and then settle them on the lands allotted to them.”²¹⁰ This focus on the relationship between independence and property resonates in later military thought on counterinsurgency. Reconcentration and the control of food and shelter were integral to the military’s program in the Philippines and Vietnam, just as it was during the Indian Wars. However, the mobility of plains Indians made efforts to destroy their materials and supplies difficult. The climate and environment of the plains offered Sheridan an opening to pursue this biopolitical approach to warfare. All he had to do was flip tradition on its head and campaign in the winter.

²⁰⁹ “Report of Operations of the Campaign against Indians in the Department of the Missouri in the Winter of 1868 and 1869,” Container 75, Reel 80, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress.

²¹⁰ “W.T. Sherman to P.H. Sheridan, October 15th 1868,” October 15, 1868, Container 75, Reel 80, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress.

Environment and climate on the Great Plains can be unforgiving, particularly in winter. Violent storms, huge drifts of snow, freezing temperatures, and shortages of food can punish the unwary and unprepared. Native peoples living on the plains adapted their yearly subsistence cycles to accommodate these environmental factors, congregating in the summer to hunt buffalo and breaking apart into smaller groups to form winter encampments. For tribes engaged in active conflict with the US military the winter months were a time of safety. The army tried to refrain from campaigning in winter due to the toll it took on men and horses.²¹¹ As Sheridan noted in a letter to Sherman, Indians believed that “the inclemency of the weather would give them ample security.”²¹² When he took over the Department of the Missouri Sheridan aimed to change that. As part of his strategic plan Sheridan requested and received permission to conduct extensive campaigning in the winter of 1868/69. In an official report Sheridan writes: “to disabuse the minds of the savages of this confident security, and to strike them at a period at which they were the most, if not entirely, helpless, became a necessity.”²¹³ Helpless: immobilized, hungry, burdened with household items and food, with no separation between warriors and women, children, and the elderly. He would not be trying to defeat Native warriors in the field. He would be taking the fight to their villages.²¹⁴

Sheridan viewed his plan as relatively novel but it was not the first time the army had campaigned against Indians in winter. However, it was probably the largest and most ambitious attempt to do so, and the unpredictable nature of a Great Plains winter made it particularly dangerous. Indeed, Sheridan’s troops would be severely hampered by snow which prevented

²¹¹ Leckie, *The Military Conquest of the southern Plains*, 88-89.

²¹² “P.H. Sheridan to W.T. Sherman, November 1st 1868,” November 1, 1868, Container 75, Reel 80, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ Philip Henry Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan, General United States Army* (New York: C. L. Webster & Company, 1888), 297.

them from converging in Indian Territory simultaneously and perhaps doing even more damage. Despite these difficulties, the campaign would be decisive, elevating the winter surprise attack to a military doctrine that found its way into strategic manuals and the American cultural imagination.²¹⁵ Sheridan was aware of the risks, calling his plan an experimental one, “campaigns at such a season having been deemed impracticable and reckless.”²¹⁶ Famous frontiersman Jim Bridger came all the way from St. Louis to try and talk Sheridan out of the campaign. Even Custer, Sheridan’s protégé, warned the general that the campaign would take a hard toll on the horses.²¹⁷ A number of measures were taken to compensate for the weather. In the fall of 1868 the army began to stockpile materials in preparation for the campaign. Soldiers were issued a supply of winter clothing including a great coat, three lined sack coats, flannel shirts and trousers, stockings, woolen blankets, ponchos, caps, and an impressive 26 pairs of drawers.²¹⁸ Food for both men and stock had been stockpiled at Forts Dodge, Lyon, Gibson and Arbuckle, the entire process aided by the railroad which alleviated many of the problems associated with supplying troops over long distances. Sheridan proposed a three-pronged attack, with one column moving southeast from Fort Lyon in Colorado, a column heading east from Fort Bascom in New Mexico, and another attacking from the north via Fort Dodge in Kansas. On October 9th Sherman gave Sheridan’s plan his enthusiastic endorsement, even if “it ends in the utter annihilation of these Indians.” He promised Sheridan to “back you with my whole authority, and stand between you and any efforts that may be attempted in your rear to restrain your purpose or check your troops.”²¹⁹ Sherman doubled down a few days later, arguing that the

²¹⁵ Hutton, *Phil Sheridan’s Army*, 54.

²¹⁶ “P.H. Sheridan to W.T. Sherman, November 1st 1868,” November 1, 1868, Container 75, Reel 80, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress.

²¹⁷ Hutton, *Phil Sheridan’s Army*, 54.

²¹⁸ “Letter to Captain John Ewers,” September 14, 1868, RG 393 Part I Entry 2571 Vol 10 Letters Sent, 10 1861 - 1 1869 (1867-69), National Archives.

²¹⁹ Hutton, *Phil Sheridan’s Army*, 53.

Army worked to avoid conflict and that Indian aggression forced it on them: “As brave men, and as the soldiers of a government which has exhausted its peace efforts, we, in the performance of a most unpleasant duty, accept the war begun by our enemies, and hereby resolve to make its end final.”²²⁰ With the support of the army’s top general Sheridan had free reign to unleash his soldiers. No matter the cost to men and horses several columns of troops would move into the field starting in October to locate and destroy Native villages. The mandate was right there in Sherman’s orders – no restraint.

Sheridan and the rest of the Army were tired of trying to chase the fast and mobile Native warriors around the plains. Instead they would attempt to catch Native villages unawares and immobilized. This would make it easier to inflict casualties and destroy Native supplies, the tangible evidence of military progress. Sheridan measured his success in terms of body counts and resources destroyed, as both furthered his goal of eliminating Native independence. In preparing for the winter campaign he explicitly acknowledged his desire to increase the body count: “Our success so far in the number of Indians killed is fully as great as could be expected, and arrangements are now being made for active operations against their villages and stock.”²²¹ This was exactly the plan Sheridan put in motion in the fall of 1868: “as soon as the failure of the grass and the cold weather, forces the settled bands to come together, to winter in the middle latitudes south of the Arkansas, a movement of troops will then take place from Bascom, Lyon, Dodge, and Arbuckle, which I hope will be successful in gaining a permanent peace.”²²² The “permanent” in Sheridan’s statement takes on a particularly ominous tone in the context of his

²²⁰ War Department. United States, “Letter of the Secretary of War Communicating, in Compliance with a Resolution of the Senate of December 14, 1868: Information in Relation to the Late Indian Battle on the Washita River.,” 1869, Special Collections, Newberry Library, 5.

²²¹ “P.H. Sheridan to W.T. Sherman To, October 15th 1868,” October 15, 1868, Container 75, Reel 80, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress.

²²² “P.H. Sheridan to W.T. Sherman To, October 15th 1868,” October 15, 1868, Container 75, Reel 80, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress.

strategic planning. He planned to hit the Cheyenne and their allies so hard that they would sustain severe casualties, the remainder having no choice but to submit to US control. Sheridan wanted to make the campaign “the end of the Indian wars.”²²³

As temperatures fell on the plains in October of 1868 the machinery of the US Army ground into gear. W.T. Sherman had instructed his Indian agents to gather all the Indians they possibly could at Fort Cobb in Indian Territory. They were to use incentives and threats to keep those they could out of the coming war.²²⁴ For several months the Army had been treating any Indians found off the reservation as “hostile,” and a concentration of Indians at Fort Cobb allowed Sherman and Sheridan to fully incorporate the reservation into their strategic operations.²²⁵ This discursive move made the reservation, a Native space reserved through treaty, into US domestic/carceral space, and traditional homelands become a contested space where Native people risked their lives to occupy. The Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, and Comanche were now rebels in their own country. Sherman’s orders to Sheridan were to “proceed against all outside of the reservation as hostile.” Sheridan was to do his best to spare the “well-disposed” but policy was that confinement to Fort Cobb was the only way to guarantee Indian safety. Sherman wanted Sheridan to pursue “the utter destruction and subjugation of all who are outside in a hostile attitude.”²²⁶ Despite these threats many bands and villages remained off-reservation. There were many reasons for Indians to avoid the reservation: loss of independence, lack of food or water, and a regime of surveillance and discipline. But for the southern plains Indians the

²²³ DeBennville Randolph Keim, *New York Herald*, Nov. 8, 1868, as cited in Knight, *Following The Indian Wars* 69.

²²⁴ “W.T. Sherman to E. Wynkoop,” October 13, 1868, RG 393 Part I Entry 2601 Box 3, National Archives.

²²⁵ “W.T. Sherman to P.H. Sheridan,” September 17, 1868, RG 393 Part I Entry 2601 Box 3, National Archives.

This stance would be formalized the following year in General Order No. 8 which reserved on-reservation jurisdiction for Indian Agents but gave the military jurisdiction off-reservation, declaring any found outside the limits of the reservation hostile. “General Orders, No. 8” (Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, June 29, 1869), Benjamin Grierson Papers, Box 4 Folder 194, Newberry Library.

²²⁶ “W.T. Sherman to E. Wynkoop,” October 13, 1868, RG 393 Part I Entry 2601 Box 3, National Archives.

military's promise of safety would have been especially hollow, as Black Kettle had received just such a promise when he moved his village to Sand Creek.

This mobilization of space gave the Army a blank check to attack Indians anywhere it found them, and it did not sit well with everyone in the department. Edward Wynkoop, agent to the Cheyenne and Arapaho, feared that his orders to concentrate Indians in the very region where Sheridan would be dispatching troops was setting up another massacre like that at Sand Creek. Black Kettle had received explicit instructions from an Indian Agent that had replaced Wynkoop to camp at Sand Creek, instructions which had ultimately offered no protection from the Colorado Volunteers that destroyed his village and people. Wynkoop would ultimately resign in protest the very day of the Washita attack, not knowing that his worst fears had been confirmed. In his resignation letter he wrote that "knowing, if I fulfilled my instructions, I was only acting as a decoy to induce these Indians to present themselves in a locality where they were liable to be fallen upon at any moment and murdered, I had nothing left me but to resign the commission I held." The frequency with which Sherman and Sheridan wrote about the need to confine Indians to reservations is evidence of their desire to keep at least some Indians out of the coming war. However, Wynkoop's critique is not merely a conspiracy theory. For Sherman and Sheridan the reservation and an active military campaign were not opposite sides of Indian policy; they were mutually reinforcing ones. The reservation and the confinement and goods it promised were viewed, explicitly, as a military tool to be used in the Army's goal of subjugating Native people.

With the plan for the campaign in place the first troops moved into the field in mid-October. Major Eugene Carr skirmished with Dog Soldiers on October eighteenth and on October 25th he once more engaged Cheyenne warriors near Beaver Creek, killing ten warriors,

wounding many more, and driving them back towards their lodges.²²⁷ The Cheyenne burned the prairie to slow Carr's advance but he persisted, capturing camp supplies, food, and ponies that were abandoned by the fleeing Cheyenne. In his report the Major regrets his inability to catch the fleeing Cheyenne but notes a success - he captured a large supply of food, equipment, lodges and ponies.²²⁸ Carr's late-October report is one of the first instances of what would become a defining feature of Sheridan's overall campaign: a focus on capturing and destroying the material necessities of Native life whenever possible. Most of the military reports for the campaign go to great lengths to carefully catalog and record all the food and supplies captured. These are usually burned as the final act of a battle.

Carr carefully lists the captured equipment, which becomes a quantifiable record of the elimination of Native independence. As Carr counts destroyed supplies he counts the decline in Cheyenne ability to live outside the boundaries of US control. Carr's soldiers captured and destroyed 130 ponies, 2000 lodge poles, 50 lodge skins, 50 half-dressed robes, 30 pounds of powder, and various camp supplies including mats, kettles, litters, pans, spades, axes, crowbars, picks, guns, and dried meat.²²⁹ Those ponies, lodge poles, skins, robes, and food would be absolutely essential with winter fast approaching, and marked a grievous loss for the Cheyenne. They represented hours of work and material wealth that would be difficult to replace, particularly during the winter with hostile US troops in the field. Carr's attack failed to engage a Cheyenne village, and the women and children that would have occupied it, but the destroyed equipment and fleeing Cheyenne certainly accomplished the goals of keeping the Cheyenne running and poor. Despite his destruction of many Cheyenne supplies Carr's efforts were

²²⁷ Greene, *Washita*, 75.

²²⁸ "General E.A. Carr's Operations Against Indians. October. 1868.," Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

considered less than successful because he was unable to strike directly at a Native village and allowed the Cheyenne to escape.²³⁰ Cheyenne military skill had managed to hold The Fifth Cavalry at bay, allowing the noncombatants to escape. However, this was only the first foray in the winter campaign. Sheridan's plan to "make them poor" was well underway and his command would soon get an opportunity to take the fight directly into a Native village.

It is unclear how prepared Sheridan's troops were for his strategy of attacking Native villages directly. In September of 1868 military district headquarters issued General Field Orders #3, guidelines for the coming campaign. Because explicit strategic statements on the Indian Wars were surprisingly rare in this period the document offers rare insight into how troops would be approaching the campaign. Most importantly, and perhaps obviously, the document has as its underlying expectation that the campaign will be targeted at Native *villages*. It opens by warning that inexperienced officers too-often underestimate Indian opponents, who will likely be better equipped and prepared for warfare on the plains. Rather than chase the better-mounted Native warriors it recommends the following:

Their strategy will be never to attack except they have the advantage, and never to make a stand for resistance, except we are lucky enough to strike their villages; their plan will be to harass us in small parties, endeavoring to draw the troops from the direction in which they may be going, or to entice us to an unsuccessful pursuit, whereby they can break down our animals.

The orders advise that following the trail of tipi lodge poles is the preferred method of tracking and chasing Indians, but caution that warriors will often lay a false trail in this way. The remainder of the document outlines strict protocols for marching and making camp, the main goal being to prevent Indians from taking the column by surprise. Strangely, the orders do not cover an actual attack on Indian people. As this was the explicit goal of Sheridan's campaign,

²³⁰ George Frederic Price, *Across the Continent with the Fifth Cavalry*, (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1883), 132-133.

this seems odd. Cavalry training manuals from the 1860's make some mention of Indians and provide guidelines on surprise attacks, but they similarly leave undiscussed the specifics of an attack on a civilian or noncombatant village. They presume that the target of a surprise attack will be enemy soldiers. In a section of the *Regulations and Instructions for the Field Service of the US Cavalry 1862* titled "Of Sudden Attacks on the Enemy" it is assumed that the enemy consists of soldiers. It advises that "sudden attacks on the enemy are made with several objectives: 1. To alarm his posts; 2. To capture one or more of them; and 3. To attack his quarters."²³¹ What is interesting is that Custer's attack at the Washita followed quite closely the tactical form suggested by these manuals. It was entirely by-the-book *except* for the fact that it targeted noncombatants. His troops approached at night from a concealed position, they had scouts reconnoiter the terrain before they arrived, and he divided his troops into several columns for the attack, using a signal so that their approach and charge would be as coordinated as possible.

These are all the guidelines that General George McClellan outlined in his 1862 manual, and Custer follows them to a tee. In his introduction McClellan lists three primary reasons for the US to employ cavalry, one of which is in operations with Indians. He writes that Indians

Are generally irregular light horsemen, sometimes living and acting altogether on the plains, in other localities falling back into the broken country when pursued: the difficulty, always, is to catch them; to do so, we must be as light and quick as they are, and then superiority of weapons and discipline must uniformly give us the advantage."

Sheridan's campaign was six years removed from McClellan's book and he had abandoned entirely the strategy of chasing mounted Indian warriors. However, McClellan's specific tactical maneuvers were still, seemingly, in effect. What this means is that Sheridan's campaign had an overall strategy of attacking villages, and specific cavalry tactics for taking an enemy by

²³¹ George B. McClellan, *Regulations and Instructions for the Field Service of the U.S. Cavalry in Time of War*. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1862).

surprise, but few-to-no guidelines on how to deal with the presence of noncombatants. It would seem that “enemy” was being defined as “Indian” in a generalized tactical sense. This ambiguity was then combined with the rush and heat of a frantic cavalry charge. The 1864 manual *Cavalry Tactics in Three Parts* acknowledges the chaos and adrenalin of the surprise attack. It notes that the decisive charge is the primary function of cavalry, and it should be swift: “the squadrons quicken the gallop and attack the enemy with impetuosity.”²³² Those guidelines surely suited Custer, who was described by famed journalist Henry M. Stanley as having “a certain impetuosity and undoubted courage” as his principle characteristics.²³³ An impetuous and swift charge would make it difficult to carefully select targets in any circumstance. When that charge was directed at a group of people that were dehumanized and reviled by many US soldiers the results could be especially deadly. The cultural politics of Indian hating was widespread in nineteenth century America.²³⁴ For soldiers operating in a tactical grey area those cultural attitudes would fill in the blanks. Ultimately, we cannot know for certain what was in the heads of Sheridan’s soldiers, but we do know which direction they were pointed. In mid-November they received their orders to proceed south towards the presumed location of “hostile” Indian villages. Custer was ordered to punish the hostile Indians as severely as possible.²³⁵

²³² United States, *Cavalry Tactics in Three Parts: School of the Trooper, of the Platoon, of the Squadron, and the Evolutions of a Regiment*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864).

²³³ Stan Hoig, *The Battle of the Washita: The Sheridan-Custer Indian Campaign of 1867-69* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 4.

²³⁴ Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980).

²³⁵ “General Field Orders No. 10, Headquarters of Troops Operating South of the Ark’s and Dist. Upp. Ark’s, in the Field, Camp Supply, I.T.,” November 11, 1868, RG 393 Part I Entry 2633 Box 1, National Archives.

Daybreak at the Washita

“The field resembled a vast slaughter pen.”

On the morning of the 26th of November, 1868, Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer’s 7th Cavalry struck the trail of what was believed to be a Native war party near the Texas-Oklahoma border. Leading one of three columns converging on the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, and Comanche clustered on the southern plains, an enthusiastic Custer hoped to follow the trail back to a Native village. Ten days earlier Custer had been denied the opportunity to follow a similar trail by Alfred Sully, but this time there was no superior officer to reign in the impetuous general and the 7th swung into motion. A heavy snowfall made the trail easy to follow and an eager Custer pushed his command through the night, marching from first light to 1:30 AM with only an hour’s rest. Custer’s Osage scouts located the village and he crept forward with two of the scouts to have a look. The tinkling bells of the Cheyenne pony herd confirmed the presence of Natives, and as he left to return to his men Custer heard a baby crying. He had found his village. Custer hurried back to his troops and made plans, dividing his command into four columns with orders to simultaneously charge at daybreak and take the village by surprise. For four hours the 7th shivered and huddled together as the moonlight reflected off the snow, unable to light fires. Strict silence was maintained. Even Custer’s prize greyhound was muzzled and later garroted when it would not stay quiet. Several of the command’s other dogs were strangled and stabbed to death. A few hours before dawn the moon disappeared and left the soldiers waiting in the dark, hearts pounding and breath misting in the air. Eventually the night began to fade away and the troops would have stiffly mounted their horses in preparation for the charge.²³⁶

²³⁶ Albert Barnitz, Jennie Barnitz, and Robert M. Utley, *Life in Custer’s Cavalry: Diaries and Letters of Albert and Jennie Barnitz, 1867-1868*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 218-220.

As Custer would later report, “there never was a more complete surprise... the Indians were caught napping for once.” Accompanied by the cavalry band playing the regimental song, “Gary Owen,” the soldiers of the 7th swept into the village at daybreak and unleashed a hail of gunfire. The music was quickly replaced with the tumult of battle as Custer’s column splashed across the Washita into the village, shooting directly into tipis as sleepy Cheyenne emerged into a scene of chaos. In addition to the Cheyenne warriors many elders, women, and children were gunned down, some intentionally and some casualties of the confusion. Many fell in the initial charge, but official reports noted that dead Cheyenne could be found as many as six miles from the battlefield.²³⁷ The question of noncombatant casualties is a difficult one. In his memoir written long after the fight Custer claimed that in the moments before the charge “I could not but regret that in a war such as we were forced to engage in, the mode and circumstances of battle would possibly prevent discrimination.” He further claimed that he ordered his soldiers to avoid killing any but “the fighting strength of the village.” However, he did instruct that no Cheyenne should be allowed to escape, and his initial reports on the battle, as well as those of his other soldiers, fail to mention any warning against noncombatant casualties. It is possible that the admonition to only kill warriors was inserted into the narrative in the aftermath of the fight to counter the backlash to women and children killed at the Washita.²³⁸

What we do know is that there was pressure to attack Native villages, kill those who resisted, and deliver a blow so hard that surrender would be the only option. What follows is difficult reading, but it is important to interrupt the romance of the cavalry charge and emphasize what it usually meant: Native suffering, experiencing attacks that were not exceptional but rather

²³⁷ “Report of Operations of the Command of Brevet Major General George A. Custer from December 7th, to December 22nd, 1868,” Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²³⁸ George A. Custer, *My Life on the Plains* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1952), 144, 159.

the intended outcome of a strategic prerogative.²³⁹ In the initial charge captain Albert Barnitz rode into a group of Cheyenne only to discover that they were women with children strapped to their backs. He wrote that “I did not care to waste ammunition on them, though to tell the truth I was not at all sentimental about it.”²⁴⁰ First Lieutenant Edward S. Godfrey claimed that the charging soldiers “took no care to prevent hitting women.” As he charged out of the village he came upon two Cheyenne women, one of whom put up her arms and said “don’t shoot” but was shot and killed by another soldier.²⁴¹ Private Dennis Lynch would later recall that the soldiers surrounded the village and “shot everything they could see” including Cheyenne women. The chaos of the charge seemingly did not encourage discrimination in the choice of targets. Even a Mexican trader named Pilan with the bad luck of being present on that unhappy morning had attempted to surrender but was shot and killed.²⁴² As historian Nicole Guidotti-Hernandez has argued, it was not uncommon for Anglo-Americans to profess confusion about legitimate targets in the context of a surprise charge on Native villages. Attackers recounting the experience would deny the ability to distinguish between men and women, a move rooted in notions about Native savagery and intended to deflect criticism for subverting moral codes about killing women or children.²⁴³

Custer seemed to make no effort to avoid the killing of noncombatants in his overall strategy but he was also unwilling to let it go on uninterrupted once the fighting began. Scout Ben Clark later recalled that the men of Captain Myer’s command pursued a group of women

²³⁹ Here I follow Ned Blackhawk’s call to center the experiences of Native people in the narrative of US history, particularly with regard to violence. See Ned. Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

²⁴⁰ Richard G. Hardorff, *Washita Memories: Eyewitness Views of Custer’s Attack on Black Kettle’s Village* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 114.

²⁴¹ Hardorff, *Washita Memories*, 131.

²⁴² *Ibid* 187.

²⁴³ Nicole Marie Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. and Mexican National Imaginaries, Remapping United States and Mexican National Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 117.

and children, “killing them without mercy.” Clark reported the slaughter to Custer who ordered the scout to intervene and place them under guard. Clark also witnessed the death of about twenty men, women and children who took cover behind a river bank and refused to surrender. According to Clark the Osage scouts were responsible for many of the noncombatant casualties and mutilations.²⁴⁴ Cheyenne accounts of the battle agree that more women and children were killed than men. Magpie, who would survive the attack and later fight at the Battle of the Rosebud and the Little Bighorn, recalled that a group of soldiers chasing him and some companions swerved to instead attack a fleeing group of women and children, the same group reported on by Ben Clark.²⁴⁵ Moving Behind Woman described the aftermath of the fight as a scene of carnage, the bodies of men, women, and children “strewn about.”²⁴⁶ Mrs. B.K. Young Bird remembered that “very many of our people were shot down like rabbits. No mercy was shown to either the babies or children of any age and no mercy was shown to the women.”²⁴⁷ Mrs. Lone Wolf recalled that in the initial charge she tried to run from her tent only to be motioned back in by some soldiers. When the battle ended she was taken prisoner and remembered that “men, women, and children lay dead everywhere.” According to Cheyenne custom prisoners could be put to death if an equal number of Cheyenne were killed by the prisoner’s friends or relatives. Consequently, the Cheyenne captives expected that a number of them would be executed in revenge for the soldiers killed in the charge. Mrs. Lone Wolf was sent to inquire of Custer, through an interpreter, how many Cheyenne should prepare themselves for death. Custer reportedly covered his face with his hands for a full minute before informing

²⁴⁴ Greene, *Washita* 120; Hardorff, *Washita Memories*, 208.

²⁴⁵ Charles J. Brill, *Conquest of the Southern Plains: Uncensored Narrative of the Battle of the Washita and Custer’s Southern Campaign*. (Oklahoma City: Golden Saga publishers, 1938), 156; Hardorff, *Washita Memories*, 308.

²⁴⁶ Hardorff, *Washita Memories*, 328.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 333.

her that “white people don’t kill prisoners.”²⁴⁸ Custer’s theatrical exasperation was meant to highlight the difference between civilized and savage war but it would ultimately ring hollow. He would threaten to hang captive Native leaders more than once in the coming winter campaign.

In the aftermath of the fight the supposed murder of white captives was used to justify the indiscriminate nature of the attack at the Washita. In his official report Custer claimed that he secured two white children who had been held captive in Black Kettle’s village. He also reported the murder of a white woman as well as a ten-year-old boy.²⁴⁹ Sheridan would forward this report to Sherman and no correction to the public record of the battle was ever made, but neither Sheridan nor Custer’s subsequent reports of the fight mention the captive boys or the murdered woman and child. Whether a result of mid-battle miscommunication or an outright fabrication, Sheridan and Custer clearly realized that they could no longer justify a narrative for which there was no evidence, but the presence of murdered white captives would persist as a justification for the attack.²⁵⁰ A correspondent for the *New York Daily Tribune* claimed that many Cheyenne women took part in the fighting, and that “others were spared, except those who had been seen to murder white captive children in their hands.” Officer Charles Brewster claimed that the Cheyenne killed all white prisoners when the fight began, including two infants, the work of “revengeful squaws.” Several soldiers reported a fleeing Cheyenne woman killing a white child with a knife, but the child was her own and not a captive, seemingly killed in the panic and despair of the attack.²⁵¹ Like Custer’s report both accounts were fabrications as there were no

²⁴⁸ Hardorff, *Washita Memories*, 336-337.

²⁴⁹ “Report of the ‘Battle of the Washita,’ fought by the 7th U.S. Cavalry November 27th 1868. By’t Major General G.A. Custer, Comd’g, with the Indians of ‘Black Kettles’ band,” Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²⁵⁰ Hardorff, *Washita Memories*, 187.

²⁵¹ *Ibid*, 196, 222.

white captives in Black Kettle's village. The only captives known to be in the vicinity were Clara Blinn and her infant son, captured by Cheyenne in October of 1868. Both were found dead in the adjacent Arapaho village two weeks after the attack and were most likely not present in Black Kettle's village, and may have been killed in retaliation for the attack.²⁵²

Custer's attack had been devastating but he quickly found his command in a dangerous position. The village had been one of several Native encampments strung along the Washita River. Although the 7th took the village in a matter of minutes they had to spend several hours fighting to dislodge the Cheyenne warriors that managed to escape the initial gunfire, who took up positions in nearby ravines and underbrush. As the initial fighting subsided, Kiowa and other Indians from nearby encampments moved to engage the US soldiers. Major Joel Elliot and 17 soldiers had pursued a group of fleeing Cheyenne downstream. They caught and killed several of the Cheyenne but were in turn surrounded by the Indians moving up from the other villages. Elliot and all 17 of his men were killed, although Custer and his officers had no idea what had befallen them. Only later would they learn the fate of Elliot and his men, with Custer's abandonment of them a lingering controversy.²⁵³ The 7th Cavalry had inflicted heavy casualties. They had also killed Black Kettle and his wife, captured 53 women and children, and taken possession of 51 lodges. Although the actual numbers have been widely debated, Custer claimed the number of Cheyenne dead at 103 warriors and "some of the squaws and a few of the children." This number was arrived at by Custer in conversations with his officers during and after the battle and was at best an estimate, as the actual casualties on the battlefield were never counted.²⁵⁴ He would later inflate this count to 140 Cheyenne killed. Soldiers present at the fight

²⁵² Hardorff, *Washita Memories*, 160, 172-173; Greene, *Washita* 184-185.

²⁵³"Papers Relating to Custer's Indian 'Battle of the Washita.'" Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²⁵⁴ Hardorff, *Washita Memories*, 131.

would place the count far lower, calling official reports an exaggeration and claiming about twenty Cheyenne men and around forty women and children killed.²⁵⁵ Cheyenne accounts of the dead were even lower, reporting to Special Agent Vincent Colyer that thirteen men, sixteen women and nine children had been killed. The number of wounded would have been much higher although no clear estimate exists.²⁵⁶ 53 Cheyenne women and children were now prisoners of the US army.

Custer's report on enemy casualties hardly seems out of place or surprising. Perhaps he felt he could not obtain an exact count given the looming threat of Indian reinforcements, or perhaps he did not want the number and type of Cheyenne casualties specifically counted.²⁵⁷ However, he was interested in cataloging more than just the dead. During a tense firefight, with the looming threat of Native reinforcements, Custer had his troops meticulously catalog the entire contents of Black Kettle's camp, down to the last blanket. This thorough list of spoils was included in his subsequent report:

The Indians left in the ground, and in our possession, the bodies of one hundred and three of their warriors, including "Black Kettle" himself, whose scalp is now in the possession of one of our Osage guides. We captured, in good condition, 875 horses, ponies and mules; 241 saddles, some of very fine and costly workmanship; 573 buffalo robes; 390 buffalo skins (for lodges); 160 untanned robes, 210 axes; 140 hatchets; 35 revolvers; 47 rifles; 535 pounds of powder; 1050 pounds of lead; 4000 arrows and arrow heads; 75 spears; 90 bullet moulds; 35 bows and quivers; 12 shields; 300 pounds of bullets; 775 lariats; 940 buckskin saddle-bags; 470 blankets; 93 coats; 700 pounds of tobacco. In addition, we captured all their winter supply of dried buffalo meat, all their meal, flour, and other provisions, and in fact everything they possessed, even driving the warriors from the village with little or no clothing.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ Hardorff, *Washita Memories*, 283.

²⁵⁶ Greene, *Washita*, 136.

²⁵⁷ Further discussion of Custer's casualty count is found in Hoig, *The Battle of the Washita*, 200-201.

²⁵⁸ "Papers Relating to Custer's Indian 'Battle of the Washita'." Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress. While it is difficult to know exactly how accurate this list is, the numbers are relatively similar with other reports Sheridan's officers would submit over the course of the campaign. Examination of the Washita list and the list produced after the battle at Summit Springs in July of 1869 will show similar numbers of material goods but a decline in food and other daily necessities; evidence that the Washita village was under less duress than Native camps several months into the campaign. A horse herd carrying goods on travois as large as the one at the Washita would have been capable of lugging thousands of pounds worth of material goods. Horses and

Remember that Custer's troops were probably engaged in continuous fighting while this incredibly detailed list was compiled. It was not a casual survey of captured goods but rather a specific cataloging of the attack's material effects on Cheyenne livelihood. It was evidence that both Cheyenne lives and Cheyenne independence were being destroyed. Of course, Custer did not have his troops count buffalo robes just so he could include it in the report. Large bonfires were kindled and most of the goods were destroyed, although Custer had the troops load one of the finest lodges into a wagon for a personal souvenir.²⁵⁹ Almost the entire herd of 875 ponies was killed, first by slitting their throats and later via gunfire when that proved too slow. This further enraged the Native warriors who were forced to watch from a distance.²⁶⁰ Custer would report to Sheridan that "we destroyed everything of value to the Indians," and left the survivors and captured women and children to mourn the loss of their family members with only the clothes on their backs. Black Kettle's band had been made "poor," fulfilling one of Sheridan's primary goals for the campaign. The loss of family members and loved ones would have been the central tragedy of the Washita attack for the survivors, but the destruction of the tipis, supplies, ponies, and food was a catastrophe for the tribe with winter arriving in full force. Cold and frostbite would afflict many of the survivors.²⁶¹ In his report of the attack Custer commended his troops for enduring the sub-zero temperatures and privations of the campaign. The hardships faced by the now destitute Cheyenne, many of them captives, would be far greater.²⁶²

mules are capable of transporting a grown man on an ambulance litter, so a 50 pound travois would leave roughly 100 pounds worth of carrying capacity for each animal in a herd. See John C. Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture, with Comparative Material from Other Western Tribes* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1955), 102-107, and George A. Otis, *A Report to the Surgeon General on the Transport of Sick and Wounded by Pack Animals*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1877).

²⁵⁹ Greene, *Washita*, 124.

²⁶⁰ Greene, *Washita*, 126; Custer, *My Life*, 170.

²⁶¹ Hardorff, *Washita Memories*, 333.

²⁶² "Papers Relating to Custer's Indian 'Battle of the Washita'." Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

For the cold and wounded, the trip back to Camp Supply was difficult as the column struggled through snow and freezing temperatures. The captive Cheyenne were now subject to violence that would extend beyond the battlefield. Much of this brutality would be borne by Cheyenne women. Various sources suggest sexual coercion and assault on the part of officers towards Cheyenne women during the journey and subsequent captivity. Frederick Benteen wrote to a friend years later that “of course you have heard of an informal invitation from Custer for officers desiring to avail themselves of the services of a captured squaw, to come to the squaw round-up corral and select one! Custer took his first choice, and lived with her during winter and spring of 1868 and ’69.”²⁶³ The woman referred to by Benteen was Monahseetah, the daughter of Little Rock. Benteen was famously critical of Custer but his account is corroborated in several places. Ben Clark claimed that “many of the squaws captured at Washita were used by the officers,” with scout Raphael Romero sending prisoners to the officer’s tents each night.²⁶⁴ Magpie, a Cheyenne survivor of the fight, would further elaborate on these abuses to writer Charles Brill. When Brill questioned him about sexual abuse Magpie reported that he had heard several of the victims recount their experience at the hands of Custer and his officers, including the officers selecting Cheyenne women from the prisoners once they returned to Camp Supply.²⁶⁵

These sorts of abuses were not unique to the Washita attack. The previous year the military had issued a confidential warning to officers on the plains alleging “practices hurtful to the reputation of the army,” including officers “keeping squaws” as mistresses under the guise of servants. The communication warned that any enlisted men or employees found “thus addicted”

²⁶³ Frederick William Benteen et al., *The Benteen-Goldin Letters on Custer and His Last Battle*, (New York: Liveright, 1974), 271.

²⁶⁴ Greene, *Washita*, 169.

²⁶⁵ Brill, *Custer, Black Kettle*, 22.

would be immediately discharged. While not all relationships between Native women and white men would have been directly coercive, clearly there was a plains military culture that viewed Native women as sexually available while simultaneously illicit, a threat to the stability of military culture that had to be dealt with in confidential memos rather than general orders.²⁶⁶ There is a long history of depicting Native women in bestial and sexualized forms, rooted in the image of the "squaw drudge" which functioned as the inverse of the Indian princess of Disney movies and settler-genealogical fantasies. Native women were viewed as subverting Anglo gender norms, a subversion that stood in the way of their elimination or domestication into a settler-regime.²⁶⁷ Guidotti-Hernandez argues that rape was used to dominate Native women and to reinstate Western gender and sexual norms. Their depiction as dichotomized princesses/drudges made them both reviled and available, subjected to ongoing sexual violence that extended beyond the Washita attack.²⁶⁸

The 7th Cavalry rode into Camp Supply with an extravagant ceremony on December 1st.²⁶⁹ For the attack Custer received the "special congratulations" of his commander Philip Sheridan for "efficient and gallant services rendered" in a set of general field orders issued the day after the battle. Sheridan also published Custer's detailed list of casualties and goods destroyed, expressing his gratitude for the "almost total annihilation of the Indian band."²⁷⁰ Sheridan took a broad view of "annihilation," incorporating both casualties inflicted and goods and materials destroyed. As news of the fight began to spread, Sherman had to fulfil his promise to defend Sheridan against criticism. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Nathaniel Taylor,

²⁶⁶ "Confidential. Headquarters Department of the Platte, Omaha, Neb., November 27th, 1867," Christopher C. Augur Papers, 1780-911, Box 5 Folder 71, Newberry Library.

²⁶⁷ David D. Smits, "The 'Squaw Drudge': A Prime Index of Savagism," *Ethnohistory* 29, no. 4 (1982): 281–306.

²⁶⁸ Hernandez, *Unspeakable Violence*, 118-124.

²⁶⁹ Knight, *Following the Indian Wars*, 94.

²⁷⁰ "Papers Relating to Custer's Indian 'Battle of the Washita'." Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

along with members of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs viewed Custer's attack as a repetition of Sand Creek, with the friendly Black Kettle once again subject to an unprovoked attack. Members of the Cherokee, Choctaw, and Creek nations issued a formal protest and pressured Commissioner Taylor for "a fair and thorough investigation."²⁷¹ For his part Sherman backed up the actions of Custer and Sheridan, maintaining that while Black Kettle may have been peaceful the warriors of his band were not, having participated in attacks on settlers near the Solomon and Saline rivers in the summer of 1868. As Sherman worked to defend the actions of his generals against public outcry, the campaign continued.

The Winter War Continues

Washita was a hard blow but Sheridan's seek-and-destroy winter campaign would continue. In his report summarizing the Washita fight Sheridan wrote that "the Indians, for the first time, begin to realize that winter will not compel us to make a truce with them."²⁷² Custer's attack on the Cheyenne was devastating but Sheridan's goal of driving Indians into reservations and killing any that remained outside was unfinished. Custer and Sheridan quickly remobilized and moved on the Indians that had been camped near Black Kettle on the Washita, leaving Camp Supply on December 7th and riding south towards Fort Cobb. They examined the Washita battlefield and then moved to pursue the Indians that had fled.²⁷³ As the column struggled southeast through snow and ice a letter reached Sheridan from Hazen, informing the general that the tribes near Fort Cobb were all considered to be friendly and had not engaged in hostilities

²⁷¹ Greene, *Washita*, 164-165.

²⁷² "Summary of Information Regarding Hostile Indians," Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²⁷³ "Report of Operations of the Command of Brevet Major General George A. Custer from December 7th, to December 22nd, 1868," Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

during the recent conflict.²⁷⁴ Shortly after the arrival of Hazen's letter a group of Kiowa under Satanta and Lone Wolf as well as some Apache and Comanche approached the column. Custer took a guard and rode out to meet them under a flag of truce, during which the chiefs offered to accompany the soldiers back to Fort Cobb and reiterated their friendliness. Custer was hardly disposed to accept their peaceful intentions. He believed that these same Indians had ridden to the defense of Black Kettle's village after the Washita attack and were thus equally guilty.²⁷⁵ Of course, the Cheyenne at Black Kettle's village hadn't been offered a chance to surrender, so it is unclear what other response Custer expected from the tribes other than self-defense.

As Custer talked with the chiefs the Indians quietly began to slip away, no doubt terrified of being attacked by the same soldiers that had inflicted such carnage on Black Kettle's village. Custer and his officers believed this to be a ruse and proceeded to arrest Satanta and Lone Wolf as well as two Apache chiefs, holding them as hostages to coerce the frightened Indians into Fort Cobb. Custer, firmly convinced that the Kiowa and others that had been present at Washita deserved to be treated as hostiles, believed that Hazen's letter attesting to their friendly disposition was more evidence of the corruption and ineptitude of the Indian bureau.²⁷⁶ Upon arrival at Fort Cobb Custer had the chiefs imprisoned, and when it became clear that their villages were not proceeding towards Fort Cobb but continued to flee Custer had them dispatch

²⁷⁴ Hazen and his colleague Henry Alvord had maintained the peaceful inclination of the Kiowa and Comanche earlier in 1868, and Hazen would continue to do so after the Washita fight. Alvord reported in early November that the Comanche and Kiowa had constantly declined to join the Cheyenne and Arapaho in the war. Hazen's letter angered Custer, who criticized the Indian Agent in his memoirs, but Hazen would continue to protest the innocence of those particular groups of Kiowa and Comanche long after the fact. War Department, United States, "Letter of the Secretary of War Communicating, in Compliance with a Resolution of the Senate of December 14, 1868: Information in Relation to the Late Indian Battle on the Washita River.," 1869, Special Collections, Newberry Library, 8; William Babcock Hazen, *Some Corrections of Life on the Plains* (Saint Paul: Ramaley & Cunningham, 1875), Special Collections, Newberry Library.

²⁷⁵ "Report of Operations of the Command of Brevet Major General George A. Custer from December 7th, to December 22nd, 1868," Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²⁷⁶ "Report of Operations of the Command of Brevet Major General George A. Custer from December 7th, to December 22nd, 1868," Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

messengers to their people with the news that the chiefs would be “hung at sunrise to the nearest tree.” As he would later report, “this produced the desired effect.” All the southern plains Apache, most of the Comanche, and the main portion of the Kiowa hastened to Fort Cobb.

Custer made it clear that the tribes were not there to make new treaties or propose terms of settlement. They were there to place themselves under US control, “being virtually prisoners of war.” Of the five tribes at whom Sheridan’s campaign was aimed there remained free only the Cheyenne and Arapaho, who had fled to the mountains south of Fort Cobb. Custer dispatched an Apache chief and Black Kettle’s sister to these tribes with messages warning them to come in. He would later report that in his dealings with all five tribes

No promise or inducement has been held out. I have made no pretense to be friendly disposed. Whatever I have asked the tribes to do, or accede to, has been in the form of a demand. They have, from the commencement of this campaign, been treated, not as independent nations, but as refractory subjects of a common government.²⁷⁷

Early in the campaign Sheridan had referred to the Cheyenne as “guerillas,” and here Custer referred to the tribes as refractory, wayward and disobedient subjects revolting against the authority of the US government rather than sovereign nations with fully ratified treaties. In late December Sheridan wrote to Sherman with the news that if the Indians continued to refuse to come into Fort Cobb, “I will issue an order outlawing them, and forbidding communication from anyone, directly or indirectly, with them, and will order to be hung any Indian so doing; and will proceed against them as heretofore stated.”²⁷⁸ This definitional move was strategic in that it shifted Native resistance away from any sort of political legitimacy. If the US was so established as to make Natives warriors “outlaws” then Custer would not be fighting a war in the first place. But Custer, and his superior, and his superior’s superior all continuously positioned Native

²⁷⁷ “Report of Operations of the Command of Brevet Major General George A. Custer from December 7th, to December 22nd, 1868,” Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

people as subjects of US authority without a claim to competing sovereignty, and by extension, land.

The winter campaigning would continue into 1869. In late December Sheridan claimed that his strategy had “filled them with consternation,” “they cannot sleep at night; they cannot graze their stock without fear; they have no buffalo to eat; they will have no robes to trade; and are feeling very nervous and insecure.”²⁷⁹ Custer’s movement south from Camp Supply was one of several troop movements in late 1868, and on Christmas Day, December 25th the column under Major Evans discovered a Comanche village of about 500 along the Red River in present-day Oklahoma. Evans promptly followed the marching orders he had received from Sheridan to “attack all Indians met.” He brought the firepower of his four mountain howitzers to bear on the village and opened fire as the panicked Comanche tried to load women and children onto horses to escape. The village suffered an estimated 20-30 casualties and left behind their property and food supplies, which Evans’ command spent the entire day burning. Evans, like his colleagues, cataloged the destroyed supplies, including 25,000 pounds of buffalo meat, 150 bushels of corn, 200 sacks of corn meal, 200 sacks of wheat meal, 1200 pounds of tobacco, 100 pounds of powder, 250 pounds of lead, 100 bullet molds, 300 robes, 100 skins, 60-80 hatchets, 100 brass kettles, 100 iron pots, 120 tin buckets, 120 camp kettles, 60 butcher knives, 60 draw knives, 60 hammers, 1000 panniers, 200-300 lariats, and a variety of other supplies, “all the paraphernalia of a rich Indian town.”²⁸⁰ Everything except the food and tobacco was destroyed, the rest being used by Evans’ command.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ Sheridan was likely basing this on meetings with Native leaders at Fort Cobb. See: “Report of Major General P.H. Sheridan in Relation to the Treacherous Conduct of Kiowa Indians; Arrest of ‘Lone Wolf’ and ‘Satanta.’” Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72, Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²⁸⁰ “Report of Major General Sheridan of the Operations of Coluimn from Fort Bascom, Bv’t Lieut. Colonel A.W. Evans, 3rd Cavalry, Commanding,” Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72, Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

Evans' description of the amount of powder, lead, utensils and tools is consistent with other reports from that winter, and paints a picture of a Comanche village well equipped to hunt, process food, and survive the hard winter months. It is unlikely that the soldiers accurately measured 25,000 pounds of Buffalo meat, but the perhaps inflated list of food supplies shows that the village had enough food to impress the soldiers and presumably to survive the winter months. Evans made special mention of the quality of the lodges, about 60 in total, "of the best Indian workmanship, and nearly all new."²⁸² Each lodge averaged around 18 lodge poles of red cedar, and twenty buffalo skins, representing a huge investment in time and effort and a grievous loss. The Comanche village had lost nearly everything, and the psychological effect of that loss, when combined with casualties and the threat of further attack, would have added to the pressure to submit to US authority. It also foreclosed a range of cultural and subsistence practices and opened a window for US authorities to force the Comanche to adopt Euro-American norms. More than total war, this sort of destruction was aimed at broad cultural changes, and Evans' effort to emphasize the number and quality of goods his command destroyed is evidence of the priority the military placed on this sort of violence.

In his report on the engagement Sheridan called it "the final blow to the backbone of the Indian rebellion," but that was a premature sentiment and one not shared by the officers under his command.²⁸³ Evans' troops would stay in the field until late January 1869 but would not have another major engagement with Indians, and in his final report he regretted that the campaign had to "terminate with so little success." Indeed, a military policy based on body counts and villages destroyed demanded more than one inconclusive battle, although Evan's destruction of

²⁸² "Report of Operations of the Command of Brevet Major General George A. Custer from December 7th, to December 22nd, 1868," Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²⁸³ "Report of Operations of the Command of Brevet Major General George A. Custer from December 7th, to December 22nd, 1868," Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

Comanche supplies was no small matter in the middle of winter. Ultimately the weather, which had enabled some of the attacks carried out that season, also played a role slowing down and interrupting the movement of US troops. Evans' command lost 172 horses to cold weather and lack of food, and the troops under Major Carr spent most of December and January struggling through snowstorms without encountering any Indians. In late December a seemingly exasperated Carr requested permission to bring his troops in from the field, reporting 8-inch deep snow that prevented the starving animals from eating.²⁸⁴

The attacks in November and December were not the end of the violence. Evans and Carr had kept Indians on the southern plains anxious and mobile. The strike on Black Kettle's village at the Washita, in addition to the various troop movements in the region, had caused thousands of Indians, both those in tribes considered hostile and others, to flee to the Fort Cobb agency to avoid a similar fate.²⁸⁵ These were not idle fears. According to Custer in the aftermath of the Washita fight "it was determined that upon a slightly modified principle, reinforced by the biting frosts of winter, we should continue to press things until our savage enemies should not only be completely humbled, but be forced by the combined perils of war and winter to beg for peace and settle quietly down within the limits of their reservation."²⁸⁶ However, the main body of Cheyenne and Arapaho, including most of the Dog Soldiers, remained southwest somewhere beyond the Wichita Mountains.

Sheridan managed to arrange a meeting with several of the independent Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa leaders on January 1st, 1869. The chiefs reported the impoverished

²⁸⁴ "Letter from Andrew Sheridan, Headquarters Fort Dodge," January 16, 1869, RG 393 Part I Entry 2601 Box 11, National Archives, "Letter from A. Sheridan to W. Keever Regarding General Carr," January 27, 1869, RG 393 Part I Entry 2601 Box 11, National Archives, "Report of Major General Sheridan of the Operations of Column from Fort Bascom, Bv't Lieut. Colonel A.W. Evans, 3rd Cavalry, Commanding," Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72, Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²⁸⁵ Greene, *Washita*, 178.

²⁸⁶ Custer, *My Life*, 399.

condition of their people and Little Robe explained the toll that the various columns of troops had taken on their sense of safety. He told Sheridan that “there are a great many troops in the country now travelling around. No matter which way we turn we meet troops travelling through the country. We are tired looking around and seeing bad, and now want to take the white man by the hand and whatever we do hereafter to see good.”²⁸⁷ Enforcing a hard line, Sheridan and Custer promised more violence unless the Indians were willing to surrender themselves entirely to US control. Custer warned that “this reservation is now the only ground left for the Indians; all the other is bad ground, and has war made on.” Sheridan similarly warned the assembled chiefs that “if they stay out, I will make war on them winter and summer as long as I live, or until they are wiped out.” He further warned that he was unwilling to discuss peace until every Indian was collected at the agency.²⁸⁸ Given the slaughter on the Washita Sheridan’s threats were far from idle. However, proximity to reservations and forts had failed to protect the Cheyenne before, and with the memory of Sand Creek still fresh not all Indians were willing to submit themselves to the dubious safety of military administration.

Military pressure continued to worsen the condition of Native people on the southern plains but many of the Cheyenne remained independent. Most of the Arapaho had been captured by Custer in late January and moved to Fort Sill, the site chosen as an alternative to Fort Cobb for the southern Plains Indian reservation.²⁸⁹ Meanwhile Sheridan and his subordinates worked to manage the Kiowa and Comanche that had settled on the reservation. In February he wrote to Sherman and complained that “it would be necessary, if we acted with fairness and justice, to

²⁸⁷ “Interview of General Sheridan with ‘Little Robe’ of the Cheyennes, and ‘Yellow Robe’ of the Arapahos - Representing the Warriors of Their Tribes,” January 1, 1869, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72, Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²⁸⁸ “Interview of General Sheridan with ‘Little Robe’ of the Cheyennes, and ‘Yellow Robe’ of the Arapahos - Representing the Warriors of Their Tribes,” January 1, 1869, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72, Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²⁸⁹ Greene, *Washita*, 179.

hang nearly all the principal chiefs or their sons, of the five bands belonging to this reservation, and now here, and about half the balance of their people.” It is hard to see how he arrived at that conclusion unless he was counting every Native person to ever take up arms against US soldiers. This was not hyperbole, as Sheridan had previously ordered Brevet Major General Benjamin Grierson to assist Hazen in managing the new reservation and to hang and imprison any Indians found committing acts of violence or thievery in Texas. Sheridan thought of Native people as something closer to criminals than warriors, advising Grierson that Native people in a “savage” state could not be expected to behave themselves without a system of punitive laws and punishments.²⁹⁰ Sheridan believed that hanging every “guilty” Indian would “have been the best in the end” but that it would have threatened the success of the reservation system. Sheridan was “deeply interested in its success” and believed that if the reservation system failed extermination would not be far behind for Indian people.²⁹¹

As Sheridan worked to confine the Kiowa and Comanche to the reservation and halt their raids into Texas, Custer moved to attack the still-independent Cheyenne. On March 2nd he led the 7th Cavalry and the 19th Kansas Cavalry out of a camp near Medicine Bluff Creek, 30 miles south of the reservation at Fort Cobb. Custer, no doubt trying to replicate the attack at the Washita, followed several trails of lodge-poles hoping they led back to the main village. By March 12th the trail had grown to over 100 lodges. Hoping to catch the Cheyenne unawares Custer ordered a ban on bugle calls or the discharge of firearms, forbid fires during daytime and had the troops burn their excess supplies to move faster.²⁹² On the 15th one of the Osage scouts located a herd of

²⁹⁰ “P.H. Sheridan to B.H. Grierson, Headquarters, Department of the Missouri,” February 23, 1869, Benjamin Grierson Papers, Box 3 Folder 117, Newberry Library.

²⁹¹ “Papers Relating to Settlement with the Kiowas and Noconee Comanches, and Record of Talks Held with Them by General Sheridan,” Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 72 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²⁹² “Report of Operations of Troops Operating South of the Arkansas, Brevet Major General George A. Custer, Commanding, from March 2nd, 1869, to March twenty-first, 1869,” Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 73 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

ponies guarded by several Indians. Custer advanced and learned from the guards that the main body of the southern Cheyenne, about 260 lodges, was camped in the vicinity. Most were in a camp nearby consisting of Dog Soldier bands lead by Rock Forehead, known to the whites as Medicine Arrows, as he was the keeper of important Cheyenne spiritual objects of the same name.²⁹³ Custer quickly made plans to surround and attack the village as he had at the Washita but cancelled the plans when he learned in a council with some of the chiefs that two white women, Anna Belle Brewster Morgan and Sarah Catherine White, were held captive. Fearing that they would be killed if he attacked, Custer delayed his charge and accompanied Medicine Arrows to the center of the village for a meeting, observing that the entire camp was being packed up in a rush. In the meeting Custer was purportedly seated directly beneath the Four Sacred Arrows and was told by Rock Forehead (Medicine Arrows) that “if you are acting treachery toward us, sometime you and your whole command will be killed.” Rock Forehead also tapped the ashes of the ceremonial pipe out onto Custer’s boots, a Cheyenne sign of bad luck which perhaps forecast the destruction of Custer’s troops at the Little Bighorn seven years later.²⁹⁴ As the meeting delayed Custer the frightened Cheyenne began to move away towards Little Robe’s village several miles away, leaving behind lodges and supplies. Custer attributed this to their guilt over crimes committed but it was no doubt out of fear of a repetition of the Washita attack.²⁹⁵

When it became clear that the Cheyenne would slip away, Custer had four chiefs, including two representing the Dog Soldiers, Big Head and Dull Knife, captured and held at gunpoint. He threatened to hang the chiefs unless the Cheyenne surrendered and moved to the

²⁹³ Greene, *Washita*, 180-181.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 257.

²⁹⁵ “Report of Operations of Troops Operating South of the Arkansas, Brevet Major General George A. Custer, Commanding, from March 2nd, 1869, to March twenty-first, 1869,” Container 73 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

reservation, a repetition of the tactic used against the Kiowa the past December. After three days of delay and attempted bargaining by the Cheyenne, Custer delivered an ultimatum: the chiefs would be hung unless they surrendered the captive women by sunset, and he would then attack the village. The captives were relinquished and Custer learned from them that the Cheyenne were in a desperate state, having been driven beyond the buffalo ranges and forced to subsist on their starving mules and horses. However, Custer was unable to pursue them due to the similarly bad shape of his own troops and animals. Returning to the now abandoned Cheyenne villages Custer ordered the lodges, food and supplies burned. He then moved his command back to the supply depot. The Cheyenne had managed to slip away but Custer still had three of their chiefs as hostages, and he extracted promises that they would return to the reservation. In his report he claimed that “we have penetrated every haunt frequented by the five tribes which were lately hostile. We know their accustomed routes and hiding places. We have taught the Indians that they are safe from us in no place, and at no season... that the white man can endure the inclemencies of winter better than can the Indian.” Although frustrated that he had been unable to attack them directly Custer believed that the hostages would ensure future Cheyenne good behavior and he concluded his report to Sheridan claiming “this I consider as the termination of the Indian War.”²⁹⁶

This was another premature declaration of victory. While most of the Arapaho moved to the reservation, only Little Robe and about 67 lodges of Cheyenne came in. That left some 200 lodges of Dog Soldiers and their allies still independent. Indeed, a letter from Colonel Benjamin Grierson reported that Custer’s recent campaign had persuaded the Cheyenne to remain

²⁹⁶ “Report of Operations of Troops Operating South of the Arkansas, Brevet Major General George A. Custer, Commanding, from March 2nd, 1869, to March twenty-first, 1869,” Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 73 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

independent. Grierson, in meetings with Little Robe and other Cheyenne chiefs, learned that the bands had been headed towards Camp Supply with the intention of surrendering when Custer overtook them. After the encounter with Custer they held a council and the general opinion was that Custer's deception and capture of several of their chiefs did not bode well for their welcome at Camp Supply. The tribes scattered, with Little Robe and his followers surrendering at Camp Wichita while the rest moved up the Canadian River to hunt buffalo.²⁹⁷ The Dog Soldiers remained off-reservation and would continue to refuse to come in. A June 1869 report sent to Sheridan relayed that the split between Little Robe's Cheyenne and the Dog Soldiers had become permanent. Several Kiowa and Comanche chiefs reported that Little Robe had held a large council with all the Southern Cheyenne at which he demanded that the Dog Soldiers either settle on the reservation or leave that part of the country. The Dog Soldiers refused, telling Little Robe they would never make peace or settle down, declaring their intent to go north and join the Lakota and continue to fight.²⁹⁸

The Dog Soldiers moved north up the Republican River and made some sporadic attacks, eventually prompting a response from Colonel Carr and the Fifth Cavalry, which would set out in pursuit in June. Carr's orders were to "clear the Republican Country of Indians. All Indians found in the vicinity will be treated as hostile, unless they submit themselves as ready and willing to go to their proper reservations."²⁹⁹ A few brief skirmishes failed to deter Carr and he caught the entire camp of Dog Soldiers in their village at Summit Springs on July 11, 1869, taking the village by surprise and winning decisively. Tall Bull, one of the leaders of the Dog

²⁹⁷ "Report of Operations of Troops."

²⁹⁸ "Report of Lieutenant Henry Jackson, 7th Cavalry, Fort Harker, Kansas, Relative to Conversation of Head Chiefs of Kiowas, and Yapparika Comanches, in Reference to the Split between the Cheyenne Nation and the 'Dog Soldiers,'" Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 73 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

²⁹⁹ "Report of Operations of the Republican River Expedition. Brevet Major General E.A. Carr, Commanding, from June 30th to July twentieth, 1869," Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 73 Reel 76, Library of Congress.

Soldiers, was killed along with some 52 Cheyenne men and an unknown number of women and children.³⁰⁰ Seventeen women and children were captured. There were two white women held captive in the village, one of which was killed once the attack started while the other escaped with a severe injury. Carr's troops pursued fleeing Cheyenne up to four miles away from the village but their exhausted horses eventually gave out. The soldiers occupied the village and the next morning proceeded to catalog and burn the food, lodges, and supplies. Carr, perhaps more invested in protocol than Custer, convened an impromptu military board consisting of three officers to produce an incredibly detailed list of supplies captured and destroyed. He would later report that "there were one hundred and sixty fires burning at once to destroy their property."

The board estimated that the soldiers burned ten tons of Dog Soldier property before leaving the camp.³⁰¹ Carr's report states that "there is much other valuable property on the list, but the above will materially reduce their means of killing white people" Carr had only one casualty, a slight injury from an arrow. His report calls the fight a source of "extreme gratification," complaining of a general feeling of underappreciation among the soldiers of the 5th Cavalry:

It may be imagination, but there is a general feeling that the services and hardships of the regiment have not been appreciated for want of any brilliant list of killed and wounded. We have, however, no pleasures in killing the poor miserable savages, but desire, in common with the whole army, by the performance of our duty, to deliver the settlers from the dangers to which they are exposed on account of the past mistaken policy, or rather want of policy, in Indian affairs, which renders it necessary to chastise them until they submit.

Carr finally had a body count to match that of Custer, as well as the material destruction to go with it. He seems aware of a general pressure in the department to inflict large numbers of

³⁰⁰ Afton, *Cheyenne Dog Soldiers*, xix.

³⁰¹ "Report of Operations of the Republican River Expedition. Brevet Major General E.A. Carr, Commanding, from June 30th to July twentieth, 1869," Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 73 Reel 76, Library of Congress. See also: Afton, *Cheyenne Dog Soldiers*, xix.

casualties, a practice that would be revisited during the Vietnam War where body counts became the metric by which success was measured.³⁰² While slightly more self-conscious than Custer, Carr's criticisms blamed the necessity for violence on failed Indian policies. The Cheyenne, according to Carr, were already conquered, and it was the policies controlling them which were flawed. Of course, the Dog Soldiers demonstrated, perhaps more than any other group on the plains, that Indian people *were not* conquered in the mid-nineteenth century. Their militant resistance had provoked a widespread and destructive military response.

The attack broke the power of the Dog Soldiers on the southern plains, and while it would not permanently end Native resistance in that region it did wrap up Sheridan's campaign which had begun 9 months earlier. For the time being most of the Southern Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, Comanche and plains Apache had been confined to reservations. Sheridan planned to involve them in "the good work of civilization, education, and religious instruction."³⁰³ The annual report to the Secretary of War for that year reported that "the Indians were severely punished, deprived of a large proportion of their animals, provisions, and other property, and compelled to release two captive women carried off by them from Kansas."³⁰⁴ Sheridan's program of attacking villages directly was considered a success. His model would make it into the few strategic manuals on Indian fighting produced in the nineteenth century.³⁰⁵ Locate a village, take it by surprise, and attack at dawn. This was now military doctrine. The violence of this strategy would be fully realized in an event that took place in early 1870. Once more Sheridan would order his troops to move out and strike an Indian village. However, this attack

³⁰² See Nick Turse, *Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Co., 2013).

³⁰³ Leckie, *The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains*, 132.

³⁰⁴ "Annual Report of the Department of the Missouri for 1869," Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 75 Reel 80, Library of Congress.

³⁰⁵ See Chapter 1.

would be inflicted on the wrong target, a band of smallpox-infected and friendly Piegan Blackfeet on the Marias River.

Epilogue: “Strike Them Hard”

They attacked the village of Bull Shield at dawn. White Man’s Dog had sung his Wolverine power song and had tied a small pouch containing the white stone around his neck. He rode between his father and Crazy Dog, slightly ahead of them. It was his honor, in Yellow Kidney’s place, to strike the enemy first. The long gallop down the hill seemed to take forever. Behind him he heard the thunder of the horses’ hooves and the cries and yodeling of the warriors. A steady pop of rifle fire increased until it seemed that Thunder Chief, Many Drums, rode with them. White Man’s Dog’s throat was dry in the surging wind, and his heart beat strongly in his ears. Then he was on the flat, guiding his horse with his knees, firing his many-shots gun, his wedding present from his father, blindly at the lodges. He saw a man emerge from one of the tipis clad only in leggings. He turned the gray horse slightly and bore down on him and he heard a strange animal cry that filled his heart with fear before he realized that it came from him.³⁰⁶

Military reports have a detached and clinical voice that fails to capture the adrenalin, fear, and chaos that would accompany a surprise attack or cavalry charge. But out of these reports historians, artists, writers, and filmmakers have elevated stories of these attacks to an iconic image of the Indian Wars. Histories of Sand Creek, Washita, Camp Grant, and Little Bighorn typically open with the early morning quiet, the still moments before a storm of soldiers breaks over a Native village. The ensuing violence has been depicted in art, such as in Frederic Remington’s *Battle of Washita*, and in film, such as Custer’s charge in *Little Big Man*. Few depictions contrast the detachment of a military report like the passage from James Welch’s novel *Fools Crow* that opens this section. Welch captures the intensity and fear of a surprise attack from the perspective of a young Blackfeet man, Fool’s Crow, the novel’s central figure. However, this passage from *Fools Crow* depicts an attack by Piegan Blackfeet on a camp of enemy Crow rather than a charge by US soldiers. In this passage, Native people are both

³⁰⁶ James Welch, *Fools Crow* (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), 145.

aggressors and defenders, and it might seem to have little to do with nineteenth century US military policy. But Welch's novel culminates in an event known as the Marias Massacre, the slaughter of more than 200 Piegan Blackfeet by the US Army on January 23, 1870. This was perhaps the fullest realization of Sheridan's strategic policy, once again tragically applied to a group of people that were ostensibly out of harm's way. However, despite being a sharp critique of the effect colonial violence had on Native people, Welch's narrative only deals with the aftermath and avoids description of the actual attack. Welch's decision to not depict the Army's attack at the Marias and instead describe the attack on the Crow village reveals a series of comparisons.

Some elements of Fools Crow's attack are like what the 7th cavalry would have experienced during Custer's charge at the Washita or Carr's attack on the Dog Soldiers at Summit Springs. The hooves of the horses *thunder*. A cacophony of yelling, music, and gunfire merge together into a disorienting wash of sound. There is chaos and death. But Welch gives us more. He gives us a sense of Fool's Crows emotional state as he charges. He narrates the slowing of time as Fools Crow's throat turns dry and his heartbeat echoes in his ears. Fools Crow is afraid, and when he kills a Crow Chief we experience his disconnect as "he looked down at the dead man and his head felt strange, as though it were trying not to be there." Individual soldiers in the Army certainly struggled with the consequences of their own violence during the Indian wars, much like Fools Crow. But that rarely makes it into histories of America's ascendance as a continental power. Welch's inclusion of a moment of inter-Native warfare in a book about the consequences of colonialism is a reminder that violence in the service of land and conquest takes on forms that set it apart from other moments of war and conflict. Fools Crow and his companions did not attack the village to wipe out Crow independence and move them to an

internment camp. In contrast, the attacks at the Washita and the Marias were aimed at exactly those goals, and they have entered US historical narratives as isolated, dramatic moments, rather than the result of structural policies. Welch's text is a critical one. The whites in the novel are known as "seizers." Rides-at-the-Door, Fools Crow's father, delivers a speech in which he argues that

If we take the war road against the whites, we will sooner or later encounter great numbers of them. Even with many-shots guns we couldn't hope to match their weapons. Or their cruelty. We have heard what they did to our old enemies, the Parted Hairs, on the Washita; rubbed them out. So too would they do to the Pikunis. We are nothing to them. It is this ground we stand on they seek.³⁰⁷

For all the complicated theorizations of settler-colonialism, no one has put it better than Rides-at-the-Door. "It is this ground we stand on they seek." Rides-at-the-Door warns of the dangers of going to war with the seizers, but he also seems to understand that regardless of whether the Pikunis choose war the attempts to acquire their land will proceed. Welch's novel proceeds towards the sort of incident Rides-at-the-Door predicts: a massacre much like Custer's attack on the Cheyenne (the Parted Hairs) at the Washita. But the actual attack is not part of the narrative, as if Welch felt like surprise attacks and the slaughter of Native peoples already occupied too prominent a place in the narrative of US history. Instead of one climactic moment the Marias Massacre is told through the eyes of the survivors who describe the smoke, the guns, the fires spreading through the lodges and death of men, women, and children.³⁰⁸

When Rides-at-the-Door foresees an event similar to the Washita fight for the Blackfeet Welch is not pulling a literary connection out of thin air. In many ways the Marias Massacre was the culminating event of Sheridan's tenure on the plains, the direct result of policies he instituted. It was a surprise attack, in winter, on a Native village unaware the US Army was targeting them.

³⁰⁷ Welch, *Fools Crow*, 176.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 384-385.

When the army made the decision to respond militarily to the supposed crisis in Montana, the conditions for the massacre were already in place. Historians have termed the violence in Montana between encroaching settlers and the Blackfeet a guerilla war in which Native people attempted to preserve their land and ways of life amidst the pressures of settler-colonialism. Horse raiding and small skirmishes characterized the fighting, and disagreements that escalated into murders would then further escalate into statewide panic. The period from 1865-1870 was particularly tense, and in August of 1869 an event took place that would eventually lead to tragedy. On August 17th Malcolm Clarke, a white trader, was killed by a Piegan Blackfeet man named Ne-tus-che-o, also known as Owl Child. Tensions between the two men went back several years. Clarke, a well-known figure to both Blackfeet and whites in the area, was married to Owl Child's relative Coth-co-co-na. In 1867 Owl Child had blamed Clarke for the theft of some horses while visiting Clarke's ranch, and had retaliated by stealing some of Clarke's horses. Clarke and his son Horace pursued Owl Child to a nearby Piegan village and beat and publicly humiliated Owl Child. However, Blackfeet accounts tell a different story in which Clarke raped Owl Child's wife who later gave birth to a mixed-race child that did not survive. The divergent accounts are difficult to reconcile but whatever the cause, Owl Child's murder of Clarke pushed the already tense situation in Montana past the breaking point.³⁰⁹

In October of 1869 the Secretary of the Interior, Jacob D. Cox, encouraged the war department to move against the Piegan Blackfeet. Phil Sheridan, relocated to departmental headquarters in Chicago, already had a blueprint for Indian fighting in place and quickly mobilized a campaign that built on what he had learned in 1868/69: "I think it would be the best plan to let me find out exactly where these Indians are going to spend the winter, and about the

³⁰⁹ Andrew R. Graybill, *The Red and the White: A Family Saga of the American West*, (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013), 97-104.

time of a good heavy snow I will send out a party and try and strike them.”³¹⁰ With that decision the conditions for the massacre were in place. Remembering the backlash after the Washita fight Sheridan attempted to get a clear picture of the situation in Montana, sending the division’s inspector general James A. Hardie to interview the highest-ranking officers in the field, Alfred Sully and Philippe Regis de Trobriand. Sully had been inflating the danger of the situation in Montana while Trobriand had cautioned against a heavy handed military response. However, when Hardie arrived he found their positions reversed. Trobriand was confident he could identify and target the band of Mountain Chief who was considered the leader of the hostiles, while Sully argued for delay. Ultimately Sherman decided that “if the lives and property of the citizens of Montana can best be protected by striking Mountain Chief’s band I want them struck. Tell Baker to strike them hard.”³¹¹ Sheridan and his officers formulated a plan to mobilize in January of 1870. Sheridan wrote to Sherman and told him that by mid-January the Piegans would be “very helpless” and his troops would be able to “give them a good hard blow.”³¹²

Baker was the hard-drinking Major Eugene Baker, who led the Second Cavalry along with members of the Thirteenth U.S. Infantry out of Fort Shaw on January 19th, 1870. With Baker were several civilians including Joe Cobell, a fur trader married to one of Mountain Chief’s sisters. Baker headed for the Marias river where Mountain Chief’s band was supposedly camped, learning from a small village of captured Blackfeet that a much larger band were camped downstream on the Marias.³¹³ Baker rushed his command onward hoping to arrive at the village by daybreak. A forced march allowed Baker to deploy his troops on bluffs overlooking

³¹⁰ Graybill, *The Red and the White*, 114-115.

³¹¹ Paul A. Hutton, “Phil Sheridan’s Pyrrhic Victory: The Piegan Massacre, Army Politics, and the Transfer Debate,” *The Magazine of Western History* 32, no. 2 (1982), 38.

³¹² Paul R. Wylie, *Blood on the Marias: The Baker Massacre*, Baker Massacre (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 124.

³¹³ *Ibid*, 184.

the Blackfeet village at dawn on the 23rd. The quiet was broken by one of the other scouts, Joe Kipp, who had recognized the central teepee as belonging to Heavy Runner, a friendly Piegan chief that the troops had express orders to avoid. A horrified Kipp rushed towards Baker shouting that this was the wrong village but a drunk and furious Baker had Kipp arrested for breaking the silence. The noise had alerted the camp and Heavy Runner ran from his lodge brandishing a paper from the Indian Bureau promising him safe conduct. Scout Joe Cobell shot and killed Heavy Runner as he ran towards the soldiers, an action he later claimed was done to divert the attack away from Mountain Chiefs band, the brother of Cobell's wife. Cobell's shot unleashed the rest of the soldiers who turned their rifles on the Piegans. For almost an hour the soldiers fired into the village, aiming not only at Native people but also the lodge poles, causing teepees to collapse on top of the cooking fires, suffocating or burning those inside. A smallpox epidemic had devastated Heavy Runner's village and almost no resistance was offered during the hour-long barrage of gunfire. As the firing ended the troops swept into the village, shooting and killing indiscriminately, cutting into teepees to murder the gravely ill inhabitants. Accounts would vary but some 200 Blackfeet lay dead, men, women, and children, victims of a slaughter intended for others. Mountain Chief, Owl Child, and the other targets of Baker's expedition had already fled the area.³¹⁴

A week later Sheridan sent Sherman a telegram that would have been familiar to the army's ranking general, describing another surprise attack and another supposed victory over hostile Indians. In it Sheridan reported complete success, with 173 unspecified Piegan dead and 44 lodges destroyed along with their supplies. As usual Sheridan confidently reported an end to the "Indian troubles" and made no mention of the facts which would soon make Baker's attack a

³¹⁴ Hutton, *Pyrrhic Victory*, 37-39; Graybill, *Red and the White*, 124-128.

controversy.³¹⁵ Sherman quickly wrote back cautioning Sheridan to “look out for the cries of those who think the Indians are so harmless” and asked him to gather evidence of Piegan guilt. A controversy would ensue not unlike those after Sand Creek or Washita but it did little to interrupt colonization and it certainly did not bring back the lives of those Piegan murdered in their beds. Although somewhat lost to history compared to Sand Creek or Wounded Knee the Marias massacre was one of the most devastating and dark chapters in the history of plains warfare. But it was not an aberration or exception. The confusion and deception that resulted in the attack was certainly the result of decisions made by specific individuals. But the attack was consistent with Sheridan’s orders and unfolded in the manner the general would have expected, albeit targeted at the wrong group of people. Ultimately it would not matter to Sheridan, Sherman, or their peers that the attack was a mistake, as it served the same purpose as an attack on the “correct” band: the destruction of Blackfeet independence and the acquisition of their land. Native resistance had to be crushed. And within the structure of settler-colonialism the unfortunate mistakes of men like Baker and the outrage of sympathetic reformers would both further the goal of acquiring Native land.

Sheridan and his troops struck many “hard blows” from 1868-1870, and while these attacks were devastating they did not end Native resistance to US expansion. Sheridan and his peers would often replicate the tactics used on the southern plains. Winter campaigns and surprise attacks on villages were at the core of US military strategy, a doctrine that would ultimately backfire on some of its practitioners. Custer would disastrously attempt to recreate his surprise attack at the Washita eight years later at the Little Bighorn, resulting in arguably the most dramatic loss the US army ever received at the hands of Native people. The defeat of the 7th

³¹⁵ “Telegram, P.H. Sheridan to W.T. Sherman,” January 29, 1870, Philip Henry Sheridan Papers, Container 53 Reel 48, Library of Congress.

cavalry in 1876 only meant that surprise attacks and cavalry charges became even more visible in American culture. It was as if one spectacular defeat sanitized the Army's policy, justifying the practice of attacking Native villages and inflicting indiscriminate casualties. For of course Custer's attack was only spectacular in that he led his command into a slaughter. If the attack had unfolded according to plan the Little Bighorn might sit alongside the Washita as an example of a general military policy rather than an infamous defeat. And the defeat was momentary, as most of the Native people at the battle would be forced to surrender in the coming months as the Army once again pushed its campaign into the vulnerable winter months. Custer's last stand was chewed on and dissected for decades in literature, film, and countless works of history now gathering dust on the shelves of used bookstores. But as the charges and surprise attacks of the Indian wars entered mythology the colonization of Native people continued. The military would stay intimately involved in this process as both killers and caretakers, destroying even as they attempted to incorporate Native people into the United States.

It is hardly controversial to argue that Sheridan unleashed total war on the southern plains. The contemporary US military acknowledges as much. In the Cheyenne Wars Staff Rides designed through the Combat Studies Institute at the US Army Combined Arms Center, student-soldiers learn that "Custer recognized that destroying the village and denying the Cheyenne their ponies rendered the Indians destitute; the total war strategy would inevitably force the Cheyenne to accept the will of the government and submit to life on the reservation."³¹⁶ This frank appraisal manages to jettison some of the starry-eyed mythology that suffuses many descriptions of the Indian Wars more sympathetic to US soldiers. It acknowledges the devastation wrought by Sheridan's strategic choices that sought to eliminate the possibility for Native independence. But

³¹⁶ Collins, *The Cheyenne War Atlas*, Introduction.

these were more than just tactical decisions. They emerged from an ideological structure in which Native people were designated as insurgents in their own homelands; criminals in an already-conquered continent rather than sovereign Nations protecting their territory. And this designation produced the sort of violence that these plains tribes experienced, a violence in the margins between citizen and combatant. It is telling that the Combat Studies Institute curriculum that draws on Sheridan's campaign recommends it as a valuable lesson for ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, two occupations in which US empire has mobilized violence at the expense of local sovereignties. This is a common definitional move in recent military history – to identify the Indian Wars as one of the United States' only successful counterinsurgencies, a roadmap for ongoing conflicts. But a crucial distinction needs to be made. Total war on the southern plains was more than a tactical choice, and classifying a conflict as a counterinsurgency is as much a discursive move as a simple act of classification. Military action with the presumption of a non-existent or diminished sovereignty for an enemy subjects them to a violence that extends beyond the battlefield. It transforms battlefield enemies into malfunctioning populations that need to be corrected, removed, or eliminated. Images of the Standing Rock Sioux and their allies facing down paramilitary mercenaries and police to exercise treaty rights is a reminder that Native people can still be classified as insurgents in their own homelands.

Chapter 3. “Indian Fighters” in the Philippines: Imperial Culture and Military Violence in the Philippine-American War

Introduction

General Elwell Stephen Otis, the military governor of the Philippines, was like many military leaders throughout history that have faced an opponent waging guerilla warfare. During the initial campaigns of the Philippines-American War Otis was quick to argue that Filipino resistance was crumbling and the war would soon be over.³¹⁷ He went to great lengths to censor the press in the Philippines and manipulate the news coming from the islands.³¹⁸ And like many counterinsurgents that have followed him, Otis was proven wrong when the Filipino revolutionary forces launched a renewed offensive against the American occupation in the fall of 1899. Like the Tet Offensive 69 years later, the counteroffensive was strategically aimed at eroding domestic support for the war. It was specifically timed to influence the US presidential election, in the hope of spurring anti-imperialist sentiment and defeating the reelection of William McKinley, a supporter of the US occupation. Filipino fighters scored several victories but they failed to prevent McKinley’s reelection, and in response US soldiers and war correspondents began to call for a more brutal form of military occupation in the islands.³¹⁹

³¹⁷ “Is The Philippine War Over?” *The Literary Digest* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, Volume XX, 1890), 503.

³¹⁸ Stuart Creighton Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation”: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 82-90.

³¹⁹ Alfred McCoy draws a similar parallel in his comparison of the Philippines-American War and the Iraq War. McCoy argues that in both instances the US government declared “mission accomplished” prematurely, faced a protracted guerilla war, and electoral politics became a referendum on US imperialism, with both McKinley and George W. Bush ultimately winning reelection. See Alfred W. McCoy, *Policing America’s Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), Prologue.

Writer Phelps Whitmarsh argued that the US commanders had conducted the war in an “intolerably feeble and hesitant manner” and unless more stringent measures were taken the war would go on for years. Colonel Jacob Smith, a veteran of the Wounded Knee Massacre, told reporters that he had already adopted appropriate tactics for fighting “savages” because fighting Filipinos was “worse than fighting Indians.”³²⁰ General James Parker, in a letter to his mother, noted that “if these Filipinos could ambush like our Indians, we would have a bad time; but they have not the grit.” And Secretary of War Elihu Root proclaimed that the Army had to return to “methods which have proved successful in our Indian campaigns in the West.”³²¹ These references to Native people illuminate a vexed question in the historiography of US empire: to what degree was the Philippine-American War influenced by the United States’ history of colonialism and continental expansion?

This chapter sets out to answer that question, exploring how the war in the Philippines was impacted by the US experience with continental colonial warfare. Perhaps geographic distance has served to mask the temporal proximity of these linked periods of US military expansion, because this is a connection that has remained surprisingly tenuous in the literature on American history, occasionally invoked but rarely explored. A handful of historians have noted that many of the generals who served in the Philippines had prior experience in wars with Native people, but little has been done to demonstrate how that influence manifested, beyond broad comparisons of tactics.³²² Other scholars have examined the prevalence of paternalistic racial

³²⁰ *The Literary Digest*, 503; Brian McAllister Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 23.

³²¹ James C. Parker “Typescripts of Ltrs 5 July 1899 - Dec 1899,” 1899. James C. Parker Letters, Box 8, Folder 3. United States Military Academy Special Collections; Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, 94-95.

³²² Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 243; Peter W. Stanley, *Reappraising an Empire: New Perspectives on Philippine-American History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 34. See also: Russell Roth, *Muddy Glory: America’s “Indian Wars” in the Philippines, 1899-1935* (W. Hanover: Christopher Pub. House, 1981).

ideologies that compared Native people and Filipinos to justify the US occupation.³²³ The military and academic literature on US counterinsurgency warfare situates the Philippines-American War between the Indian Wars and the “Banana Wars” of the early-twentieth century as early iterations of that particular mode of warfare.³²⁴ However, a careful examination of whether and how the so-called “Indian Wars” went global at the turn of the century has been lacking.³²⁵ This chapter will show that such a connection exists and can be charted through an approach that examines the interaction between imperial culture and military violence. Rather than viewing 1898 as a caesura marking the separation between the continental and global phases of American imperialism, these connections highlight the continuities in US imperial policy.³²⁶ Many US soldiers in the Philippines drew directly on their experiences in wars with Native people,

³²³ Julian Go and Anne L. Foster, eds. *The American Colonial State in the Philippines: Global Perspectives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 8-9; Walter L. Williams, “United States Indian Policy and the Debate over Philippine Annexation: Implications for the Origins of American Imperialism,” *The Journal of American History* 66, no. 4 (1980).

³²⁴ Contemporary historians and military theorists have sought to resurrect the war as one America’s first successes in counterinsurgency, a model that many have argued is sorely lacking in US military history, in which the failures of Vietnam continue to loom large. For example, the US Army Combat Studies Institute has published several studies of the Philippines-American War as a counterinsurgency model to apply to the War on Terror. For more on the US military’s strategic approach to the war in the Philippines, see Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1998), 108-135.

³²⁵ The most extensive examination of these connections can be found in Paul Kramer’s *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). However, Kramer is wary of what he calls the “export” model of imperial historiography in which historians transplant prevailing ideas about race from the metropole outward to the colonies, erasing local particularities in the process. While Kramer’s caution to avoid reproducing an uncritical flattening of categories of difference is useful, US soldiers were certainly influenced by the decades of conflict with Native peoples they were emerging from at the end of the nineteenth century, particularly given their frequent reproduction of the languages and discourses of those conflicts and their implementation of similar tactics in the Philippines.

³²⁶ These are continuities that continue to resonate today, particularly in the recent history of the War on Terror. Look no further than President George W. Bush’s visit to the Philippines in 2003 during the early phase of the US occupation of Iraq. Speaking to the Philippines Congress, Bush declared that the United States “is proud of its part in the great story of the Filipino people. Together our soldiers liberated the Philippines from colonial rule.” Unmentioned by the president was the long and bitter guerilla warfare marked by torture, violence, and forced relocations, patterns playing out once more in Iraq. One of these continuities is the role of counterinsurgency in shaping both foreign and domestic policy. For example, Alfred McCoy shows how US counterinsurgency policies in the Philippines and in Iraq negatively affected civil liberties back home. McCoy, *Policing America’s Empire*, 1-8. See also: Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

narrated their time in the Philippines as an “Indian war,” and validated their actions by discursively positioning themselves and their fellows as “Indian fighters.” In sum, the Indian Wars were translated, through the actions, imaginations, and writing of US soldiers, politicians, and journalists, into a flexible discourse able to travel across space and time.

However, we should be cautious. There was never a wholesale transfer of the ideologies and practices of US settler-colonialism onto the war in the Philippines. Charting the discursive and material imprint that Indian warfare has left on the US military requires a tight-rope walk along the boundaries between academic disciplines. It involves a tension between local particularities and systematic patterns, between temporal specificity and long imperial continuities, between material violence and its literary resonances. It demands a cultural history attentive to the physicality of warfare, just as it requires a history of violence attuned to the ways culture shapes that violence. Ultimately, an analysis of culture and discourse allows us to connect the dots when institutional records and practices fall away. Discourses - the terms, categories, and beliefs found in particular social contexts - have the power to shape human actors, investing their actions, their bodies, and the tools they wield with particular meanings.³²⁷ This is certainly true for soldiers, and the war in the Philippines was awash in colonial discourses that drew on the mythologies of US continental expansion. To understand the influence that the Indian Wars exercised on the Philippine-American War, we have to account for both the lived experiences of frontier veterans *and* the colonial discourses that permeated US imperial culture.³²⁸

³²⁷ Joan W. Scott, “Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: Or, the Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism.” *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 1 (1988): 33–50, 35.

³²⁸ The “Indian Wars” became entrenched in the US cultural imaginary even as they were being fought, in everything from novels to Buffalo Bill’s touring performances. For example, General Charles King, who worked closely with Lawton in the Philippines, wrote dozens of novels that drew on his service against Apache and Lakota people. See John W Bailey, *The Life and Works of General Charles King, 1844-1933: Martial Spirit* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998); Richard Slotkin, “Buffalo Bill’s ‘Wild West’ and the Mythologization of American Empire,” in Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 164-184.

“Indian warfare” was not the only racializing discourse that US soldiers brought to the Philippines. Anti-black racism and imperial paternalism abounded, as did new forms of anti-Filipino racism.³²⁹ But the discourse of Indian fighting exercised a potent imaginative power that journalists, officers, and individual soldiers deployed to legitimate and narrate US military action. Many of the top officers in the Philippines had experience in wars with Native people to draw on, and they did, as this chapter will show. But a more subtle influence was exercised on the younger US soldiers who had never fought against Native people, but who nonetheless were conscripted *into* a discourse of “Indian fighting” while in the Philippines.³³⁰

This chapter is thus attentive to both the material consequences of the Philippine-American War and the discourses that shaped its participants. It is both a history of “Indian fighting” as a mobile, imperial discourse, and a story about one of the earliest American experiences with the type of warfare now known as “counterinsurgency.” In less than a decade the US military moved from the 1890 massacre of Lakota Sioux at Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to the jungles and mountains of the Philippines. Many of the same men who fought the Lakota, the Apache, the Cheyenne, and the Ute now had to fight a war in the Philippines that was both familiar and different. The Indian Wars resonated to the Philippines in the words of journalists who compared Geronimo to Filipino leader Emilio Aguinaldo, and in the justifications of politicians who compared the occupation of the Philippines to the reservations that Native people in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were fighting to transform

³²⁹ US soldiers made frequent use of racial epithets drawn from the anti-black racism of the United States. “Imperial paternalism” describes a range of discourses that sought to deny Filipino’s the right (or ability) to self-govern based on a presumed racial inferiority. See Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government*, 87-158.

³³⁰ Here I draw on the work of Mary Renda and what she calls “cultural conscription,” or the process by which discourses shape human actors. As Renda emphasizes, these discourses are not separated from the material world, but rather, directly shape human actors, the tools they wield, and the environments they move through. For soldiers in the Philippines, “Indian Fighting” was both an attitude and a set of actions, a mechanism of violence shaped by the colonial imaginaries they inherited from continental expansion. Mary Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 22-27.

from government-controlled prisons into homelands. But the Indian Wars also travelled materially in the minds and actions of US soldiers required to fight a guerilla war against opponents they regularly labeled “insurgents,” in which the only immediate precedent was the wars of continental expansion.³³¹ This is not an argument for the uncritical acceptance of “insurgent” as a designation for Filipinos (or Native people). Rather, I want to call attention to the violent consequences of that discursive move, which transformed Native and Filipino fighters into subjects to be corrected rather than simply defeated. In this biopolitical form of warfare “insurgents” are always-already claimed as subjects, interior problems rather than sovereign opponents.³³² Analyzing the Philippine-American War as a part of the history of American counterinsurgency thus demands a critical analysis of how subjects are constituted as “insurgent,” a process that relied, in part, on comparing Filipinos to Native American people.³³³

In what follows, I will explore the first year of the Philippine-American War, 1898 to 1899. The bulk of this chapter focuses on General Henry Ware Lawton and the informal scouting unit he created called “Young’s Scouts,” demonstrating the ways in which the war in the Philippines was imagined and, at times, fought, as an “Indian War.” The time frame and

³³¹ It is important to remember that Native people also fought in the Spanish-American War and the Philippines-American War. For example, Tuscarora soldier Clinton Rickard served in the Philippines from 1901 to 1904. In one incident he was mistaken for “a wild Indian” by his commanding officer, who called for help. See Al Carroll, *Medicine Bags and Dog Tags: American Indian Veterans from Colonial Times to the Second Iraq War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 99-100.

³³² Recent scholarship has analyzed counterinsurgency and the War on Terror through the lens of biopolitics, illuminated modern warfare’s preoccupation with, as Foucault famously put it, “making live,” with transforming the enemy rather than simply killing them. As the US military’s field manual on counterinsurgency argues, “some of the best weapons do not shoot.” However, these patterns of violence are not recent, and have their origin, in the United States, in wars with Native people. See Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76* (New York: Picador, 2003), 255-257; Jasbir K. Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 2; Laleh Khalili, *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 42-45; Markus Kienscherf, “A Programme of Global Pacification: US Counterinsurgency Doctrine and the Biopolitics of Human (in)Security.” *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 6 (December 1, 2011): 517–35, 518-524.

³³³ Contemporary historians and theorists of counterinsurgency warfare often refer to the “Indian Wars” as the United States’ first counterinsurgency. See Matthew J. Flynn, *Settle and Conquer: Militarism on the American Frontier, 1607-1890* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2016); Kendall D. Gott, *In Search of an Elusive Enemy: The Victorio Campaign, 1879-1880* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004).

geographic scale will be relatively narrow. Lawton operated on the island of Luzon, the largest island in the Philippines, from March 1899 until his death on December 19, 1899. He was present for the initial phases of the war, when the US assumed control of the islands from colonial Spain, betraying Filipino hopes for independence. American troops won several early victories against the Filipino revolutionary forces, but as the conflict transitioned into a protracted guerilla war men like Lawton were increasingly imagined as “Indian fighters” that would be able to translate their experiences with colonial violence into success in the Philippines. Lawton and Young’s Scout would help set the tone for the increasingly brutal war and occupation of the islands, and their experiences would offer a wealth of material for journalists and writers seeking to connect US settler-colonialism to the broader contours of US empire in the early twentieth-century.

Narratives of “Indian Fighting” in the Philippines

In the January 1900 issue of *Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly* writer H.R. Mencken published a poem titled “The Four-Foot Filipino.” The first stanza reads as follows:

We have chased the slick Apachy over desert, plain and hill,
We have trailed the sly Osagy through the bresh,
We have fullered Ute and Sioux all their blasted country through,
When their liquor made them get a little fresh;
We have seen our share of fightin’, we have stopped our share of lead,
We have fought all sorts of fighters, great and small,
But the four-foot Filipino, when it comes to doin’ harm,
Is the toughest proposition of them all.³³⁴

A cut out of the poem is included at the end of a scrapbook dedicated to the life of Henry Ware Lawton, assembled by his close friend and fellow soldier Robert G. Carter. The poem is not particularly remarkable for its racism nor for the connections drawn between Native North American peoples and Filipinos. The overseas expansion of US territory at the turn of the

³³⁴ “The Four-Foot Filipino” in Robert Goldthwaite Carter, “Henry W. Lawton Scrapbook,” Special Collections, Newberry Library.

century was driven, in part, by a virulently racist paternalism that assumed non-white peoples were incapable of self-government. Much of this rhetoric drew on descriptions of the supposed inferiority of American Indians when describing the inhabitants of the Philippines. But the inclusion of the poem in a scrapbook dedicated to Lawton was not incidental or casual. Lawton had chased Apache people all over the southwest, had fought Lakota (Sioux) and Cheyenne on the northern plains, and had worked to confine Ute people to their reservation in Colorado. He ended his career in the Philippines where his experiences in the Indian Wars formed a potent endorsement of his potential to defeat Filipinos. The crude caricature of the “slick Apachy” and the “four-footed Filipino” met, in Lawton, a lifetime of experience fighting against men and women working to preserve their independence from US political authority. The Indian Wars travelled overseas in the heads and bodies of men like Lawton, who were both the bearers of a discursive legacy and enactors of a military policy that drew on experiences fighting American Indians to construct the first insurgents of the 20th century.

Born in Ohio in 1843, Lawton enlisted with the start of the Civil War and served throughout, fighting in numerous engagements including the exceptionally bloody battle at Shiloh in April of 1862. After the war Lawton studied law at Harvard but returned to the Army in 1866, serving in the Reconstruction south. In 1871 Lawton joined the Fourth US Cavalry in Texas, and began an extended period of active duty against Native peoples on the plains and in the southwest. Lawton fought in the 1871 expedition into Indian Territory, the 1872 expedition to the Staked Plains, in border fights with both Mexicans and Indians in 1873, and the Red River War in 1874. In 1874 Lawton was assigned to recruiting detail and took a short break from frontier service, but after the defeat of Custer and the 7th Cavalry in 1876, Lawton requested and received permission to join the troops headed to the northern plains. There Lawton took part in

General Crook's campaign against the still-independent Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho. He was present for the destruction of Dull Knife's village of Northern Cheyenne in November of 1876 and was tasked with escorting the remaining Cheyenne to their reservation in Indian Territory.³³⁵ Lawton's regiment was then reassigned to Texas, but the ever-aggressive Lawton would again request reassignment to an active conflict zone in 1879 for the war with the Utes. Lawton even postponed his marriage so he could join his regiment when it was reassigned to Arizona Territory to fight Apaches. Lawton would remain in the southwest until 1888, an integral part of the US military's ongoing war on Apache people.³³⁶

Lawton's military career, particularly in the US southwest, endowed him with an aura that followed him to the Philippines. He was larger than life – a mythical figure to journalists and the troops that served under him precisely because of his role in the Indian Wars. That mythical status was supposed to translate into a tactical advantage over the Filipinos. Writers covering the war emphasized it as soon as he arrived in the islands. In an article for the *Saturday Evening Post*, Senator Albert J. Beveridge noted that the US troops in the Philippines were full of “hardened regulars who had seen service with the Indians for years.”³³⁷ None of these frontier soldiers was more celebrated than Lawton. An article in the *American Manila* from May 6, 1899 proclaimed “Lawton: Fighting Machine.” The general was “as tireless as a wolf and can go a week without food or sleep.” Lawton was “steady, rapid and remorseless,” and for these reasons the general had been chosen to lead US troops in the Philippines.³³⁸ The article references one of

³³⁵ Lawton's participation in the sort of village destruction detailed in chapter two links the general to both early iterations of indiscriminate biopolitical destruction and later attempts to create a formal counterinsurgency policy in the Philippines.

³³⁶ “Military Papers, 1883-1900,” Henry Ware Lawton Papers, Box 3 Folder 3, Library of Congress.

³³⁷ “The American Army Officer in Action,” in Robert Goldthwaite Carter, “Henry W. Lawton Scrapbook,” Special Collections, Newberry Library.

³³⁸ “Lawton, Fighting Machine” in Robert Goldthwaite Carter, “Henry W. Lawton Scrapbook,” Special Collections, Newberry Library.

his supposedly many “Indian names,” “Man-Who-Gets-Up-In-The-Night-To-Fight,” which is conspicuously close to the name Emilio Aguinaldo is rumored to have had for Lawton, “The General of the Night.” Foremost among Lawton’s accomplishments was his role in the surrender of Apache Leader Goyakhla (Geronimo): “It is the Geronimo incident – or rather the record of years in the West crowned by the Geronimo incident – which has sent him to the Philippines to command the American forces in the field.” Some of the descriptions of Lawton even begin to slip into the realm of folklore, sounding more like Paul Bunyan or Johnny Appleseed: He can sleep for three days straight, he can drink anyone under the table, and he can eat two-dozen redbirds in one sitting... “It is not difficult to imagine him a pillar of steel, hurling his huge bulk through the lists or heading some heroic thunderous charge when a thousand spurs are striking deep and a thousand lances are in rest.”³³⁹ This was the literary Lawton that served as an endorsement for the actual military actions the real Lawton would undertake in the early campaigns of the Philippines-American War.

On May 1st, 1898, the US Navy defeated the Spanish fleet in the Battle of Manila Bay, the first battle in the Pacific theater of the Spanish-American War. A month later Filipino revolutionaries led by General Emilio Aguinaldo, who had been fighting the Spanish since 1896, declared their independence from Spain. In the ensuing months Filipino forces would gain control of most of the country except Manila, surrounding the city. They erected a governing apparatus throughout the islands and appealed to foreign leaders for recognition.³⁴⁰ However, neither the US nor Spain recognized Filipino independence, and Spain ceded the country to the US in the Treaty of Paris, signed on December 10, 1898. Tensions would mount in early 1899 as

³³⁹ “Lawton, Fighting Machine,” Lawton Scrapbook.

³⁴⁰ John Morgan Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags: The United States Army in the Philippines, 1898-1902* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973), 27-29.

Filipino troops continued to surround Manila. The US occupation, commanded by General Elwell Otis, was conducted with an imperial paternalism and increasing belligerency and fighting broke out the night of February 4th.³⁴¹

US troops quickly pushed Filipino forces away from Manila in a series of violent clashes. Otis, rejecting a conditional surrender, sought to capture Aguinaldo and destroy the Philippine Revolutionary Army, which was concentrated in the northern part of the island of Luzon under the command of General Antonio Luna. He naively believed that if he could eliminate the revolutionary leadership and capture Malolos, the capital of the Philippine Republic, most of the provinces would accept the “benevolent assimilation” of American rule. Otis’ unrealistic assessment of the conflict extended to US troop levels; he had maintained a force of 25,000 to 30,000 was sufficient despite the disagreement of his subordinate officers. Exacerbating the problem was that many of the US troops that made up the Eighth Army Corps in the Philippines were volunteers, due to return home once the war with Spain was over.³⁴² Shorthanded, but intending to cut the fractured revolutionary army in two, in mid-March Otis sent General Lloyd Wheaton southeast from Manila, and General Arthur MacArthur north towards a fleeing Aguinaldo. These columns made limited gains, but the US advance quickly stalled, as commanders learned that occupying Manila and controlling the dense Philippines countryside were two very different endeavors.³⁴³ The *Manila Freedom* reported that Filipinos were increasingly turning to “harassing tactics,” unable to face US troops in pitched battles. Hidden sharpshooters were picking off US soldiers and then running away before they could be engaged.

³⁴¹ The American occupation was marked by racial animosity from the very beginning. Racial slurs and abuse directed at Filipinos were so pervasive in the weeks and months leading to the official start of the war that General Otis, the ranking US officer, issued an official order forbidding use of the word “nigger” by military personnel. Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, 57-58.

³⁴² Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 88-92.

³⁴³ Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, 67-70.

The paper argued that these tactics were expected, and were the reason that when sending for reinforcements the War Department “made it a point to send as many as possible of the regular troops, who had been used to Indian fighting in the bad lands of the west.” Lawton was specifically highlighted as “an old Indian fighter,” ready to strike a heavy blow.³⁴⁴

Lawton arrived in the Philippines in March to great fanfare from the press, and a possibly jealous Otis kept the general in Manila for a month before sending him to attack the city of Santa Cruz southeast of Manila along the shores of Laguna De Bay, the largest lake in the Philippines, where it was believed Filipino troops were regrouping following Wheaton’s campaign. As Lawton and a force of 1500 US troops collected from various units moved away from the urban areas around Manila their Indian-fighter pedigree became increasingly prominent in coverage of the war. One newspaper proclaimed, “Indian Tactics to be Adopted” in an article titled “In Pursuit of Rebels.” The reporter, who likely spent time with Lawton or someone on his staff, wrote that “the tactics will be those of the old-time frontier fighting, and it is probable that the command will be divided into squads of twelve, under non-commissioned officers.”³⁴⁵

Other journalists emphasized that Lawton’s attack on Santa Cruz would be modeled on the “old Indian tactics” of mobile, smaller units. Of course, these tactics were hardly old. They were fresh from use in the US southwest and on the plains, but journalists were quick to endow Indian fighting with a nostalgia that sat awkwardly alongside the actual war they were covering. These tactics became “old Indian fighting” almost immediately, discursively closing off the colonization of North America as finished, complete, even as Native people were working to maintain their political autonomy on reservations. The campaign was a logistical nightmare, with

³⁴⁴ “Will Push The Campaign” in Robert Goldthwaite Carter, “Henry W. Lawton Scrapbook,” Special Collections, Newberry Library

³⁴⁵ “In Pursuit of Rebels” in Robert Goldthwaite Carter, “Henry W. Lawton Scrapbook,” Special Collections, Newberry Library

Lawton's soldiers hampered by dense swamps and an amphibious strike force stuck in shallow water, but despite these difficulties US troops captured Santa Cruz on April 10th and nearby Pagsanjan on the 11th.³⁴⁶ The expectation was that Lawton's command would continue to scour the region in smaller units much as he had the mountains of Sonora and Arizona. Lawton's mystique as the Indian-fighter was beginning to link up with reality. However, Otis recalled the expedition on April 15, against Lawton's wishes.³⁴⁷

After the Laguna de Bay campaign Lawton's troops moved north from Manila into central Luzon. The Philippine Revolutionary Army had fortified many of the railroads and river crossings in the region north of Manila, but friction between Aguinaldo and Luna threatened to fracture Filipino resistance to the American advance.³⁴⁸ The plan was to coordinate with General Arthur MacArthur and catch the retreating Filipino forces in a two-pronged attack, targeting the towns of Calumpit, Baliuag, and Norzagaray. Like Lawton, MacArthur had commanded troops in the southwest during the Apache Wars, although largely as a garrison commander. Lawton and MacArthur's frontier service was useful for writers hoping to project a hopeful image of the American advance, an enterprise encouraged by Otis. The campaign was profiled in an article for *The National Magazine* by Peter MacQueen. He describes the campaign as full of "wild, romantic scenery and rich, abounding vistas... wild trails through unknown mountain tribes" which could not help but invoke the months Lawton spent in the Sonoran Mountains.³⁴⁹ The reality was that small groups of Apaches had, for years, eluded sustained efforts to confine them to reservations, continually outmaneuvering Lawton and other American soldiers in the US-

³⁴⁶ Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, 70-71.

³⁴⁷ Ibid; Linn, *The Philippine War*, 101-104.

³⁴⁸ Linn, *The Philippines War*, 104-106.

³⁴⁹ "Campaigning with General Lawton" in Robert Goldthwaite Carter, "Henry W. Lawton Scrapbook," Special Collections, Newberry Library.

Mexico borderlands. It was only through the use of Apache scouts that the US Army finally cornered Goyakhla (Geronimo) and his followers.³⁵⁰

Nevertheless, MacQueen refers to Lawton as the “old Indian exterminator” and notes that while the general is strict about looting and plundering he is “the very scourge of God” with armed Filipinos.³⁵¹ Emilio Aguinaldo was the prime target of the campaign but he remained elusive despite the efforts of Lawton and his troops. The successes ascribed to Lawton in chasing down Geronimo was supposed to result in a similar success with Aguinaldo. A Massachusetts newspaper reprinted correspondence from a soldier with Lawton under the title “Tireless Lawton: He Will Follow Aguinaldo as He Did Geronimo – Officers on his Staff Have to Work Hard.”³⁵² *The Washington Post* ran an article on Lawton which made a similar argument: “Just now he is using in the Philippines to excellent purpose the tactics and strategy he learned years ago against Naches and Geronimo in Apache land, in pursuit of Aguinaldo.”³⁵³ Clearly the press was invested in emphasizing the connection between Lawton’s career in the Indian Wars and his campaign in the Philippines. But these were not simply imaginative linkages with little relation to on-the-ground tactics. As much as Lawton was the embodiment of the discursive aura of an Indian fighter, he also put into practice tactics which directly drew on his experience in frontier violence.

³⁵⁰ The reality of the US Army’s difficulty in capturing those Apache refusing confinement on reservations tempers some of the effusive praise Lawton received in the Philippines. In 1886 more than 9000 US and Mexican troops were chasing about eighteen Apache people, with little success. Lawton’s initial attempts to corner Geronimo were fruitless, and it was likely only thanks to the Apache scouts in the Army that Geronimo ultimately surrendered. See David Roberts, *Once They Moved Like The Wind: Cochise, Geronimo, And The Apache Wars* (Simon and Schuster, 1994), 260-296.

³⁵¹ “Campaigning with General Lawton” in Robert Goldthwaite Carter, “Henry W. Lawton Scrapbook,” Special Collections, Newberry Library.

³⁵² “Tireless Lawton” in Robert Goldthwaite Carter, “Henry W. Lawton Scrapbook,” Special Collections, Newberry Library.

³⁵³ “Lawton, the Fighter,” in Robert Goldthwaite Carter, “Henry W. Lawton Scrapbook,” Special Collections, Newberry Library.

“Old Frontiersmen” – The Formation of Young’s Scouts

Very little of the US Army’s experience with nineteenth century frontier violence made it into training and strategic manuals.³⁵⁴ Men like Lawton were the main repository for that sort of institutional knowledge. However, several tactical approaches emerged informally and then officially, codified in the few texts that did set down a strategic approach for the Army’s wars with Native people. Surprise attacks on villages, ideally while the inhabitants were sleeping, the use of smaller mobile units alongside Indian scouts, and the coercion and incarceration of Native non-combatants were all used to devastating effect in the wars of continental expansion. The US Army learned how to wage war on entire Native populations, whether by attacking noncombatants directly or by destabilizing Native communities into either accepting life on the run or detainment on reservations.³⁵⁵ While the early phase of the US campaign in the Philippines emphasized defeating the Philippine Revolutionary Army, commanders, including Lawton, also pursued similarly population-centric forms of warfare that targeted Filipino non-combatants and their property.³⁵⁶ Lawton also made frequent use of scouts and guides, and he emphasized mobility, pushing his troops so far ahead of their supply trains that his northward advance out of Manila stalled out.³⁵⁷ Although the role of Native scouts in the US military had

³⁵⁴ John M. Gates, “Indians and Insurrectors: The US Army’s Experience with Insurgency,” *Parameters* 13, (1983); Lieutenant Colonel Robert M. Cassidy, “Winning the War of the Flea: Lessons from Guerilla Warfare.” *Military Review* September-October (2004).

³⁵⁵ For an overview of nineteenth century military doctrine regarding Native peoples, see Randolph Barnes Marcy, *Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border*. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1866); Edward S. Farrow, *Mountain Scouting: A Handbook for Officers and Soldiers on the Frontiers* (New York: Published by the author, 1881); John Bigelow, *The Principles of Strategy: Illustrated Mainly from American Campaigns* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1894). For the history of Indian Scouts, see Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers: Indian Scouts and Auxiliaries with the United States Army, 1860-90* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982).

³⁵⁶ This sort of population-centric warfare could cut both ways. For example, Lawton often issued strict orders to protect Filipino property in an effort to “win hearts and minds,” while in other cases he looked the other way (or directly encouraged) the appropriation or destruction of Filipino property. See Linn, *The Philippine War*, 103.

³⁵⁷ Lawton felt that his superior, general Otis, was overly timid and holding him back. He boasted that if Otis would turn him loose with two regiments he would end the war sixty days. Some historians, including Linn, have argued that Lawton was overly aggressive and Otis’ hesitation was based in a realistic assessment of logistics. See Roth, *Muddy Glory*, 17-18; Robert Dexter Carter and Michael E. Shay, *A Civilian in Lawton’s 1899 Philippine Campaign*:

been hotly debated for decades, with both supporters and critics, Apache scouts had played a large role in the success Lawton won during the campaign to capture Goyahkla (Geronimo) in 1886.³⁵⁸ He had witnessed firsthand the advantages of mobile scouting units in pursuing and wearing down the enemy. A member of Lawton's staff even remarked that Lawton was "prosecuting an Apache warfare," and was held back by his superior, General Otis.³⁵⁹ It would not take long for Lawton to organize an elite scouting unit that would reflect his desire for mobility and seek-and-destroy operations.

On May 3rd, 1899, as US troops pushed north from Manila, Lawton sent a telegram to the Adjutant General with an unusual report: "I have organized a most efficient detachment of scouts, employing Mr. W.H. Young, an old frontiersman, prospector and scout, as chief – with 25 selected volunteers." Who was this "old frontiersman," and why had Lawton given him control of a picked group of US soldiers? The history of this elite unit demonstrates the ways in which "Indian fighting" operated both discursively and materially in the Philippines, conscripting US soldiers into a narrative of colonial violence that was then enacted against Filipinos.³⁶⁰ Where Lawton was the soldier, Young was the *frontiersman*, a civilian who could operate at the bleeding edge of civilized warfare, often outside of the loosening restrictions of military convention. "Frontiersman" evoked the settler-militias, trappers, mountain-men, guides,

The Letters of Robert D. Carter (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2013), 58-60; Linn, *The Philippines War*, 114-116.

³⁵⁸ These scouts were at the center of a lingering controversy over who deserved credit for the final surrender of the Apache that refused to submit to the reservation regime. General George Crook had championed the use of Native scouts, but his replacement, General Nelson Miles, had criticized them as untrustworthy. In the end Miles was forced to make use of the scouts, dispatching Lieutenant Charles Gatewood and several Apache scouts to join Lawton in the field in the summer of 1886. Ultimately, Geronimo's surrender was likely enabled by these scouts. See George Crook, *Crook's Resumé of Operations Against Apache Indians, 1882 to 1886*, (Johnson-Taunton Military Press, 1971); Charles B. Gatewood, "The Surrender of Geronimo," *The Journal of Arizona History* 27, no. 1 (1986): 53-70; Robert M. Utley, *Geronimo* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2012.

³⁵⁹ Carter, *A Civilian in Lawton's Campaign*, 76; William Thaddeus Sexton, *Soldiers in the Sun; an Adventure in Imperialism* (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 130.

³⁶⁰ Renda, *Taking Haiti*, 17-24.

prospectors, and criminals of the American West. An old frontiersman was just what Lawton needed as he pushed further into the island of Luzon, and he used Young to deadly effect.

Much of our information on W.H. Young comes from the diary of John B. Kinne, a member of the First North Dakota Volunteer Infantry. Kinne's first encounter with Young is entirely literary, a glimpse of the frontier mythos manifested in the jungle of the Philippines.

While watching the troops embark on the cascoes my attention was called to a fine, athletic looking individual in civilian clothes, leaning on his rifle. He was not taking any part in the preparations, but seemed to be an interested spectator of the operations. He reminded me of Leatherstocking, the hero of Cooper's Tales. Finally he went aboard the Wapidan with the scouts, and we afterwards learned that his name was William H.

Young, of whose interesting career in action we will have considerable to tell later.³⁶¹ Nothing could be more indicative of the literary inflection of the Indian Wars, and US empire more broadly, than Kinne's immediate association of this frontier soldier of fortune, standing on the shoreline in the Philippines, with a hero from James Fennimore-Cooper's famous novels. Here was a real-life Leatherstocking, leaning on his rifle and casually observing his surroundings, not a soldier but civilian, a man whose deviation from the professional norms of the US military would ultimately make him the perfect tool. Born in Connecticut, Young had served as a scout under General O.O. Howard in the wars with the Nez Perce, had prospected in Montana, California, Korea, and China, and had served as a soldier in Korea and in Japan. He had made his way to the Philippines after the US occupied the islands hoping to prospect, but instead fought alongside the volunteer regiments. Young gained quite a reputation with the US soldiers, particularly for his skill at countering the hated Filipino sharpshooters. His reputation was further amplified by his history as a frontier scout in one of the more famous conflicts of the Indian Wars. Much of his time was spent with the First North Dakota, and many of his scouts, including Kinne, came from that regiment.

³⁶¹ "John B. Kinne Diary," Box 1, Elwyn B. Robinson Department of Special Collections, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, 40.

The First North Dakota spent about a year in the Philippines, largely serving under the command of Lawton. In 1898 the regiment was ordered overseas and moved west on the trains that had been so integral to the conquest of Native land on the northern plains, land these men's families had settled on. Where US empire had once expanded west in search of continental supremacy, now it pushed further west in search of an ocean to cross, prairie settlers bound for San Francisco, Hawaii, and finally the Philippines. A few decades earlier an east-west movement meant an invasion of Native land, but in 1898 Kinne narrates the journey as a sober reflection on now-pacified Indian people. Rather than bison herds he notes that the bones of these animals had been collected by Natives and piled near the track for shipment to sugar refineries. Their train passes near a Blackfeet village, no longer a threatening presence but rather a curiosity, the Blackfeet waving blankets in answer to the shouts of the soldiers. Indian people are now met with cameras rather than guns. In Idaho, the North Dakotans took pictures and shook hands with three Indians, which Kinne calls "a little burlesque and seemingly solemn occasion" that he thoroughly enjoyed. Kinne seems to understand the staged nature of their interaction with these three nameless Native men.³⁶² For Kinne, Indian people are no longer the preoccupation of US imperialism, but rather a remnant, a distraction and curiosity that precedes his deployment to the Philippines. The immense effort Native communities were exerting to transform reservations from prisons to homelands remains invisible, submerged by Kinne's imperialist nostalgia.³⁶³

In San Francisco the First North Dakota camped in what Kinne calls "an old Chinese graveyard." Now on the coast, the contours of US empire are larger, and the soldiers find

³⁶² "John B. Kinne Diary," 2-3.

³⁶³ For more on Native political efforts on reservations in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries see Frederick Hoxie, "From Prison to Homeland: The Cheyenne River Indian Reservation Before WW1." *South Dakota State History*, Winter 1979. For imperialist nostalgia at "vanished" Native people, see Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (UNC Press Books, 2000), 195.

themselves sleeping on the graves of people whose labor helped construct the railroad the North Dakotans had just travelled on. The initial disrespect of stationing soldiers on top of the graves is further compounded when some men dig up two skeletons. Kinne noted that “in digging a sink the boys dug up two Chinese skeletons and had lots of amusement with the queues.” Kinne’s global tour of US empire continues in Hawaii, where their transports docks temporarily. The soldiers throw coins in the water for Native Hawaiian divers to retrieve, and steal from a food vendor, Kinne calling it a shame to steal from such “simple and honest” people. Soon enough the North Dakotans are in the Philippines, where the “gu gu,” “savage” and the “nigger” replaces the Hawaiian, Chinese, and Indian as the object of Kinne’s scorn. The regiment took part in the capture of Manila, and then helped to garrison the city for the remainder of 1898.³⁶⁴

Kinne and the North Dakotans participated in the initial fighting of the war, pushing out of Manila under the leadership of General Charles King after the retreating Filipino soldiers. He casually recounts stories of “dead niggers,” burned buildings, and wounded noncombatants in between the daily minutiae and entertainments of young soldiers: paddling canoes, the quality of the food cooked by their Chinese chef, and the appropriation of brass from an abandoned church to be sold for cash to fund gambling. What for the Filipino soldiers was a desperate defense of home and country was for soldiers like Kinne an imperial excursion that alternated between fatigue, hilarity, boredom, and adventure, punctuated by episodes of violence. It is jarring to quickly transition, sometimes in a single journal entry, from descriptions of race-war to the

³⁶⁴ These invocations of anti-black racism were common in the Philippines, and were typically linked to the violence US troops unleashed on their Filipino enemies. For example, General James Parker, commenting on a particular fight in November of 1899, wrote that “the enemy left 81 dead on the field. The Texans are great fighters, and first class shots; but they simply terrorize the country. They are always ready to shoot at a ‘nigger’ armed or not. James C. Parker, “Typescripts of Ltrs 5 July 1899 - Dec 1899,” 1899. James C. Parker Letters, Box 8, Folder 3. United States Military Academy Special Collections; Kinne Diary, 3, 8-15.

amusements of young soldiers.³⁶⁵ But this juxtaposition of the mundane and the horrific is characteristic of empire, and hardly unique to these North Dakotans. Take the following incident observed by US Army general James C. Parker, who served in Lawton's command, while on board a Navy ship in November 1899: "The next morning we closed in on the beach, near the village Cavayan, the port of Vigan. Insurgents were seen in trenches. They did not reply to our fire. The navy shelled the beach with all kinds of guns... The navy men apologetically explained they did it in order to expend their allowance of ammunition for target practice. We heard later that they killed two women, and badly wounded one non-combatant – no insurgents."³⁶⁶ The contrast is jarring; the casual shelling of a beach in order to use up ammunition balanced against the loss of three Filipino lives. The families of those who died certainly would not have viewed the shelling as target practice.

Lawton had first encountered Young on the 29th of April, 1899, when he noticed a civilian walking ahead of the troops as they advanced towards the town of San Rafael during the so-called "northern expedition" targeted at Filipino revolutionary strongholds north of Manila. Lawton summoned the strange man intending to reprimand him and send him to the rear of the line, but Young apparently made quite the impression on the general. Young told Lawton he had been a scout in Indian campaigns and had made his way to the Philippines to "help the boys." The general was impressed, and he recognized Young's name as "one who had done some gallant work against the redskins." This was enough to earn the itinerant civilian a chance to work his way into the general's good graces: "Something in the man's bearing and appearance, made me change my mind, and I directed him to go to the front and bring me in a citizen that I

³⁶⁵ Here I follow Kramer's use of "race-war" as a descriptor for the fighting in the Philippines. See Kramer, *The Blood of Government*, 88-90.

³⁶⁶ James C. Parker, "Typescripts of Ltrs 5 July 1899 - Dec 1899," 1899. James C. Parker Letters, Box 8, Folder 3. United States Military Academy Special Collections.

might get definite information about the location of San Rafael.”³⁶⁷ Five minutes later Lawton heard three shots, and soon Young reappeared, carrying a rifle and a sack full of ammunition. He had encountered a Filipino outpost of eight men, killed one, and drove the others off. Impressed, Lawton had Young select twenty-five men to form a scouting unit. Most of the men had been sharpshooters or scouts in their respective regiments, uninterested in military discipline and protocol. One had served in the Spanish, English, and US navies before enlisting in the army. A few had multiple court-martials on their record. Private William Harris, one of the original scouts, recalled the men as informal and rugged, often heading into the countryside without permission to explore.³⁶⁸

These disheveled men must have seemed a transplant of the frontier army, and they suited Lawton’s purpose perfectly. Indeed, they seem to fit a long history of ragtag soldiers who are allowed to escape military discipline by becoming particularly vicious frontline (or behind-the-lines) killers. These sorts of military units have become cultural tropes which often draw explicitly on “Indianness” to represent both their savagery and effectiveness, particularly in Hollywood. From Mel Gibson’s bloody tomahawk in the film *The Patriot* to Brad Pitt’s scalp knife in *Inglourious Basterds*, certain soldiers are allowed to exceed the boundaries of civilized warfare in the pursuit US military goals. These men become irregulars in the service of liberalism and democracy, their mismatched clothing and guerilla tactics an alluring transgression of civilized norms. Often these men embark on suicide missions, a Cooper-esque twist in which they help to win a peace which they themselves can never enjoy. “The Apaches,”

³⁶⁷ Lawton to Adjutant General, June 6th 1899, in Robert Goldthwaite Carter, “Henry W. Lawton Scrapbook,” Special Collections, Newberry Library; “John B. Kinne Diary,” 61.

³⁶⁸ “Telegraph, Lawton to Adjutant General,” May 14, 1899, RG 395 Entry 789 Box 1, National Archives; Jerry M. Cooper and Glenn H. Smith, *Citizens as Soldiers: A History of the North Dakota National Guard* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, 1986), 97-98.

a group of Jewish soldiers lead by Brad Pitt's character in Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds*, are celebrated for beating German officers to death with baseball bats and scalping Nazi soldiers before almost all dying in the conflagration that marks the film's finale. A similar squad of suicide commandos is found in the film *The Dirty Dozen*, in which a group of military criminals are dropped behind enemy lines to attack a meeting of German officers. *The Dirty Dozen* is based on the Filthy Thirteen, a demolition section of the 101st Airborne Division that served during World War Two. Lead by Jake McNiece, an officer of Choctaw heritage, the squad was famous for its lack of discipline, hygiene, and disinterest in following rules. Most of the squad perished while parachuting into France on D-Day. Inspired by McNiece, the squad was known for sporting Mohawk haircuts and donning war-paint before heading into combat.³⁶⁹

“Young's Scouts,” as the unit came to be known, were used much the way scouts had been used when Lawton was on the northern plains or in the southwest. They were independent, taking orders directly from Lawton and led by Young, a man Lawton called a natural leader. This independence was galling for some officers that had to interact with the scouts, but Lawton consistently backed them up in the face of criticism or discipline.³⁷⁰ They advanced a half-day ahead of the main body of soldiers, locating the enemy and sometimes engaging them. At this stage in the conflict the war was somewhere in between a series of pitched battles and the guerilla warfare that would later come to define the conflict. Young's Scouts allowed Lawton to pursue the sort of smaller-scale objectives he was familiar with, aimed at disrupting the ability of Filipino revolutionary forces to maintain their day-to-day resistance to the US occupation. A set

³⁶⁹ Lou Mumford. “Filthy Thirteen's Last Man.” *South Bend Tribune*, November 9, 2010.

³⁷⁰ “Telegram, Lawton to Adjutant General,” May 14, 1899, RG 395 Entry 789 Box 1, National Archives; Cooper, *Citizens as Soldiers*, 99.

of orders Lawton issued to Young's Scouts could almost sound like they were setting out from a fort in the American west:

Chief Scout Young was instructed to proceed on the afternoon of the 4th with the entire detachment of scouts in a northeasterly direction covering the country between San Rafael road and the Maasin River, for the purpose of locating and destroying all magazines, storehouses and caches of insurgent subsistence or other supplies. He was instructed to keep a careful record of stores destroyed, that his party would not carry rations, but would subsist on the country traversed by them, that the expedition should continue and that reports of progress be sent in at every opportunity practicable, and that his movements should be concealed from the enemy as much as possible, with whom no avoidable contact should be had, though he might when returning secure as many guns as possible from the insurgents. The usual instructions as to private persons and property were given.³⁷¹

Travel light, acquire food as you go, and seek and destroy the enemy's supplies. Destroyed supplies and captured guns functioned as a quantifiable measure of progress against the so-called insurgency, something that body counts and occupied towns could not do. And although Lawton's orders included cautions about respecting noncombatants and private property, looting and burning became hallmarks of the scouts and the US occupation of the Philippines in general. By drawing on the skills of frontiersmen like Young, Lawton instituted a set of military policies that would come to define the US counterinsurgency in the Philippines.

In what would become one of the primary occupations of the unit, Young's first "rice burning expedition" involved the scouts creeping, as Kinne puts it, "Indian fashion" through the Philippines countryside, thirty paces apart.³⁷² They appropriated food from Filipino villagers, captured prisoners, and searched the buildings they came across. In one house they captured a Filipino officer and two soldiers and forced them to shred their uniforms. The next day they discovered a series of rice-beds which were torn up and burned, drawing the attention of the

³⁷¹ Lawton to Adjutant General, June 6th 1899, in Robert Goldthwaite Carter, "Henry W. Lawton Scrapbook," Special Collections, Newberry Library.

³⁷² The reports of operations for Lawton's northern expedition during April and May of 1899 are full of similar accounts of Young's Scouts locating and burning storehouses of goods.

locals who proceeded to flee into the hills. In one storehouse the scouts found 10,000 bushels of rice, and later they found a cache with 20,000 bushels of rice, 50 gallons of kerosene, 100 gallons of coconut oil, five tons of sugar as well as uniforms, cloth, sewing machines, and ammunition.³⁷³ Due to the large quantities of supplies they made camp and spent three days burning everything. The scouts then circled back towards Manila, floating down a river on a raft and cutting telegraph lines as they went. Lawton was happy with the expedition, which had resulted in destroyed supplies, several Filipino prisoners, and had demonstrated that the scouts could operate independently and quietly in the Filipino countryside.³⁷⁴

The scouts had covered a large amount of territory in four days, which Lawton estimated would take a normal infantry regiment twice that amount of time. In his report Lawton recorded the destruction of 40,000 bushels of rice and 12,250 of corn, 250 pounds of tobacco, 30 jars of sugar, 283 uniforms, and assorted supplies. He also offered a ringing endorsement of the scouts:

The services of these scouts have been from the beginning peculiarly valuable, and are daily increasing in value as a result of experience. The individuals detailed were in all cases men who had either lived for years on our Indian frontier, were inured to hardship and danger, and skilled in woodcraft and use of the rifle, or had demonstrated their service in these islands peculiar fitness for the work contemplated.³⁷⁵

³⁷³ If the numbers are correct this was an enormous supply of food – a bushel of rice would have weighed somewhere in the vicinity of 45 pounds, which would make a cache with 20,000 bushels of rice approximately 900,000 pounds.

³⁷⁴ This sort of seek-and-destroy mission would become a feature of the US occupation of the Philippines, particularly the emphasis on destroyed supplies. Similar accounts can be found in the diaries of individual soldiers and in official reports. For example, the journal of soldier Charles Dudley Rhodes records the following for March 10, 1901: “Went immediately to Salitaran, and rounded up the place. Captured one known soldier, Francisco Barbon, with his rifle. Also captured 1 insurgent uniform, 6 prs chevrons, 1 U.S. canteen, 1 U.S. rubber blanket. All these were on the premises of Tenientes Austria and Juliano. As an example, I removed all personal clothing from the so-called cuartels, as well as about three tons of rice, and burned them to the ground.” Another example can be found in the journal of Harry M. Dey: “found and destroyed insurgent stronghold and storehouses in the mountains containing over 100 bushels of rice...” “John B. Kinne Diary,” 63-65; “Diary of Charles Dudley Rhodes,” The Charles D. Rhodes Papers, 1940-1949, Box 1, United States Military Academy; “Journal of Harry M. Dey,” Captain Harry M. Dey Papers, Box 1, Phil-Am War Day – Reports and Accounts – Soldiers’ Narratives – Journal (Nov 13 1899 – July 6 1901), University of Michigan Special Collections.

³⁷⁵ United States, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899, 201-202).

For Lawton, the Indian frontier was both a training ground and instrument of validation. It had produced men suited to these seek-and-destroy missions and discursively validated the scout's existence. They were Indian fighters – therefore they were effective Filipino fighters, effective counterinsurgents. Young certainly had experience in Indian warfare, and put that experience into practice. But many of the men in Young's Scouts were too young to have directly fought with Native people. However, they came from North Dakota, from Oregon, from places recently taken from Native people. This history of colonial conquest clung to these men in the Philippines. Conscripted into a discourse of Indian Fighting, they enacted it in their actions. This aura possessed the ability to remake men into "old Indian fighters," even young men like Kinne. It also seemed to endow the scouts with a certain bravura and recklessness which resulted in several highly risky actions that would lead to Young's death and numerous Medal of Honor awards for the unit.

Young's Scouts could move quietly and quickly through the Philippines countryside, but that does not mean they avoided fighting. As Kinne noted in his diary, the entire North Dakota Volunteers were eager to get into the fighting and resented not being on the front lines in the beginning of their deployment. One soldier even wrote home to a friend that "most of the boys say as the cowboys of our North American Indian: A dead Philipino [sic] is a good Philipino." This was not an empty threat – another soldier noted in his diary that "they caught a sharpshooter in the act of changing his uniform for a white suit and now he is a *good* Philipino [sic]."³⁷⁶ Frequent references to "dead niggers" made throughout Kinne's description of the scout's operations attest to the racialized character of the war in the Philippines, which was based as much in anti-blackness and anti-Filipino racism as it was Indian-hating.³⁷⁷ Young's Scouts killed

³⁷⁶ "John B. Kinne Diary," 37; Cooper and Smith, *Citizens as Soldiers*, 106-107.

³⁷⁷ "John B. Kinne Diary," 44-47, 58.

numerous Filipinos on their expeditions, occasionally noncombatants. Kinne's diary notes several noncombatant casualties, in one instance the death of a woman holding a baby.

On several occasions the unit threw themselves recklessly at the enemy. On May 12th and 13th the scouts captured two towns against overwhelming odds. At San Ildefonso, the 25 scouts engaged in a daylong firefight with some 400 Filipino soldiers. In late afternoon the scouts charged the Filipino position, driving them entirely from the town with only one casualty. The next day at San Miguel the scouts charged a bridge into the city held by between 300-500 Filipinos, scattering them in a sudden rush and then taking refuge in the church bell tower until reinforcements arrived.³⁷⁸ While crossing the bridge at San Miguel Young was shot in the knee. In his diary Kinne narrates Young's injury like a heroic last stand out of a Frederic Remington painting or John Ford film: "As they reached the bridge in the center of the town, Young was hit in the knee with a Remington bullet and fell. He kept up the fire as long as he could see any niggers and then bound his knee. When they found him he was sitting up with his wound bound and surrounded by empty shells."³⁷⁹ Another story of racial violence and bravery to amplify Young's reputation, the mess of spent rifle shells a potent visual for the sort of long-odds the scouts' mystique was built on.

In a telegram praising Young and the scouts Lawton noted that the wound was not life-threatening, likely to result in no more than a stiff joint.³⁸⁰ Captain William Birkhimer, in his report on the fight, called the charge of the scouts "one of the rare events in war where true valor asserts itself against overwhelming odds."³⁸¹ High praise, but the captain was tired of the

³⁷⁸ United States Army, "Operations & Casualties Lists Feb. 1899 - June 1899," RG 395 Entry 764 Box 3, National Archives; Cooper and Smith, *Citizens as Soldiers*, 98-99.

³⁷⁹ "John B. Kinne Diary," 66.

³⁸⁰ "Telegram, Lawton to Adjutant General," May 14, 1899, RG 395 Entry 789 Box 1, National Archives

³⁸¹ Wm. E Birkhimer, "Report of Reconnaissance of Road...," RG 395 Entry 789 Box 1, National Archives.

independent scouts, who were only supposed to reconnoiter the town, not attack it. Birkhimer gathered the scouts for a meeting and lectured them on military discipline and protocol, a speech that was not at all well received. Corporal Anders received instruction on the proper method of saluting a superior officer that was particularly unwelcome. Several of the scouts appealed to Lawton, who told Birkhimer to leave them alone. Ultimately Birkhimer and eleven of the scouts would receive the Medal of Honor for the charge at San Miguel, and Birkhimer's attempted interference was negated by the general.³⁸² The scouts would remain independent and informal.

Lawton was confident that Young would return to duty, and predicted that "if we have guerilla warfare, he will be very useful," even if Young was forced to go mounted from then on.³⁸³ However, Young's stiff knee turned out to be more serious, and a day after his injury he died in Manila. The loss of their namesake certainly demoralized Young's Scouts but the unit would continue to operate for the remainder of Lawton's northern expedition. The scouts, led by Young's replacement, Lt. J.E. Thornton, were instrumental in the capture San Isidro, the then-current capital of the Philippine Republic, on May 16. At San Isidro Lawton's campaign came to a halt. The general once more blamed Otis' timidity, but the reality was that Lawton's troops were suffering widespread illness, he had used up his supplies, and had no way to acquire more. Aguinaldo and the revolutionary government had eluded capture, and the Philippine Revolutionary Army, though battered, had not been destroyed.³⁸⁴ By June of 1899 the worn-out soldiers of the First North Dakota were running out of steam, and they would soon board a ship to return to the United States. Kinne would end his diary describing a barbecue in a park in Fargo, but the war was far from over.

³⁸² Roth, *Muddy Glory*, 170; Sexton, *Soldiers in the Sun*, 134-135.

³⁸³ "Telegram, Lawton to Adjutant General," May 14, 1899, RG 395 Entry 789 Box 1, National Archives.

³⁸⁴ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 115-116.

Lawton himself would remain in the Philippines until his death in December of 1899. His time there would continue to be described in terms that sought to position the general and his troops as Indian Fighters, often in the face of increasing Filipino success in guerilla warfare. A June campaign lead by Lawton southward from Manila towards the town of Cavite initially failed to engage a single Filipino fighter, the US soldiers defeated by swamps, mosquitoes, and weather. Nonetheless, the press, tightly managed by Otis, reported that “Insurgents Flee as Lawton Advances.”³⁸⁵ When Lawton did manage to engage Filipino forces, Otis told reporters that Lawton’s troops had killed 400 “Indians” in a battle, and one newspaper proclaimed: “Success of the Moment Against Filipino Braves,” but the reality was that hundreds of Filipino soldiers managed to elude Lawton once more.³⁸⁶ In the fall of 1899 Lawton and Otis would clash again when Secretary of War Elihu Root ordered the formation of scouting detachments of Filipino Macabebes, Spanish loyalists who were opposed to the Filipino revolutionary forces, over the protests of Otis. Lawton had spread the idea to his friends in Washington, which enraged Otis, but the idea of Native scouts would have appealed to Lawton, who had made such effective use of Apache scouts in the southwest.³⁸⁷ Indeed, a resonance of Lawton’s experiences in the Apache Wars would catch up with him when he was shot by a sniper and killed in the Battle of Paye on December 19th, 1899. The Filipino general in command was Licerio *Gerónimo*. And while this Filipino general did not do the actual shooting, his presence on the battlefield evoked the Apache leader Goyahkla (Geronimo), who Lawton had played a role in convincing to surrender 13 years before, a man still in US military custody at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

³⁸⁵ Most of the American journalists in Manila hated Otis and his attempts to censor the press. Linn, *The Philippine War*, 134-135.

³⁸⁶ Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, 71-72.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 81.

Like the journalists that had covered the war, the obituaries commemorating Lawton's life emphasized his military career, particularly his role in the Indian Wars. According to these memorials it was Lawton's past as an Indian fighter that had made him such an effective general in the Philippines. As one speaker at Lawton's funeral put it, "having fought it out with the insurrectionary tribes for fifteen years, he was the picked man of men to track the Apaches to their last lair and to wrest the southwest from the terror of Geronimo and his band." As another vividly said, "he hunted them off their feet." One of his obituaries noted that Lawton's experience with Apaches made him especially competent when dealing with Filipino insurgents, "whom it required chasing to catch." It was this tenacity and aggression in what the military termed "savage war" which made Lawton famous. One writer noted that he was "constantly in the field of action – here, there, and everywhere – moving rapidly and striking quick, decisive blows after the fashion which he had learned so well in the border wars of the west." Lawton's reputation in the Philippines was built on his Indian fighting prowess, and the troops there had anticipated his arrival. Rev. Peter MacQueen recalled the following conversation: "'Wait till Lawton comes,' said a husky volunteer from the West; 'he'll rip this insurrection up the back.'"³⁸⁸ Being a frontier-experienced regular carried a great deal of military capital with the soldiers in the Philippines, and no general had more than Lawton.

The Army's inspector general went even further in his announcement of Lawton's death. Rather than jumping from the Sonora Mountains of the southwest to the jungles of the Philippines, General Breckinbridge inserted Lawton into a centuries-old lineage of white militarism:

The man of El-Caney is the man of the Mogollons, and the man of the Mogollons is the reincarnation of some shining, helmeted warrior who fell upon the sands of Palestine in

³⁸⁸ "General Lawton as Warrior, Statesman and Man" in Robert Goldthwaite Carter, "Henry W. Lawton Scrapbook," Special Collections, Newberry Library.

the first crusade, with the red blood welling over his corselet and his two-handed battle sword shivered to the hilt. The race type persists unchanged in eye, in profile, in figure. It is the race which in all centuries the Valkyrs have wafted from the war docks, have hailed from the Helmgangs, or helmet strewn moorlands – the white skinned race which drunk with the liquor of the battle, reeled around the dragon standard at Senlac, which fought with Richard Grenville, which broke the Old Guard at Waterloo, which rode the old slope at Balaklava, which went down with the Cumberland at Hampton Roads, which charged with Pickett at Gettysburg, the race of the trader, the financier, the statesman, the inventor, the colonizer, the creator, but, above all, the fighter.³⁸⁹

Lawton is presented as the inheritor of a Nordic and Anglo-Saxon martial tradition stretching from the Crusades, to the wars of nineteenth century Europe, to the Civil War (and noticeably, *both* sides of the Civil War). He is presented as a leader of the race of colonizers, and his prominence in both continental and overseas colonial violence made Lawton an ideal candidate, in both life and death, for writers wishing to draw a link between the conquest of Native people and the occupation of the Philippines. And as general Breckinbridge's obituary makes clear, this was a racialized connection.³⁹⁰ Lawton was viewed as an expert in savage warfare, uniquely suited to subduing the Filipinos, just as he had the Apache. However, soldiers like Lawton were not simply exporting North American racisms to the Philippines. As Paul Kramer reminds us, much of the racialized violence US soldiers directed at Filipinos was the products of distinct, localized processes.³⁹¹ But soldiers like Lawton *were* bringing with them a history of experience in colonial violence that shaped both their attitudes and their practices, their investment in defeating Filipino independence and their tactical approach to combat with people they deemed

³⁸⁹ "General Lawton as Warrior, Statesman and Man" in Robert Goldthwaite Carter, "Henry W. Lawton Scrapbook," Special Collections, Newberry Library.

³⁹⁰ Senator Albert Beveridge, a vigorous proponent of the US occupation in the Philippines, made a similar argument in an 1898 campaign speech when he told the crowd that "we are a conquering race, and we must obey our blood and occupy new markets, and, if necessary, new lands." Beveridge would later justify the denial of self-determination to Filipino people through comparisons to Native Americans, arguing in the Senate that "you, who say the Declaration applies to all men, how dare you deny its application to the American Indian? And if you deny it to the Indian at home, how dare you grant it to the Malay abroad?" Laura E. Gómez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (NYU Press, 2008), 74.

³⁹¹ Kramer, *The Blood of Government*, 89-90.

racially inferior.³⁹² The mobility of US colonialism had as much to do with how soldiers imagined themselves as it did with how they racialized their enemies.

Young's Scout's and Lawton's 1899 campaigns would prove to be highly influential on US military policy in the Philippines. As the conflict transitioned into a protracted guerilla war, the tactics Young and Lawton had developed became an integral part of the American counterinsurgency, focused on mobile seek-and-destroy operations, population and resource control, and the destruction of insurgent infrastructure and supplies. These were policies rooted in the experience and mystique that Indian warfare endowed in men like Lawton and Young. And as US tactics became increasingly brutal, those measures were justified by continued references to the frontier, references that would find increasingly literary forms.

The Literary Lawton

The Philippine-American War occurred amidst widespread concern about race, gender, sexuality, and social class. Writers, educators, and politicians in both the United States and Britain warned that white racial superiority and masculinity were under threat, eroding in the face of industrialization, poverty, urban overcrowding, immigration, women's suffrage, and labor unrest. These fears were inseparable from global imperialism, particularly in the US. They helped motivate an aggressive foreign policy that many believed would reinvigorate a nation forged in the now-lost crucible of frontier expansion.³⁹³ In this context Lawton's eulogies

³⁹² Lawton's service in the military included the Civil War, the 1871 expedition into Indian Territory, the 1872 Staked Plains campaign, the Red River War of 1874, the Black Hills War of 1876-77, the campaign against the Utes in 1879, and the protracted war on the Apache that kept Lawton in the southwest until 1888. "Military Papers, 1883-1900," Henry Ware Lawton Papers, Box 3 Folder 3, Library of Congress.

³⁹³ Gail Bederman and Kristin Hoganson show how masculinity and white supremacy became powerful motivators for overseas US expansion in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Much of this masculine expression involved carefully regulated forays into a "primitive" state in organizations like the Improved Order of Red Men and other "scouting" organizations. Here men could participate in a highly-scripted form of the "strenuous life," a taste of frontier masculinity preserved amidst industrial expansion. Children in the US, Canada, and Britain participated in similar clubs such as the Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, and Woodcraft Indians. Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of

celebrated him as a hero of white Anglo-Saxon militarism and masculinity, and this was a theme that authors of turn-of-the-century fiction literature for children would amplify. Lawton may have died in the Philippines, but a literary version of the general would return home and enter the pages of several novels. As Amy Kaplan has shown, fiction literature in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries is inseparable from the expansion of US empire. Popular genres like historical romances and travel stories celebrated white masculinity while both amplifying and reflecting American political desires for global expansion.³⁹⁴ Here I am concerned with a particular subset of this imperial literature, namely the children's adventure stories which became very successful in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Marketed largely to boys, these stories sought to mythologize the now "closed" frontier and offer narratives with new venues for masculine development, often taking place outside the United States, and featuring boys roughing it outdoors while facing a variety of dangers.

The narrators in these adventures paradoxically reflect on the loss of wilderness while celebrating the effects of US expansion, urbanization, and development.³⁹⁵ Readers learn the value of physical and moral strength as they traverse the newly forged networks of US empire. Racial and national superiority are celebrated as dangerous warzones like the Philippines transform into light-hearted arenas of American dominance. Unlike the historical romances Kaplan describes, in which the male hero performs and asserts his imperial masculinity for a female gaze, the boys in these stories are *learning* masculinity, and they do so through

Chicago Press, 1996), 20-31; Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood : How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 2-9; Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 95-99; Robert Macdonald, *Sons of the Empire* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 12-13.

³⁹⁴ Amy Kaplan, "Romancing the Empire: The Embodiment of American Masculinity in the Popular Historical Novel of the 1890s." *American Literary History* 2, no. 4 (1990): 659-90, 659-661.

³⁹⁵ Deidre Johnson, *Edward Stratemeyer and the Stratemeyer Syndicate* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), 64-65.

participation in US empire. Intended for the next generation of soldiers, many of these stories include details about the military occupation of the Philippines, and they often narrate the Philippines-American War as an “Indian War.” As such, they transmitted a record of the conflict to an audience that would have been unlikely to receive more formal instruction if they entered the military.

In the aftermath of the war in the Philippines the military largely failed to create any doctrine or educational record that would preserve institutional knowledge acquired during the occupation. Professional journals discussed the conflict sparingly, and the military censored several publications intended to transmit the lessons learned, likely due to the descriptions of harsh counterinsurgency tactics, the very measures that were currently under-fire by anti-imperialist politicians.³⁹⁶ As a result, the record of US counterinsurgency in the Philippines was ephemeral in the early twentieth-century, and the children’s literature I highlight here became an unlikely venue for the transmission of the conflict’s history. In these stories the overtly racialized violence that the military attempted to downplay is refigured as a lesson in masculinity for young readers. Two prominent authors working in these genres were Elbridge Street Brooks and Edward Stratemeyer, both of whom wrote books about the war in the Philippines that featured Lawton prominently. In both stories young men become involved in Lawton’s campaigns of 1899, where they interact with the general, Young’s Scouts, and other members of the US military. Lawton may have been larger than life, but after his death a literary Lawton would continue to develop the mystique of the Indian Fighter.

³⁹⁶ Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency*, 10; Keith B. Bickel, *Mars Learning: The Marine Corps Development of Small Wars Doctrine, 1915-1940* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 42-47; John M. Gates, “The Official Historian and the Well-Placed Critic: James A. LeRoy’s Assessment of John R. M. Taylor’s ‘The Philippine Insurrection against the United States,’” *The Public Historian* 7, no. 3 (1985): 57–67; Robert D. Ramsey III, *A Masterpiece of Counterinsurgency Warfare: BG J. Franklin Bell in the Philippines, 1901-1902* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, United States Army Combined Arms Center).

Elbridge S. Brooks' *With Lawton and Roberts: A Boy's Adventures in the Philippines and the Transvaal*" was published in 1900 soon after Lawton's death. The story is a broad endorsement of empire, in which the US occupation of the Philippines is connected to European colonialism in southern Africa. The American and British generals, Lawton and Roberts, are introduced in the preface as "heroes of Anglo-Saxon blood." Their intertwined stories are meant to unify Anglo-Saxons everywhere and to defend the cause of imperialism. Similar to politicians that sought to deny self-determination to colonized peoples, Brooks writes that "the Stars and Stripes in the Philippines, and the Union Jack in South Africa, are advancing the interests of humanity and civilization, and that untrammelled liberty to the barbarian is as disastrous a gift as are unquestioning concessions to a republic which has been a republic only in name."³⁹⁷ This ambitious project is narrated through the story of 16-year old Ned, a California schoolboy who, on a dare, stows away on a transport ship headed to the Philippines. The precocious Ned is swept up in the US campaign, fights alongside Lawton and Young's Scouts, and manages to play an integral role in the early months of the war in the Philippines. He then travels to South Africa and takes part in the Second Boer War before returning home a hero.

With Lawton and Roberts is a work of fiction aimed at adolescent boys, and men like Lawton become instructors for Ned, and by extension the reader. Foremost among Lawton's credentials: he is the hero of the Apache wars. Ned discovers "that no work was too severe, no fighting too hot, no march too rapid, to baffle the man whom the Apaches used to call 'man-who-gets-up-in-the-night-to-fight,' and whom the Filipinos dubbed 'the sleepless one.'" Ned is also introduced to Young and his elite scouting unit, and together with Lawton they become a cautionary tale for the reckless teen. When he fails to follow orders and stumbles into a group of

³⁹⁷ Elbridge Streeter Brooks, *With Lawton and Roberts; a Boy's Adventures in the Philipinnes and the Transvaal* (Boston: Lothrop Publishing Company, 1900), Preface.

Filipino revolutionaries, barely escaping with his life, Lawton warns Ned that he hasn't had the same frontier experience. "Just you take a lesson from Young's scouts, lad, whom I am going to detail for service with Colonel Sinclair. They'll tell you that a woodsman knows before he feels... You ought to hunt Apaches a little while, then you'd get schooled to cautiousness."³⁹⁸

From Brooks' story we learn a few things. First, that Lawton and Young Scouts were famous enough to justify an entire novel dedicated to their exploits. We also get a sense of how much the Indian Wars continued to influence cultural meanings around military violence in the early-twentieth century. Journalists, politicians, and individual soldiers made sense of their actions in the Philippines by relating it back to the frontier. The same is true of the writers who translated the violence of empire into narratives for children and young adults.

Brooks does not confine himself to perpetuating a mythological frontier, transplanted to the Philippines. He is writing historical fiction and Ned's adventure narrates Lawton's northern expedition, the push out of Manila into northern Luzon in the spring of 1899. Lawton is "the gray-haired giant of the piercing eye and the tireless tactics," swiftly taking town after town with the aid of Ned, whose experience of war is both light-hearted and exhilarating. Readers of Brooks' story embark on an adventure in which the US soldiers, particularly Lawton and Young's Scouts, form an invincible tide against which the routinely treacherous Filipinos can only flee. Filipino's are sent to the "happy hunting grounds," the stereotypical Native afterlife of dime novels and westerns. "Grim Indian Fighters" out-maneuver and out-fight their opponents in the towns of Baliuag, San Isidro, and San Miguel. Ned is instrumental in these fights, which made the real Young's Scouts famous. He learns how to behave like "an old Indian-fighter," and is taught to have "little respect for savage or half-civilized 'hostiles.'"³⁹⁹ Even young boys like

³⁹⁸ Brooks, *With Lawton*, 29-36.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 47-67.

Ned can become old Indian fighters, endowed with a practiced frontier brutality and the even older lineage of Anglo-Saxon white warrior-hood that so many writers were quick to position Lawton in. The overarching message is that violence is justified and necessary in the service of empire. Ned and his companions are continuously contrasted to the “savage” or “treacherous” Filipinos, who are kept in check only through the efforts of men like Lawton.

At the end of the story Ned travels to southern Africa, where learns from a Filipino man that had also travelled there that Lawton had died. In a fit of rage, he mercilessly beats the man. Embarrassed, Ned is chastised by a British general for breaking camp discipline, who nonetheless commends Ned’s love for the now-dead Lawton. In Africa this Filipino soldier, who has opposed Ned throughout the story, is transformed into an ally. Removed from the defense of his own home and plugged into the global network of empire, his transformation is the final resolution of the story before Ned returns home: “‘We may never meet again, my brother,’ said the Filipino, as he stretched out a hand in farewell to the American. ‘But you have done me a good service. I hated you as an American invader; I love you as an American brother, and I shall go back to my own dear Luzon to work among my fellows for what I now believe to be our best and surest interest.’”⁴⁰⁰ By story’s end Ned has almost single-handedly converted this hardened Filipino insurgent into an enthusiastic booster for the US occupation. This was the final lesson from the literary Lawton, who earlier in the story had argued that the American way was to convert the Filipinos into friends rather than simply destroy them: “‘We wish to reclaim your people and not to revenge ourselves. A dead Aguinaldo would not be so great a feather in our caps as a contented and friendly Aguinaldo.’” Ned fulfills Lawton’s charge, ending the story

⁴⁰⁰ Brooks, *With Lawton*, 315.

with the ultimate counterinsurgency fantasy, a hardened enemy transformed into a friendly and loyal subject of US power.

Few readers will recognize the name Edward Stratemeyer. But what about Franklin W. Dixon? Victor Appleton? Carolyn Keene? Perhaps if you think back to the books you read as a child these authors might ring a bell. Those names stand in for the ghostwriters of some of the most enduringly popular children's literature ever published, in *The Hardy Boys*, *Tom Swift*, and *Nancy Drew* respectively. Edward Stratemeyer was the creator and initial author of all three of these characters, as well as numerous other popular series in children's literature. Through his Stratemeyer Syndicate he published more than a thousand books and helped to define the genre of children's literature and series fiction.⁴⁰¹ And while Stratemeyer is mostly known for his sleuthing teenagers, his first successful hardcover novels were a series of stories about the Spanish-American War. Beginning with *Under Dewey at Manila*, Stratemeyer published six stories about the war in which young men are paired with top military leaders, including Lawton, MacArthur, and Otis. To prepare for the stories Stratemeyer read military reports in an effort to be historically accurate. The fifth in the series, *The Campaign of the Jungle; or, Under Lawton Through Luzon*, closely follows Lawton's "southern campaign" towards Laguna de Bay and his "northern campaign" towards San Isidro, primarily in April and May of 1899.

Like Brooks, Stratemeyer's story is an endorsement of US militarism in which Lawton's history as an Indian Fighter gives definition to his campaigns in the Philippines. In the preface Stratemeyer writes that Lawton's northern campaign "was one of the most daring of its kind, and could not have been pushed to success had not the man at its head been what he was, a trained

⁴⁰¹ Stratemeyer created numerous other series including *The Bobbsey Twins*, *Bomba the Jungle Boy*, *The Boys of Columbia High*, *Christopher Cool / TEEN Agent*, *Dave Dashaway*, *Doris Force*, *The Happy Hollisters*, *Honey Bunch*, *The Jerry Wonder Stories*, *The Motion Picture Chums*, *The Outdoor Girls*, *The Rover Boys*, *Ruth Fielding*, *Kay Tracey*, and *X Bar X Boys*.

Indian fighter of our own West, and one whose nerve and courage were almost beyond comprehension.”⁴⁰² The Lawton of Stratemeyer’s story is larger than life, just as he was in media depictions of his actual military service. The narrator introduces him as the captor of Geronimo and recycles the story that his Apache name was “man-who-gets-up-in-the-night-to-fight.” The novel’s main characters, Larry and Ben, are in awe of the general from the moment they see him. At one point Larry assures his companion that ““a soldier who has whipped the Apache Indians isn’t going to suffer any surprise at the hands of these Tagals, no matter how wily they are.””⁴⁰³ Apache people remained the benchmark against which cunning and savagery were measured, and Lawton’s success in the southwest served as an endless endorsement of his ability to beat Filipino opponents. At one point Ben tells a fellow soldier that ““I never heard of such a campaign.”” His companion replies that, ““General Lawton puts it down as a regular Indian campaign.”” Just a regular Indian campaign, one in which soldiers like Lawton and Young’s Scouts, who also make an appearance in the story, base their ability to defeat insurgents on their experiences as Indian fighters.

Conclusion

On May 30th, 1899, Kinne and the rest of Young’s Scouts, recently returned to Manilla after the end of Lawton’s Northern Expedition, celebrated Decoration Day (the precursor to Memorial Day) by adorning Young’s grave with flowers. Kinne wrote that:

Decoration Day seemed the most like Sunday of any day we had spent on the Islands. Being on the floral committee to decorate the graves, I was busy early in the morning, and after getting bouquets from the natives, who made up the floral monument for Young's grave, I went to the bamboo barracks, where the Scouts assembled to march to Battery Knoll where Young was buried. Chaplain Stull of the 2nd Oregons read some

⁴⁰² Edward Stratemeyer, *The Campaign of the Jungle; Or, Under Lawton through Luzon* (Boston: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1900), Preface.

⁴⁰³ Stratemeyer, *Under Lawton*, 37.

Scripture and spoke a few words, and we put our decorations on the grave, after which a picture was taken of it with the boys around.⁴⁰⁴ The flowers, scripture, and crisp new uniforms in which the scouts were photographed should not give the impression they had lost their rough edge. One of the first things they did upon return to Manilla was head to a market and sell off a captured pony and cart for \$250, which was divided among the men. The independent scouts seemed to take their cues from their namesake, even after his death. In the following pages of his diary Kinne recaps, with no small amount of admiration, the winding career of Young, who had served as an Army scout in the Nez Perce War, prospected in Montana and California, served as a captain of the King's Guard in Korea, organized a mining company in China, fought for the Chinese in the First Sino-Japanese War, before heading to the Philippines to prospect for gold.⁴⁰⁵ It's hard to imagine a man more enmeshed in the overlapping networks of colonialism, imperialism, and global capitalism at the turn of the century. Young's tenure in the Philippines helps to connect the Philippines-American War to continental US colonialism in the nineteenth century, and demonstrates the persistence that discourses of "Indian fighting" exercised in a supposedly post-frontier US culture.

By June of 1899, John Kinne, the rest of the 1st North Dakota, and many of the other young men who had volunteered for the Spanish-American War were nearing the end of their service in the Philippines. However, the war was far from over. Kinne and several of his fellows spent their final month on the outskirts of Manilla attempting to root out persistent Filipino revolutionary forces and guerillas on the Morong peninsula. Many of the men in Young's Scouts had been reassigned back to their original regiments with assurances that they would get "special mention to the secretary of war." The soldiers of the 1st North Dakota who had been in Young's Scouts were promptly chosen as scouts for their old regiment, a clear indication that these men

⁴⁰⁴ "John B. Kinne Diary," 61.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid

had built a reputation in just a few short months. For Kinne this was a welcome assignment as it promised a relief from the more onerous guard duties and the opportunity for increased freedom. Kinne seems to have taken advantage. The final pages of his journal juxtapose a sometimes holiday-like atmosphere alongside a series of tense firefights. On several occasions Kinne goes duck hunting and canoeing on the nearby lake, but the scouts also lost their third commander of the war, J.H. Killian, during a skirmish in early June (Young's successor, J.E. Thornton, had been reassigned earlier).⁴⁰⁶

As the 1st North Dakota and other volunteer regiments prepared to return home to the United States, the War Department appointed J. Franklin Bell, a rising star in the Army, commander of the 36th US Volunteer Infantry, the first of the new volunteer regiments in the Philippines. Bell was given permission to recruit officers and soldiers already in the Philippines, and Kinne notes on June 20th that "Bell came out from Manilla looking for recruits for his regiment of sharpshooters." It is likely no coincidence that Bell targeted the 1st North Dakota, a unit that had contributed many soldiers to Young's Scouts. Bell was a similarly offensive-minded officer who, like Lawton, was a veteran of the Indian Wars. He would go on to organize his own scouting units that served in ways similar to Young's Scouts. They performed reconnaissance, advanced ahead of troop columns, and conducted search-and-destroy missions.⁴⁰⁷ Bell's later campaigns in the Philippines are celebrated by contemporary military historians as some of the most effective examples of counterinsurgency warfare in US military history, a lineage that grew out of Lawton's use of Young's Scouts.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁶ "John B. Kinne Diary," 69-72.

⁴⁰⁷ Edgar F. Raines, "Major General J. Franklin Bell, U.S.A.: The Education of a Soldier, 1856-1899," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 83, no. 4 (1985): 315-46, 340-343.

⁴⁰⁸ Ramsey III, *A Masterpiece of Counterinsurgency Warfare*.

At least one of the men in Kinne's regiment that had also served in the scouts, James McIntyre, put in for a transfer to Bell's new regiment. Kinne, anxious to return home to North Dakota, chose not to. On June 22nd, after several more days spent duck hunting, Kinne narrates the final firefight of his time in the Philippines with a more literary voice:

The next day a few of the scouts were out and shot at some natives who were crossing an opening, stirring up a regular hornets nest of them. The rest hurriedly went out to where they were and we got a few very good shots at the "Gugus." They dropped a few pretty close to us but none of us were hit... We heard the war whoop [sic] of the Filipinos. It was a long drawn out oh---ah---oh, and sounded savage enough echoing and re-echoing among the hills and valleys around.⁴⁰⁹

It is clear when reading Kinne's journal that Indians were never far from his mind during his deployment to the Philippines, and this final skirmish fittingly ends with a savage war-whoop that echoes through the hills and valleys. The casual way in which he describes "shooting at some Natives" capture both the uncertainties of the guerilla warfare that was coming to define the conflict, and the dynamics of US imperial violence in which Filipino people, ostensibly the beneficiaries of the United States' benevolent assimilation, found themselves under a general threat of violence. The "Oh---ah---Oh" that seems to have sent a shiver down Kinne's spine, capturing the feeling of savage warfare, demonstrates one final time that US soldiers in the Philippines often narrated their experiences as an "Indian War." This chapter has shown that an exploration of the interaction between imperial culture and military violence allows us to see the connections between the violence of US settler-colonialism and the Philippines-American War. "Indian fighting" was not the only lens through which US soldiers understood their time in the Philippines, but it was prominent and powerful, able to enmesh the soldiers in one of the United States' most enduring narratives about violence. Lawton's strategies and tactics, most prominently the creation of Young's Scouts, were the product of material conditions,

⁴⁰⁹ "John B. Kinne Diary," 69-72.

institutional training, and these very cultural ideas: the discourse that framed the war in “frontier” terms. These are the narratives and stories that influence and define US militarism on the global scale. They have not gone away, and the war and occupation of the Philippines was one of the first conflicts that cemented “Indian fighting” as an important structuring narrative of US military violence.

Chapter 4. Narrating Empire in Global Indian Country

Introduction

“Savage warfare was never more beautiful than in you.”

- Charles King

Arizona Territory, November 1st, 1874. Twenty-Five or so men of the 5th US Cavalry are relaxing, trying to find some shade from the oppressive heat. They are chasing a group of Tonto Apache who ran off a herd of cattle and killed a settler before fleeing into the mountainous Black Mesa region. Their leader, First Lieutenant Charles King, has reconnoitered ahead with some Apache scouts. The second in command, Lieutenant George Eaton, relaxes with a copy of James Fennimore Cooper’s *Last of the Mohicans*, an iconic portrayal of Native people in American literature. Cooper’s novels, which center on the woodsman Natty Bumppo, otherwise known as Hawkeye or Leatherstocking, would have resonated with men like Eaton serving on the front line of the Indian Wars. At the core of Cooper’s novels was an anxiety over the degeneration of frontiersmen into uncivilized denizens of nature. Although such men were necessary to the colonial process, they were, according to Cooper, dangerous, in too-close contact with an undeveloped wilderness and the Native people that inhabited it.⁴¹⁰ Cooper’s frontiersmen could be admired for their Indian-like skills but they were a vanishing breed, much like the Indians, and had to step aside and make room for civilization. As he reclined in the shade and read Cooper’s story Eaton may have imagined himself as the inheritor of Leatherstocking’s legacy, a skilled warrior that had shed the rough buckskin of the frontiersman and replaced it with the

⁴¹⁰ Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence; the Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 484-493.

professionalism of the modern Army, able to challenge Indian warriors on their own ground without sacrificing the trappings of civilization.

Perhaps he was reading the passage where Huron warriors led by the novel's antagonist Magua ambush a column of British soldiers. Suddenly Eaton heard a few scattered shots from the direction King had taken, followed by an eruption of gunfire. He quickly gathered his troops and rushed towards the shooting, finding a badly injured King being carried, under fire, by Sergeant Bernard Taylor.⁴¹¹ Eaton's literary repose had turned into the real thing. While scouting, King had encountered the hostile Tonto Apache, who shot several arrows at King, one slicing the flesh near his left eye. Gunfire followed the arrows, which King answered, hitting one of the Apaches hidden among the rocks. However, as he tried to reload King was struck in the right arm and was forced to make a haphazard retreat, his injured arm dangling uselessly at his side. Sergeant Taylor would eventually find the wounded King and, ignoring his superior officer's orders to leave him to his fate, struggled down the mountain where he was eventually met by Eaton and the rest of the command.⁴¹² Taylor earned a Medal of Honor for his rescue, and King earned an injury that would trouble him for the rest of his military career.

Eaton's story about reading *The Last of the Mohicans* before an ambush blurs the line between the literary and the real. Out of moments like this the conflicts known as the Indian Wars have blossomed into one of the most enduring cultural tropes of US history, proliferating in literature, film, television, video games, sports, and more. Charles King, the man Eaton rescued that day in Arizona, was integral to the process of translating the violence of settler-colonialism into a flexible and mobile discourse and imprinting it on American culture. Part of the reason

⁴¹¹ Charles King, "Indians and Two Young Lieutenants" *New York Herald Tribune Magazine*, August 3, 1924, Elmo Scott Watson Papers, Box 22 Folder 204, Newberry Library.

⁴¹² Don Russell and Paul L Hedren, *Campaigning with King: Charles King, Chronicler of the Old Army* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 49-51.

that “Indian Country” and the “savages” that inhabit it have shown up in almost every US conflict, from the Philippines to Vietnam to Iraq, is because of men like Charles King. King was both a soldier and chronicler of empire. He fought in the continental US and the Philippines and turned that experience into a collection of stories that helped to influence the Western genre. Through writers like King, Indians, and the soldiers they fought, became one of the central images of US militarism, a symbiotic discourse that has continued to structure how the United States has viewed enemies and its own soldiers.

Born into a military family in 1844, King graduated from West Point in 1866 and was stationed in New Orleans during Reconstruction. In 1874 King was transferred to the 5th US Cavalry and joined them in Arizona Territory, beginning a period of frontier service that would spawn his literary career.⁴¹³ King participated in George Crook’s campaigns against the Apache in the southwest and later joined the general on the northern plains for the large-scale operation targeting the Lakota, Cheyenne, and their allies in 1876, the same campaign that resulted in the defeat of Custer’s 7th Cavalry at the Little Bighorn. There King witnessed his lifelong friend “Buffalo Bill” Cody in action as a scout for the 5th Cavalry and participated in several famous fights, perhaps most notably the fight at Warbonnet Creek where Cody would claim he “took the first scalp for Custer” in a fight with Cheyenne warrior Yellow Hair.⁴¹⁴

The fight with the Tonto Apache in November of 1874 would leave King with a lasting injury to his arm, but he remained in the army until 1879 when the pain finally forced him to retire. After his discharge King joined the Wisconsin National Guard, taught military science at

⁴¹³ C. E Dornbusch and National Library of Australia, *Charles King, American Army Novelist; a Bibliography from the Collection of the National Library of Australia, Canberra* (Cornwallville: Hope Farm Press, 1963), Foreword.

⁴¹⁴ John W Bailey, *The Life and Works of General Charles King, 1844-1933: Martial Spirit* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 96-97. King would defend Buffalo Bill’s claim to have killed Dog Soldier chief Tall Bull and Cheyenne chief Yellow Hair for the rest of his life, calling one book that called the showman’s narrative into question “mendacious and malicious reports.” Charles King, “Fighter, 84, Goes To Clear Name of Buffalo Bill,” *Chicago Daily News*, 1929, Elmo Scott Watson Papers, Box 22 Folder 204, Newberry Library.

the University of Wisconsin, and began a writing career to earn extra money. However, his military service would continue in 1898 with the onset of the Spanish-American War, when he was commissioned as a Brigadier General of Volunteers and commanded a brigade during the early stages of the US occupation of the Philippines. In 1904 King returned to the National Guard and would remain involved until 1931 when he finally retired, two years before his death in 1933.⁴¹⁵ During his life King wrote more than 60 books, mainly dealing with frontier violence, Army life, the Civil War, and the Spanish-American War. His writing has not entered the canon of great American literature, with its cumbersome focus on sentimental love stories and valiant frontier soldiers. However, his influence on the Western genre has been significant. Owen Wister, largely credited as the father of the Western, wrote that King “opened for us the door upon frontier military life.”⁴¹⁶ Where writers like Wister mythologized the cowboy, King made the soldiers of the regular Army his focus, valorizing the men who fought in the Civil War, Indian Wars, and the Spanish-American War. King also influenced the early days of film. In 1911 he sold the rights to several of his novels, and in the 1920’s four more of his books were adapted to film. King even collaborated with Buffalo Bill on his series of Indian Wars films, serving as a screen-writer.⁴¹⁷ Through his writing King helped cement the Indian wars as an enduring literary construction. But unlike most who wrote about those conflicts King actually fought in them, and because he fought overseas in the Philippines his writing forms a bridge across which the tropes of frontier violence migrated overseas, where they developed into a central metaphor for US military violence. King was one of the most prominent examples of US soldiers narrating their overseas experiences as Indian warfare.

⁴¹⁵ Bailey, *The Life and Works*, 240.

⁴¹⁶ Dornbusch, *Charles King*, iii.

⁴¹⁷ Bailey, *The Life and Works*, 226-228.

This chapter will follow King's writing from Arizona to the Philippines, exploring the ways in which soldiers like King framed their experience as agents of US empire through references to frontier violence. In King's writing Native people are positioned as the iconic enemies of US expansion, and are then translated into a mobile set of representations that are applied to a range of enemies, foreign and domestic. Jodi Byrd has argued that "Indianness" functions as a transit of empire, a set of ideas, discourses and practices that translate colonized subjects into "Indians" in order to justify the spread of US empire. Following Byrd, this chapter will show how Indianness (and Indian fighting) became a vehicle for the spread of US military violence, the lens through which US soldiers understood their enemies and themselves. These colonial continuities are used, in King's writing, to justify the policies of the Philippines-American war, a war that is now remembered, particularly in the US military, as the most successful counterinsurgency in American history.⁴¹⁸ This chapter charts these continuities through space and time, showing how King can move, for example, from justifying colonization by describing the horror of Apache torture, to later justifying US troop's use of torture through references to the colonization of Native people. I will begin with King's early writing before moving overseas to the Philippines, charting the author's relationship to the controversies that accompanied the United States' first sustained, overseas counterinsurgency.

Imagining Apacheria

Unsurprisingly, King's fight at Sunset Pass, which led to the injury which forced him to begin a writing career, looms large in his canon. He first wrote about the fight in a short story in his collection *Starlight Ranch*, and would later write an entire novel about an Apache ambush titled *Sunset Pass*. The Apaches who fought on both sides that day at Sunset Pass became the

⁴¹⁸ Bill Putnam, "COIN Lessons Ignored: The Philippines Campaign (1899-1902)," *Small Wars Journal* Volume 9, Number 10 (May 22, 2013).

focus of many of King's novels; increasingly they appear as the specters that haunt the edges of civilization, invisible up to the moment they attack, shadows of violence that could manifest in actual Apache people but also in Mexicans and Filipinos. The Indians of his writing became increasingly abstracted over the course of King's career, serving as flexible antagonists that could be transposed onto other groups of people and transported overseas, a literary companion to US empire.

Charles King first explored the fight that resulted in his injury in a short story titled, "The Worst Man in the Troop," in the collection *Starlight Ranch*. The story features fictionalized soldiers that undergo a pursuit and fight nearly identical to the one King and the 5th Cavalry experienced in 1874. In the story King's Yuma Apache scouts are fearful and timid, unwilling to do their jobs and fleeing at the first sign of trouble. Perhaps they were simply unwilling to walk into an obvious ambush, but it allows King's narrative to focus on the exploits of the soldiers. The story is straightforward, with the Tonto Apache ambush suddenly revealed in the form of an arrow "photographed as by electricity on the retina." Mr. Billings, the fictional King, returns fire and sustains the same arm wound that interrupted King's real career. As he attempts to escape, the maligned sergeant O'Grady, the "worst man in the troop," rescues the fictional King and carries him down the mountain. Once they meet up with their reinforcements, the hostile Apache are swept away and the story ends. In the narrative the fight is largely a device that allows Sergeant O'Grady to put to rest his bad reputation and prove his worth. King retells the fight in straightforward and literal terms, but he would later resurrect the story in the form of a novel.

In *Sunset Pass* King utilizes his experiences fighting Apaches to develop a far more embellished narrative. The story centers on Captain Gwynne, a widower, and his children Ned and Nellie. The family is headed back east to Pennsylvania from Arizona Territory accompanied

by their nurse “Irish Kate,” their driver, an African American man known only as “Jim,” a “swarthy Mexican” named Manuelito in charge of the mules, and a retired soldier named Pike. King’s characters conform to the racist stereotypes of the day, the brave Captain Gwynne and Pike contrasting to the cowardly Manuelito, the crass “Irish Kate,” and the lazy “darkey Jim.” However, even the characters that King maligns in his writing get to stand together with the white settlers in their opposition to the Native threat. The small party is stalked and ambushed by a hostile group of Apache who force a final confrontation in a cave. Captain Gwynne and Jim barely manage to hold them off before they are rescued from their last stand by US soldiers.⁴¹⁹

In *Sunset Pass* King’s Apache begin to take on their exaggerated literary form. US soldiers had a respect for Apache martial skills mixed with a widespread belief in their racial inferiority, and in King’s writing these two traits combined to begin to form the mythic image of the “Apache,” a literary figure that would take on a ponderous cultural weight, overshadowing the experiences and struggles of actual Apache people. They became one of the quintessential and enduring figures of insurgency. King’s Apache are at times dirty, then sleek. They are crafty and calculating, but they do not “have sense enough” to rush the cave and use their superior numbers to overwhelm the defenders. In the novel “no human being on earth can follow an enemy like an Apache.”⁴²⁰ These expert trackers pin down Gwynne’s party and capture Manuelito, who they proceed to torture. They dance and sing a “devil-inspired chant,” burning Manuelito with “jeering laughter and fiendish yells.” Their “savage song” drowns out Manuelito’s shrieks, after which they turn their attention to the trapped family.⁴²¹ Gwynne, Pike,

⁴¹⁹ Charles King, *Starlight Ranch, and Other Stories of Army Life on the Frontier*. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1890), 229-233.

⁴²⁰ Charles King, *Sunset Pass; or, Running the Gauntlet through Apache Land*, (New York: John W. Lovell Company, 1890), 70.

⁴²¹ King, *Sunset Pass*, 122-123.

and Jim spare their family a similarly barbaric fate by holding on until reinforcements arrive. Even Gwynne's young son manages to kill an Apache attacker, yelling "papa, I shot an Indian," and earning the admiration of the soldiers.⁴²² The novel makes clear that the Apache are a threat looming at the edges of civilization, but one that can be overcome by individual bravery and the constant presence of the US Army. Like most literary Indians these Apaches are powerful, frightening, and exist to be killed. Every character, even the youngest, gets a shot.

King would further develop his literary Apache in *Foes in Ambush*, written two years after *Sunset Pass*. Having already covered the dynamics of an Apache attack, *Foes in Ambush* turns the Apache into a universal threat. The story centers on the robbery of an Army paymaster and the kidnapping of the daughters of a prominent settler by Mexican bandits, the Morales gang, although Apaches continuously lurk at the edges of the story as possible culprits. They have become, in King's writing, the benchmark against which frontier violence is measured, a shadowy threat more so than a literal menace as in *Sunset Pass*. Much of the novel takes place at night to escape the Arizona heat, Apaches being the only humans "impervious to the fierceness of its rays." They are "no more human than so many hyenas," and the novel's characters are constantly looking over their shoulders expecting them to attack. Even once it becomes clear that the Morales gang of Mexican bandits are responsible for the theft and kidnapping they are measured against the Apache.⁴²³

Midway through the story the Morales gang attacks a settlement where US soldiers are sheltering. The soldiers manage to fight off the initial attack and the Mexicans are transformed, through their subversion of civilized warfare, into Indians:

And then it was that the inhuman brute gave the order to resort to Indian methods, and even old Moreno begged and pleaded and blasphemed all to no purpose. Furious at their

⁴²² King, *Sunset Pass*, 202.

⁴²³ Charles King, *Foes in Ambush* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1895), 5, 74, 92.

repulse, the band were ready to obey their leader's maddest wish. The word was "burn them out."⁴²⁴

From the moment the Morales gang resort to "Indian methods" they are marked off in the story as unredeemable. They leave the settlement in ruins and begin a haphazard flight for the safety of their hideout. The remaining soldiers, anxious to rescue the captives and avenge those killed by the bandits, promise vengeance. One soldier remarks that "it's worse than Apaches, lieutenant, and there'll be no use trying to restrain our fellows when we catch the blackguards." By resorting to "Apache" methods the bandits have forfeited the privileges of civilized restraint and will now be dealt with harshly. King's narration makes it clear that if the gang had stopped at the murder of a several soldiers few in Arizona or Mexico would have made a great effort to stop them. It is the attack on white womanhood and the adoption of Indian methods which renders them fully irredeemable: "But in the deed of rapine that made them the captors and possessors of those defenceless sisters each man had put a price upon his head, a halter round his neck, for 'Gringo' and 'Greaser,' American and Mexican alike, would spring to arms to rescue and avenge."⁴²⁵

Although the story largely pits Mexicans against US soldiers and citizens, the transformation of the Morales gang into "Apaches" unites the two sides of the border, bringing them together to face the Indian threat, real or otherwise. They remain Apaches for the rest of the story, "scattering like Apaches" when the soldiers overtake them and recover the captive women. Here is one of the first steps in a mobile Apache discourse that could be applied to Mexicans, and later Filipinos, Iraqi soldiers, and even members of Al Qaeda.

As the bandits are chased towards the Mexican border a small group of soldiers, as well as the rescued daughters, take shelter in the all-too-familiar mountain cave. Despite having firmly established the Mexican bandits as the antagonists King continues to dangle the threat of

⁴²⁴ King, *Foes in Ambush*, 98.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid*, 128-130.

Apache attack. Sergeant Wing, a hero of the story, fears that “unseen Indians would come skulking, spying, ‘snaking’ upon their refuge.”⁴²⁶ Smoke signals are observed in the desert, and the anxiety of the group begins to grow about the possibility of an Apache attack. Wing rides out to protect some soldiers separated from the main group, observed crossing the desert, sure that there are Apaches lurking in the rocks, and is predictably ambushed and injured by gunfire. “Blindly he searched for dusky Apache skulking from rock to rock,” but all he sees are men on horseback, not the expected Apache threat. Again, using an Apache bait and switch, other members of the Morales gang attacked the soldiers, one of whom was a relative of sergeant Wing. Again and again the reader is told to expect Apache violence, only to have that expectation subverted.

In the final moments of the story it is almost as if King is unable to help himself, inserting an Apache attack that has no relationship to the overall plot. Having alluded to an Apache threat throughout, the feared Indians finally make an appearance at the end, serving to unite soldiers and criminals against the common indigenous foe. The “fury of the Apaches” descends on those trapped in the cave, “savage war” ensues, and one of the Mexican captives pleads for release: “Senor Teniente, I pray you unloose me and let me help. The Apache is our common enemy.”⁴²⁷ Together the US soldiers and Mexican bandits hold off these Apaches that have materialized out of the desert to hijack the story’s narrative. As in *Sunset Pass*, a last stand is made in the entrance to a cave, and just when hope seems lost and the Apaches set fire to the cave entrance the group is rescued by the US Army, the Mexican traitor having redeemed himself by giving his life in the defense. In the end, it was always Apaches, no matter who was

⁴²⁶ King, *Foes in Ambush*, 187.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid*, 213-217.

threatening King's characters. This would hold true, even when King left the continental US behind at the end of the nineteenth century.

Authoring Empire

In early 1899 Charles King returned from a short deployment to the Philippines. His health had forced the general to make an early exit from that conflict, and on his way home to Milwaukee he stopped off at Chicago and talked to a reporter from the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. King argued that the US should send an additional 60,000 troops to the islands, a force that would enable General Otis “to crush out anything approaching organized opposition.” Predicting a lingering guerilla conflict, King extolled the virtue of a particular subset of soldiers that had been under his command: “I want to say a word for the Western volunteers. Three regiments of them were in my command—the First Washington, the First California, and the First Idaho. Better soldiers the world never saw. They were uniformly cheerful in the face of most discouraging conditions, and never failed to show dash and gallantry.”⁴²⁸ It is unsurprising that these westerners resonated with King, the author of so many works of Western and frontier fiction. The mystique of Indian Fighting clung to these men, just like it had clung to the men in Young's Scouts, imprinted not just on the American military imagination but on their physical bodies. King, recounting the fighting around Manilla at the start of the conflict, remembered one officer “who had already won a name for daring and skill in the face of a savage enemy. A Sioux bullet at the bloody fight at Wounded Knee eight years ago drove fragments of his watch through his body, but in no way impaired his efficiency or daunted his nerve.”⁴²⁹ Like his superior officer Henry Lawton, King expected his western soldiers to perform in the Philippines. They must

⁴²⁸ “GEN. CHARLES KING HERE,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 29, 1899.

⁴²⁹ Charles King, “Among the Blood-Stained Trenches in the Philippines: The Famous Military Novelist, Captain Charles King, Who Has Written Such Fascinating Fiction About Fighters, Now Tells Thrilling New Tales and Deeds of Daring of Our Men in the Philippines.” *The Atlanta Constitution*, May 14, 1899.

have, for King would not only sing their praises in the press, but continue his literary arc by penning several novels that take place in the Philippines, novels that continued his interest in Western themes.

King's writing after he returned from the Philippines bridges continental US expansion and the overseas colonialism of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In his novels King emphasizes the Indian-fighting lineage of the soldiers who find themselves in the Philippines. These warriors had honed their skills "in the hardy, eventful and vigorous life of the Indian frontier."⁴³⁰ In one of his novels, a group of American soldiers are caught in an ambush, and a frantic officer yells out "Those fellows have had no Indian campaigning or they'd have never got into such a box."⁴³¹ The literary King needed "Indians" to face his newly transnational Indian fighters. In an article he wrote for *The Atlanta Constitution*, King reflected on the racial character of Filipino people, "fanatical as the turk," "more superstitious than the negro," sneaky, half child and half devil. However, this mishmash of racist caricatures was secondary to King's primary interest in Filipinos: their fighting prowess. And on that topic, King notes that Filipinos were "an enemy as utterly without conscience and as full of treachery as our Arizona Apache."⁴³² This was a comparative framework King would continue. Indeed, Indians, and specifically Apaches, became a lens through which King's experiences in the Philippines were refracted when he composed his novels.

In *Found in the Philippines*, (which he wasted no time on, beginning to write on the voyage home), which is largely concerned with a convoluted love story, King also narrates the beginning of the Filipino military resistance to the US occupation. As the first shots are fired

⁴³⁰ Charles King, *Found in the Philippines: The Story of a Woman's Letters* (New York: F.T. Neely, 1899), 52-53.

⁴³¹ Charles King, *The Further Story of Lieutenant Sandy Ray* (New York: R.F. Fenno & Company, 1906), 285.

⁴³² King, "Among the Blood-Stained Trenches."

around Manila, US troops faced “thickets of bamboo that fairly swarmed with Insurgents.” They possessed an “Indian-like skill in concealment” that frustrates the US soldiers.⁴³³ But King also began to consolidate and advance a new argument that was, according to Richard Slotkin and others, actually very old: that soldiers themselves could be caught up in the imaginative world of colonial representation. King denigrates Filipinos and calls them “little brown men,” and thinks of the so-called “insurgents” as Indians. But King noticed—and imagined—the ways that US soldiers were *also* beginning to assume an imagined “Indianness.” During a tense battle near the end of *Found in the Philippines* a group of US soldiers is pinned down by Filipino fire. They attempt to charge the Filipino position, “yelling like Apaches,” and the story’s hero (whose father once commanded at Fort Apache in Arizona) is lost in the chaos, sustaining an injury that he barely notices in the fury of the attack.⁴³⁴ “Apache” had become an increasingly flexible descriptor in King’s writing, appropriate for limited use to describe the more audacious actions of US soldiers.

This connection between continental expansion and the war in the Philippines was based in King’s lived experience. He commanded troops in both contexts, and understood his time in both arenas as linked. In the Philippines he was a Brigadier General in the First Brigade of the First Division, serving under Henry Ware Lawton. King celebrated Lawton as “our famous Indian campaigner,” someone that the “old frontier cavalry swore by.”⁴³⁵ King’s troops were volunteers and militia from western states like Colorado, the Dakotas, Montana, Nebraska, Kansas, and more, men who had lived through conflicts and wars with Native nations.⁴³⁶ King even saved a newspaper article about his service in the Philippines which made that connection

⁴³³ King, *Found in the Philippines*, 277.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 284-287.

⁴³⁵ Charles King, “Memories of a Busy Life,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 6, no. 1 (1922): 3–39, 29-30.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

explicit: “Captain Charles King’s heroes fought Sioux, Apaches, and other barbarous foes, always against powerful odds, and always with triumph. The accounts from Manila indicate that he can enact the fighting parts he has been so fond of creating on paper.” It even relays an episode in which King lead an assault similar to what the officers in another of King’s novels, *Comrades in Arms*, hoped to unleash: “The dark-skinned Natives, who outnumbered his brigade, were not unlike Apaches or Sioux, and General King was not unlike the fighting heroes of his books. He charged the Filipinos and drove them into the Pasig river.”⁴³⁷ This was a battle in the earliest stages of the war, on the outskirts of Manila, and it was one of the bloodiest of the entire conflict. As the newspaper account makes clear, the Indian Wars were the imaginative frame through which Americans interpreted the service of men like King while they fought in the Philippines. King later remembered the fight as a short and violent affair in which “little mercy was shown” to the overrun Filipinos where the fighting was hottest. Many Filipino soldiers were driven into the river to drown or be shot in the back. Hundreds of Filipino soldiers were killed, hundreds more captured, and a surrendered general told King that the Americans were relentless in a way that the Filipino soldiers were unaccustomed to. The battle launched King, Lawton, MacArthur, and the rest of the US soldiers in the Philippines into the aggressive initial campaign, a campaign that would come under increasing criticism after King left the islands.⁴³⁸

King seems to use frequent references to the Indian Wars to make the patterns of guerilla warfare in the Philippines feel more familiar to his readers. In *A Conquering Corps Badge, and Other Stories of the Philippines*, Filipino tactics and the Army’s response are compared to what King calls “the old time Indian business.” An aging officer named Major Bellingham, returning

⁴³⁷ “Captain King Fights as Well As Writes,” Rufus and Charles King Collection, accessed March 21, 2017, <http://archives.carrollu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/King/id/1149>.

⁴³⁸ King, “Memories,” 26-29.

from a scout through the countryside, is ambushed by Filipino revolutionaries who surround the Americans and shoot them to death. At this point King gives the readers a familiar, and oft-criticized, pattern from nineteenth century military policy on the frontier: “Then came the old time Indian business over again. Cross went out to ‘pursue and punish;’ gave the poor mutilated remains Christian burial; sent a scrawl to Coates bidding him break the news to Mrs.

Bellingham, that the major's remains would hardly bear transportation, and to look sharp to his own sentries lest the Tagals give him a touch of the same treatment.”⁴³⁹ The “old Indian business” refers to the frustrations of frontier officers, who viewed themselves as caught between encroaching settlement and Native peoples, forever reacting to Native attacks with punitive columns of soldiers.

These complaints betray a deeper effect of settler-colonialism: the tensions between elimination and incorporation embodied in the military’s multiple roles as a force of conquest and an apparatus of governance. Military policies thus occur in a liminal space between waging war and punishing crimes, King’s “old Indian business” of forever chasing after Native ambushers and raiders. In an 1869 letter from General Philip Sheridan to one of his subordinate officers, Benjamin Grierson, Sheridan complains about Comanche, Kiowa, and Kiowa-Apache raids into Texas. He instructs Grierson to hang anyone guilty of murder and arrest those guilty of robbery, and offers an appraisal of Indian policy: “The trouble heretofore with Indians has been caused by the absence of all punishment for crimes committed against the settlements. No people, especially those in a savage state, can be expected to behave themselves where there are no laws providing punishment for crimes.”⁴⁴⁰ This is the sort of attitude King is tapping into in *A*

⁴³⁹ Charles King, *A Conquering Corps Badge, and Other Stories of the Philippines*. (Milwaukee: L.A. Rhodes Company, 1902), 16.

⁴⁴⁰ Philip Henry Sheridan, “Sheridan, Philip H. to B.H. Grierson,” February 23, 1869. Benjamin Grierson Papers, Box 3 Folder 117. Newberry Library.

Conquering Corps Badge, the colonizer's frustration in being unable to enforce an imperial normalcy combined with an unwillingness to concede the martial legitimacy of Native resistance. There is, according to King, nothing else to do but bury the bodies and once more chase down the duplicitous "Amigos" who feign sympathy to the American occupation only to rise up at the slightest opportunity.

King plays with and reinforces some of the gendered aspects of colonialism in his Philippines stories. He contrasts the wives of US Army officers, and the tempering they received along the US frontier, with Filipino men, as a mechanism of racialized emasculation in *A Conquering Corps Badge*. When a US occupied town faces the threat of Filipino revolutionary resistance, Miss Bellingham, the focus of the stories love triangle, is more than prepared for Filipino violence: "Army girls, frontier bred as are most of them, have seen too much of the American savage to scare easily at the puny Malay. Bessie Bellingham had been one of the best shots with a little Smith & Wesson in old days at Fort Custer. She had a heavier pistol now and well knew how to use it."⁴⁴¹ Native "savages" are used as a contrast to the Filipinos of King's story. And while the white women in his novels tend to conform to the gendered and genteel norms of the period, largely serving as passive love interests for his fictional soldiers, King does not hesitate to mobilize their participation in military settler-colonialism as a way to further racialize Filipino men as cowardly, diminutive, and weak.

The threat that Indian men supposedly held for white womanhood found its way into *Captured: The Story of Sandy Ray*, in which Gertrude, a white woman, is threatened with the possibility of being captured by Filipinos. Her companion, the soldier Sandy Ray, watches as "in her dilating eyes there came a look of infinite horror, of dread unspeakable." As their enemies

⁴⁴¹ King, *A Conquering Corps Badge*, 29.

draw closer Gertrude throws herself at Sandy's feet and begs him for a knife. Confused, the soldier protests that he could never take on that many men with a single knife. "Oh, can't you understand... Mrs. Blake told me – your regiment – never let a woman fall into the hands of the Indians. Isn't this as – as horrible? Oh, you will not! You shall not!"⁴⁴² The infinite horror – the sexual threat of non-white men, serves as a linkage in King's story between continental expansion and the occupation of the Philippines. In both contexts, the presumed racial inferiority of Native people and Filipinos justified US expansion and occupation, and specifically justified colonial violence. Filipino sexuality as a threat would in turn refract *back* to the United States in the twentieth century. Anti-immigrant violence against Filipinos was driven in part by the "racial-sexual threat" that Filipino men supposedly posed to white women. Amy Kaplan has shown how the "anarchy of empire" causes disruption and change in the metropole as much it does on the colonial periphery, but King's writing narrates this process as a three-step transference, where frontier racism travels overseas only to travel back to the continental United States, reformulated through overseas colonialism.⁴⁴³

Using the Indian Wars to Justify Torture

Even the more controversial violence of the Philippines campaign is filtered through a frontier lens in King's writing. In *Comrades In Arms* the story follows a group of soldiers from their posting near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in 1897 to the Philippines. Once overseas, the men encounter the "savage" violence that they no longer find in the west. The Native people in King's story are now pacified, the soldiers only needing to "keep a fatherly eye on them." One of the story's antagonists even considers using "the renegade Sioux" to run off a

⁴⁴² Charles King, *Captured; the Story of Sandy Ray* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1906), 268-271.

⁴⁴³ Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, & the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 407-410; Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 11.

woman attempting to extort money, but rejects the plan as “ever since Wounded Knee they had been timorous.” Gone are the dangerous, skulking Indians of King’s frontier-era stories. Instead, King uses these scared and pacified Sioux as a contrast to the “swarthy throng” of the overseas foe.⁴⁴⁴ The safety King’s soldiers experience in Dakota Territory contrasts to the danger they face in the Philippines. As the soldiers in *Comrades in Arms* work to justify the increasingly harsh measures they employ, the reader is reminded that they travelled overseas from a territory marked by exceptional violence that had effectively ended Native resistance. Indeed, *Comrades in Arms* turns into an impassioned defense of the more brutal elements of the US occupation.

Comrades in Arms chronicles the transition from the initial, more conventional campaign of the US troops in the Philippines to the guerilla warfare that began in late 1899 and spread throughout the islands. King participated in the initial campaign, but he observed the later years of the occupation from a distance. He uses the story in *Comrades in Arms* to address the charges of excess, torture, and illegality that slowly began to filter into the American press and government. Ultimately the story becomes a defense of torture and American counterinsurgency policy, a defense that King undertakes through a comparison to continental colonialism and the Indian Wars.

The Army worked hard to censor the press in the Philippines, and largely succeeded in keeping descriptions of torture, murder, and property destruction away from the American public until 1902, when the war (or at least the official version of the war) was nearly over. Anti-imperialist groups and politicians made sporadic efforts to document abuses and disseminate them, but President McKinley, and later President Theodore Roosevelt, along with Secretary of

⁴⁴⁴ Charles King, *Comrades in Arms: A Tale of Two Hemispheres*. (New York: The Hobart Company, 1904), 106, 227, 280.

War Elihu Root, vigorously defended the US military's conduct in the Philippines.⁴⁴⁵ In February of 1902 Root informed the United States Senate Committee on the Philippines that most reports of atrocities had been either “unfounded or grossly exaggerated.” He went on to justify what he argued were sporadic instances of illegal conduct by US troops by attacking Filipino conduct during the war:

The war on the part of the Filipinos has been conducted with the barbarous cruelty common among uncivilized races, and with general disregard of the rules of civilized warfare... That the soldiers fighting against such an enemy, and with their own eyes witnessing such deeds, should occasionally be regardless of their orders and retaliated by unjustifiable severities is not incredible... The War in the Philippines has been conducted by the American army with scrupulous regard for the rules of civilized warfare, with careful and genuine consideration for the prisoner and the noncombatant, with self-restraint, and with humanity.⁴⁴⁶

Root is attempting to have it both ways: US troops had conducted themselves legally and with restraint, but even if there *had* been instances of “unjustifiable severities” they were, in fact, justified by the barbarous and uncivilized nature of the Filipinos. His choice of the word “barbarous” is calculated. Root attached a copy of General Orders 100 to his report to the Philippines Commission, the document that governed the conduct of US soldiers during war, particularly with regard to prisoners and guerillas. Known as the Lieber Code, the document was careful to differentiate between the civilized warfare of the European tradition and the “barbarous armies” of “uncivilized people,” and allowed for retaliation against the “barbarous outrages” that US troops might face.⁴⁴⁷

By April of 1902 the pressure on the administration began to mount as the number of court-martials and testimony alleging atrocities and torture by US soldiers increased. In

⁴⁴⁵ Kramer, *The Blood of Government*, 145-146; Christopher J. Einolf, *America in the Philippines, 1899-1902: The First Torture Scandal* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 97-109.

⁴⁴⁶ Einolf, *America in the Philippines*, 110.

⁴⁴⁷ Francis Lieber, *Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States, in the Field* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1863).

Comrades in Arms, which was published soon after the war was officially ended, King blames the press and anti-imperialist politicians for the protracted guerilla warfare that followed the initial successes of the campaign in the Philippines. According to King, criticism of the war and the conduct of US soldiers had emboldened the Filipino resistance to the occupation. His writing echoes the frequent complaints of the frontier army and predicts the more hawkish discourses of the Vietnam War. Press, humanitarians, and a meddling government stood in the way of victory for the US military:

Then campaign orators and anti-administration papers denounced and dis owned the deeds of the soldiery; revived and restored the spirit of rebellion, and the misguided natives, hearing and permitted to hear only these treasonable vaporings, believing the nation spoke and not a bigoted few, took heart and arms again, and in many a province and many a distant isle fell upon the far-separated detachments, oftentimes with fatal effect. Here the story is mirroring reality, as Filipino revolutionaries had tried, unsuccessfully, to intensify the war in order to influence the election of 1900 which pitted the incumbent pro-imperialist William McKinley against the anti-imperialist populist William Jennings Bryan. According to *Comrades in Arms* these criticisms had “incited the Filipino to renewed and desperate effort.” King even blames anti-imperialists for the death of Henry Lawton, who died in battle in December of 1899: “Lawton had died in December, pierced by a bullet, as he himself had expressed it, that might as well have been aimed by one of his own people.”⁴⁴⁸ These excoriations of anti-imperialist sentiment are combined with racialized descriptions of Filipino guerillas as “as screaming, screeching, triumphant host,” and just like the American generals who fought the war, the officers in King’s story decide to intensify the occupation.

In his novel King relates criticism of the Army directly to the frequent complaints officers in Indian Country made about eastern newspapers and reformers. For soldiers like King the enemy was not only Indians (or Filipinos), but a hostile press, meddling religious

⁴⁴⁸ King, *Comrades*, 300-301.

activists, and government intrusion into military affairs. As the Philippines campaign intensifies a soldier in the novel cautions his superior officer to reign in his more aggressive impulses.

“‘You know the orders, sir,’ said his staff officer dryly. ‘I used to think we were up against the press, the pulpit, the people, and the Indians, too, when we had our annual run for the scalp dancers, but that was a simple proposition as compared to this.’” “It isn't the men—it's the measures,” another officer responds. “It's like the orders we used to get long days ago at Laramie, when the Sioux had scalped our herders: ‘make every effort to arrest the murderers, but be sure to do nothing to excite the Indians.’”⁴⁴⁹ For these soldiers in King's story it is the Army against everyone else, called upon to do a difficult job but then criticized when they attempt to do it correctly. This was a pervasive attitude in the frontier military, one King was intimately familiar with and sympathetic to. The soldiers were willing, but held in check by half-measures.

It is hard to fathom the massacre at Wounded Knee, which King references earlier in the story, as being a half-measure.⁴⁵⁰ Nonetheless, King's fictional soldiers long for the opportunity to strike out at their Filipino enemies as they used to on the frontier. King himself longed for that opportunity. In a letter to his daughter while stationed near Manilla he wrote that US soldiers had orders to avoid all conflicts before the war broke out in early 1899. King clearly found those orders frustrating, telling his daughter that “I dare say these little Filipinos think they've got the Yankees scared half crazy – when the fact is it is galling... to keep our own tempers and our men from rushing the insurgent lines and ‘eating them up.’”⁴⁵¹ Racial superiority drove this frustration. References to Filipino men as diminutive and cowardly, along with a variety of racial

⁴⁴⁹ King, *Comrades*, 302-303.

⁴⁵⁰ Hundreds of Lakota Sioux were killed at Wounded Knee, many as they attempted to flee through the winter snow.

⁴⁵¹ “Charles King to His Daughter-Jan. 31, 1899.” Rufus and Charles King Collection,” accessed March 21, 2017, <http://archives.carrollu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/King/id/325>.

slurs, fueled the desire of US soldiers to conduct an aggressive campaign. King's desire to "eat them up" is an early iteration of the United States' military hubris, the faith that overwhelming firepower, technology, and strength can easily overwhelm any foe, a belief that guerilla fighters have been challenging since the war in the Philippines and continue to do so.

Particularly frustrating for the novel's soldiers are the dynamics of the US occupation in which Filipino guerillas move through the country unseen, embedded in the general population. US soldiers were forced to constantly patrol through the countryside and occupy towns, uncertain of the hostility of the Filipinos they encountered. King's soldiers again understand their frustrations in terms drawn from their experiences in Indian country:

You are trying to carry out your orders, but you can't, because of your instructions—the one blocking the other just as the War and Interior Departments used to keep us between two fires on the Indian frontier. You know there are hundreds of Mausers and thousands of Mauser cartridges cached somewhere in that village. You know that presidente knows all about it, too, but the only way you can prove it is to rip things to pieces until you find them, and you are forbidden to rip.⁴⁵²

In King's narrative it took actual Indian Fighters to resolve this quandary, just as real-life generals like Lawton, MacArthur, Chaffee, and King himself aggressively pursued an end to Filipino resistance. Near the end of the story the American occupation intensifies: "Then at last there began a new dispensation. New district commanders stepped into the field, some from the regulars, some from the national volunteers. They were men chosen because of certain traits of strenuous, vehement energy that had marked them in other sections and at earlier stages of the game." Colonel Langham, the story's hero, is one of these "vehement and strenuous men," molded in frontier service and happy to "rip." Now the Philippines campaign had the men it needed, men who "belonged to the heroic age when results, not means, were of first consequence." And freed from restraint, Colonel Langham and this new cohort of strenuous men

⁴⁵² King, *Comrades*, 304.

clamp down on the Filipino population in a way similar to the escalation that happened in the real Philippines war, complete with widespread destruction, death, and torture.

King describes Langham as the man who “swept the big island from end to end until he had scourged it clean,” surrounding and occupying town after town, capturing insurgent leaders and using the water cure to reveal the location of weapons caches.⁴⁵³ This was the pattern of the actual US occupation from late 1900 to 1902. Take the following example from the diary of Lieutenant Charles D. Rhodes dated January 20, 1901:

At 4:00 a.m., the troop started on a hike to San Pedro Tunasan, 2 ½ miles. Surrounded the town at a gallop, although Private Flannery, C troop, nearly spoiled things by firing a shot. Then we rounded up all males, and Major Miranda, former insurgent officer but now an informer in our pay,-- picked out a dozen as insurgents. After Miranda had administered the so-called “water-cure” to several of these, we succeeded in obtaining 3 guns, 1 revolver, 4 bolos.⁴⁵⁴

Rhodes, who was stationed on the Pine Ridge reservation in 1890 when the US Army massacred hundreds of Lakota Sioux at Wounded Knee, narrates his troop’s tactics in the Philippines in a way that evokes the Indian Wars: they surround the town at a gallop, although the surprise is nearly spoiled when someone fires an errant shot. Rhodes also notes the frequent use of the water cure in his diary, which by that point was a widespread and standard element of the counterinsurgency.

Ultimately King deploys Indian Country in this novel as a defense of torture. Colonel Langham’s tenure in the Philippines culminates in a general court martial, the main charge of which is that his troops regularly tortured Filipinos. King’s narrative describes Langham’s tactics, in one episode occupying a Filipino town and demanding intelligence from a local leader. Langham’s men administer the “water cure,” a torture technique which involves force-feeding an

⁴⁵³ King, *Comrades*, 306-309.

⁴⁵⁴ Charles Dudley Rhodes, “Diary of Charles Dudley Rhodes,” The Charles D. Rhodes Papers, 1940-1949, Box 1, United States Military Academy; Einfeld, *America in the Philippines*, 65-66.

individual an excessive amount of water until their stomach becomes distended, and then applying sudden pressure to the abdomen. The victim feels as if they are drowning and experiences pain in the stomach and internal organs from the pressure of the water.⁴⁵⁵ King goes out of his way to make the torture seem benign:

The tube of the funnel went into his mouth; cool water into the bowl of the funnel, and the presidente had either to swallow or choke. It didn't hurt; it was simply inconvenient. Few men care to be made to drink when they do not wish to. One swallow led to another, and still the presidente held out. No one further touched or hurt him. The discomfort arose from having to absorb more water than the system had room for, even after swelling visibly. When finally he began to run over, the presidente was lifted to his feet and asked very civilly would he now point out the assassins, and the ammunition?⁴⁵⁶ “Cool water” and the mere “inconvenience” of the water cure in King’s retelling attempt to portray the practice as far more benign as it was in reality. The water cure was hardly a gentle procedure. It was a mechanism of torture designed to inflict pain and coerce information, and in addition to the damage to the stomach and internal organs, could result in teeth getting knocked out and slashes and trauma to the limbs as the victim was held down.⁴⁵⁷ Langham’s methods convince the presidente to talk, and word begins to spread about these increasingly aggressive counterinsurgency tactics: “The story went swiftly from town to town that at last the Americans were led by an officer who couldn't be fooled, and who carried a funnel. The mere exhibition of that suggestive implement told further presidentes what to expect. And so ended the triumphant defiance of Samar and its modern Samaritans.” During the proceedings of the court martial King once more suggests that the victims of the water cure had “been no more than temporarily

⁴⁵⁵ Einfolf, *American in the Philippines*, 1.

⁴⁵⁶ King, *Comrades*, 318-319.

⁴⁵⁷ The Water Cure was hardly a gentle procedure. It was a mechanism of torture designed to inflict pain and coerce information, and in addition to the damage to the stomach, could result in teeth getting knocked out and slashes and trauma to the limbs as the victim was held down. Nelson A. Miles, *The Philippines Reports by Lieutenant-General Nelson A. Miles, U.S.A. Reprinted From Army and Navy Journal, May 2, 1903*, (Boston: Anti Imperialist League, 1909).

inconvenienced,” the aggrieved Langham the victim of jealous subordinates eager to bring about his downfall.⁴⁵⁸

King paints the members of the court martial as largely sympathetic to Langham and his tactics, veterans of Indian Country themselves that understand the demands of savage war:

Some of them, West Pointers and Indian fighters of the line, chosen, because of their energy in that line, to command volunteer regiments against the Insurgent Islanders, had been heard to say that the only way to thrash Indians or Islanders was to tackle them Indian or Island fashion, which was not with gloves, or close observance of a General Order devised for use in battling a civilized and not a savage foe. Some few of them had gone so far as to profit by Pat Langham's example.⁴⁵⁹

This entire section of King's story, which otherwise is concerned with Langham's attempts to win over the daughter of a fellow officer, is a forceful defense of Army tactics, torture, and the necessities of "savage war." When fighting Indians or Filipinos the Army was justified, according to these men, in removing their gloves and exercising a severity beyond that allowed by the formal rules of war. It is a defense that echoes the justifications of President Theodore Roosevelt, who argued in 1902 that "the army, which has done its work so well in the Philippine islands, has... been cruelly maligned even by some who should have known better... The temptation to retaliate for the fearful cruelties of a savage foe is very great, and now and then it has been yielded to."⁴⁶⁰ King's (and Roosevelt's) frequent references to savagery are more than just a reference to a central question of military law: whether the enemy's actions justify an extreme response. They show the ongoing influence the cultural discourse around "savagery" had in determining US military action. Indians lurked even in the shadowy recesses of military

⁴⁵⁸ King, *Comrades*, 316-319.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 312.

⁴⁶⁰ Moorfield Storey and Julian Codman, *Secretary Root's record: "Marked Severities" in Philippine Warfare. An Analysis of the Law and Facts Bearing on the Action and Utterances of President Roosevelt and Secretary Root* (Boston: G.H. Ellis Co., 1902), 3.

law, a potential indictment that more often was invoked as a justification. Against the savage the exception became the rule.

King turns criticism of Army conduct into a ringing denunciation of anti-imperialists, Indian sympathizers, and civilian interference with military policy. In *Comrades in Arms* the overwhelming majority favor aggressive tactics to subdue “savages” but are drowned out by a loud minority that controls the press and the halls of government. One of Langham’s superiors, and the father of his love interest, offers a forceful defense of Army tactics in the Philippines, but to no avail.⁴⁶¹ Protocol prevails and Langham is punished:

Belden's plea was eloquent and forcible, but—orders are orders. No matter that our people, soldier or civilian, were shot from ambush, boloed in cold blood, trapped in pitfalls, flayed, flogged, and tortured to slow and cruel death; no matter that officials, sworn to loyalty, should give refuge to assassins, should conceal them, their arms, and their supplies—should laugh and lie in the face of the officers sent in search—the law and the prophets, the press and the pulpit held that only by the rules of civilized war should even savages be handled.⁴⁶²

King clearly feels betrayed, just as he and his fellow officers in Indian Country felt betrayed in their 19th century wars with Native people. “Just as in the days of the Indian wars the good folk farthest removed from the scene were loudest in denunciation of the troops at the spot. To these latter it was death if they lost, and defamation if they won. The men who put an end to the most savage and intractable side of the insurrection were summoned in turn to take their punishment.”⁴⁶³ Langham becomes a sacrifice to the demands of savage warfare, a hero willing to use extreme tactics in pursuit of ends which, according to King, justify the means.

⁴⁶¹ In the cases that did come before a court martial US officers were hesitant to return guilty verdicts and largely sympathetic to officers that used torture techniques. Einolf, *America in the Philippines*, 49.

⁴⁶² King, *Comrades*, 320-321.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid*, 321.

King is simultaneously removed from and adjacent to reality in *Comrades in Arms*. There was widespread torture in the Philippines, in addition to other forms of controversial violence.⁴⁶⁴ And the rise of torture by US forces corresponds to the moment in King's narrative when the men of "strenuous, vehement energy" took over the occupation and proceeded to "rip" their way through the Filipino countryside. According to Christopher Einolf's meticulously researched chronology of American torture in the Philippines, the use of torture by US troops and allies began after the conventional phase of the war ended in late 1899. As guerilla warfare spread throughout the islands so did a variety of forms of torture including beatings, slow hangings, and the water cure. The techniques spread slowly at first, but saw increasing usage in late-1900 when Filipino forces launched a surprising counter-offensive. General Arthur MacArthur responded by authorizing full use of the penalties for guerilla warfare outlined in General Orders 100, the so-called Lieber Code developed during the Civil War, which outlined harsh penalties for non-uniformed guerilla fighters.⁴⁶⁵ By 1901 the water cure was widely used, most visibly by Major Edwin F. Glenn, likely one of the inspirations for the court martial of Langham in *Comrades in Arms*. One of the few officers to face a court martial for the use of torture in the Philippines, Glenn, somewhat paradoxically, had a law degree and expertise in the rules of warfare, which he seems to have used to justify the use of the water cure.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁴ In many instances torture was justified or encouraged through racial and exterminationist language. In addition to King's references to the Indian Wars, many soldiers understood Filipinos through the lens of anti-black racism. A marching song composed by a US soldier encouraged the troops to "Get the good old syringe boys and fill it to the brim; We've caught another nigger and we'll operate on him; Let someone take the handle who can work it with a vim; Shouting the battle cry of freedom." Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government*, 138-141.

⁴⁶⁵ General Orders 100 (The Lieber Code) forbids torture, but leaves open the possibility of retaliation as a response to "barbarous outrages," and denies fighters who are not members of organized, hostile armies the privileges of prisoners of war. Such men "shall be treated summarily as highway robbers or pirates."

⁴⁶⁶ Einolf, *America in the Philippines*, 37-67; Allan W. Vestal, "The First Wartime Water Torture by Americans," *Maine Law Review* 69 (2017): 1-66, 17-21.

Some officers, such as Glenn and Jacob “Hell Roaring” Smith, famous for his orders to turn the island of Samar into a “howling wilderness” and kill every Filipino male over the age of ten, did face prosecution or censure.⁴⁶⁷ But the criticism of the military’s conduct was not restricted to strident anti-imperialists in the US. The Army’s top general, Nelson A. Miles, a fellow Indian Fighter who had done his fair share of complaining about civilian criticism of military conduct, himself criticized Army abuses in the Philippines. Miles toured the islands in 1902 and published a report focused on the dispersion of US troops, their condition, the progress of the war, and other concerns. A special section of Miles’ report addressed the accusations of US atrocities in the Philippines, accusations Miles found credible. He detailed several meetings with Filipino community leaders and was introduced to people that had been tortured with the water cure. In one community, he met local leaders and was informed that fifteen people from the area had been tortured with the water cure; one man had been tortured and then confined to a burning building, where he died. Miles saw burned out fields, destroyed towns, and heard stories of US officers known for their extreme tactics.⁴⁶⁸ The Miles Report became a minor controversy when anti-imperialist Herbert Welsh accused Secretary of War Root of suppressing the report and organized a letter writing campaign.⁴⁶⁹ According the War Department the report had been published in full and edited for brevity by various newspapers, but the zealous Welsh went ahead

⁴⁶⁷ King may be referencing the case of Major Edwin F. Glenn, a military lawyer and intelligence officer in the Philippines who was tried in a military court on charges of torture and killing surrendered Filipinos in 1902. Glenn had commanded a mounted intelligence unit that went from town to town administering the water cure to extract information. In his testimony, Glenn did not deny administering the water cure but argued that it was humane and justified, a necessary element of the counterinsurgency campaign. He was found not guilty. See Einolf, *American in the Philippines*, 1-2, 167-168.

⁴⁶⁸ Miles, *The Philippines Reports*.

⁴⁶⁹ Welsh’s accusation was seemingly unfounded, as the report had already been supplied to various newspapers.

with his campaign and sent assistants to gather testimony from soldiers who had served in the Philippines.⁴⁷⁰

What the testimony demonstrates is that the water cure was anything but benign, contrary to King's depiction. Testimony offered by Herbert Yenser, a private in Company E of the Eight Regiment Regulars, related an instance of the water cure at the town of San Pueblo in Laguna Province. Members of the 7th Cavalry captured a Filipino revolutionary soldier while sleeping. He was brought before the leader of the regiment, Colonel Baldwin, and when he refused to offer any information the colonel said "take him away." Yenser reportedly crept into a loft overlooking the guard house and through cracks in the boards saw a Maccabebe scout attached to the 7th Cavalry administer the torture. According to Yenser:

First a pipe was placed in the Victim's mouth and then water poured in until his abdomen became much distended. Then the men jumped with both feet upon the victim's stomach with such force that the water spurted from his mouth over three feet in the air. The second time this operation was performed blood also came out with the water.⁴⁷¹

A similarly gruesome testimony was offered by Daniel F. Murphy of G Company, 3rd and 4th Cavalry. Like Yenser he attributes the torture to another unit of soldiers, who captured a Filipino soldier and subjected the man to the water cure near a stream.

The man was laid down and a canteen of water being procured from the stream he was made to drink until he would give information. The victim shouted and screamed and tried to kick but they 'held him.' The man had to be held down because of his struggles and he would keep constantly vomiting the entire contents of his stomach... The soldiers kept pouring water from the tin cup until the man 'gave in.'⁴⁷²

Perhaps the most inflammatory witness interviewed by Welsh and his associates was

Charles S. Riley, who would later testify before the Senate Philippines Investigating Committee

⁴⁷⁰ Paul Kramer, "The Water Cure," *The New Yorker*, February 18, 2008.
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2008/02/25/the-water-cure>

⁴⁷¹ Herbert Welsh, "Report on Herbert Yenser, Worcester's Philippine Collection," Documents and Papers, 1834-1915. Maria C Lanzar-Carpio Papers. Welsh, Herbert, 1851-1913. Box 2 Incoming S-Z Miscellaneous. University of Michigan Special Collections.

⁴⁷² Ibid.

about the widespread use of torture by US forces. Riley testified that he had witnessed Captain Edwin Glenn oversee the administering of the water cure to Tobeniano Ealdama, the presidente of the town of Igaras. After several minutes of torture Ealdama answered the questions that were put to him through a translator, and was allowed to dress. However, moments later more information was demanded and, refusing to answer, the presidente was once more tortured. Pinned down at the arms and legs, multiple syringes were inserted into his mouth and nose, and water, this time mixed with salt on the suggestion of an American surgeon, Dr. Lyons, was forced into him. Ealdama reportedly confessed to alerting nearby Filipino revolutionary soldiers of the arrival of US troops. Riley testified that while that was the only instance of the water cure personally witnessed, other soldiers under Glenn freely discussed multiple instances in which the torture had been used to procure information. Based on the “confession” of Ealdama, Glenn led the troops into the nearby mountains in search of insurgents, and upon returning to Igaras he ordered the entire town burned to the ground. According to Riley’s testimony this was “on account of the exposition of the affairs of the morning, the information received from the presidente.”⁴⁷³

The Miles Report was only one example of the widespread backlash to US atrocities in the Philippines, and King’s writing in *Comrades in Arms* is a clear attempt to counter such criticism. The Roosevelt administration managed to contain most of the fallout from the torture scandal, and the president declared the war officially over on July 4th, 1902. Like most occupations, Filipino resistance continued, particularly in the Moro regions in the southern part of the Philippines. But the Philippines commission passed the Brigandage Act in November of 1902 which defined remaining resistance to US authority as “banditry” and “ladronism,”

⁴⁷³ *Testimony of Charles S. Riley [and William Lewis Smith]* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office).

categories even more illegitimate than insurgency. This attempt to inject a colonial normalcy in the islands was furthered by the establishment of the Philippine Constabulary, a police force under Commission control that Paul Kramer calls “a colonial army in police uniform.” When the US assumed control of the Philippines they had turned anticolonial resistance into an insurrection; the creation of the Constabulary now turned insurgency into mere criminality. The majority of US troops returned from the islands, having suffered minimal consequences from the torture scandals King so vociferously critiques in *Comrades in Arms*.⁴⁷⁴

Conclusion

In August of 1899, following Charles King’s return to the United States, Henry Lawton wrote the following letter to the general:

I cannot express to you how much I regret the necessity for your return to the United States at the time you did. I want to say to you that you are the only General officer whom I know who possesses that peculiar faculty or that magnetism which attracts men to him; you are the only one of all the General officers who has excited among the men of his command any great amount of enthusiasm. I remember when you left your launch to come aboard the gunboat just before the attack on Santa Cruz, that a cheer went up from all the men in the transports; and you seem to possess that peculiar dash and spirit which carries men who follow you along with you with enthusiasm.

King reciprocated Lawton’s enthusiasm, writing years after the general’s death that Lawton was “a glorious soldier, and we of the old frontier cavalry swore by him.”⁴⁷⁵ Recall the earlier report in which Lawton lauded Young’s Scouts for their “peculiarly valuable” service. “Peculiar” functions as a coded signifier for Indian Fighting, at this point more a general counterinsurgency strategy and supporting discursive mythology. “Peculiar” serves to remove that fighting into a state of exception in which “savage” tactics can be used to defeat savages and reconstitute a civilized social normality. King’s familiar use of the word “old” traffics in just that nostalgia for Indian Fighting which clearly was not a nostalgia but rather a material fact of developing US

⁴⁷⁴ Kramer, *The Blood of Government*, 152-155.

⁴⁷⁵ Charles King, “Memories of a Busy Life,” 30-33.

counterinsurgency strategy. Soldiers like King and Lawton thought fondly on their “old” Indian Fighting days even as they translated that experience into a coherent program to defeat Filipino revolutionaries. Nostalgia masked the continuities at work in military strategy. The reputation of both men was built on their role in the conquest of Native people in the continental US, which informed their subsequent history as soldiers, writers, and objects of a frontier mythology that became infused into the US military.

Yes, both Lawton and King fought Apaches and Filipinos. But when you dig into their histories a more complicated process of cultural formation emerges. Lawton, King, and their peers from the frontier army moved overseas to the Philippines and in the process made “Indian Fighting” a structuring narrative of US military violence. They were discursively positioned as Indian fighters and they willingly filled that role, narrating their time in the Philippines as an Indian war, and in King’s case further cementing that connection in a literary canon which played a significant role in the development of the western genre. The first counterinsurgency fighters of the twentieth century were *Indian Fighters* – tactically, discursively, and in the imaginations of those who viewed the frontier as encompassing the entire globe. For contemporary theorists of counterinsurgency, the “Indian Wars” and the Philippines-American War have emerged as the main usable history of US counterinsurgency. The lives of King and Lawton demonstrate that counterinsurgency in US history is not a neutral descriptor of a particular mode of warfare, but rather an outgrowth of colonialism, linked to the expansion of US territory.

Chapter 5. America's Counterinsurgency-Culture and the War on Terror

Introduction

Indian Wars everywhere? In the conclusion to his Strategy Research Project thesis at the US Army War College, Lieutenant Colonel Michael G. Miller reflects on the similarities between the Indian Wars and the War on Terror:

When it comes down to it, humans will fight to defend their survival interests. It's not a stretch when looking at an early photo of military officers sitting in a circle with Indians having council or "pow-wow" over some grievance; just as we have seen young officers doing in Afghanistan with the local tribal elders. The times, places, names and combatants are different, but the human nature of the conduct of insurgent war remains the same. Clearly then, Red Cloud's War and the Indian Wars in general can provide us with many lessons learned to help in the fight against insurgents of the 21st Century.⁴⁷⁶ Miller proposes a striking visual continuity: the frontier soldier transplanted to the mountains of Central Asia, dual images that evoke the colonial nostalgia of continental expansion and the imperial ambitions of the War on Terror. This has proven to be an attractive comparison, one that Miller and a host of US soldiers, strategists, and military theorists have made in the years since the terror attacks of September 11th, 2001, and the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Unprepared to fight a counterinsurgency, the military grasped for a history and practice of irregular war that could function as an alternative to the failures of the Vietnam War, an institutional scar so deep that the armed forces worked to forget what they had learned (and not learned) in Southeast Asia.⁴⁷⁷ In the effort to (re)learn counterinsurgency, the Indian Wars

⁴⁷⁶ Michael G. Miller, "Red Cloud's War: An Insurgency Case Study for Modern Times" (Master's Thesis, Army War College, March 16, 2011), 49.

⁴⁷⁷ US soldiers trained in the 1980's and 1990's learned very little about counterinsurgency. Top US generals had vowed in the aftermath of Vietnam to avoid guerilla conflicts, and the prevailing belief was that wars were won with superior firepower. What John Dower calls "the suffocating cultural politics of Vietnam War memory" also played a role, particularly the effective conservative argument that weak politicians and traitorous war protesters were the

became a potent well of military and cultural knowledge to draw from. Baghdad, like other occupied zones before it, was “Indian Country,” and the Apache Wars became the focus of military study at places like the Command and General Staff College and the War College. The colonial violence of US continental expansion has always hung like a cloud over the US military, but in the decade after 9/11 the cloud seemed to burst.⁴⁷⁸

This chapter will explore the ongoing influence of continental expansion on the US military, particularly the development of an American “counterinsurgency-culture” that continually frames counterinsurgency warfare as an “Indian war.” As a particular manifestation of militarization, counterinsurgency-culture acts broadly, on a national scale, and institutionally, within the different branches of the US military. It is expressed through everything from continual references to Indian Country by soldiers and civilians, to the military publications that compare nineteenth century Native fighters to contemporary insurgencies in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Scholars such as John Dower, Michael Sherry, and Aaron O’Connell have explored the pervasive influence of militarism and militarization on US culture, with Sherry defining militarization as “the process by which war and national security became consuming anxieties and provided the memories, models, and metaphors that shaped broad areas of national life.”⁴⁷⁹ Counterinsurgency-culture is a part of the militarization Sherry outlines, and his definition is

reason for defeat in Vietnam. Fred Kaplan, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013).

⁴⁷⁸ For an analysis of “Indian Country” as a key military metaphor during the War on Terror, see Stephen W. Silliman, “The ‘Old West’ in the Middle East: U.S. Military Metaphors in Real and Imagined Indian Country,” *American Anthropologist* 110, no. 2 (June 2008): 237–47.

⁴⁷⁹ Some scholars seem to use “militarism” to describe a culture that encourages military action and “militarization” as the material effects of that cultural predisposition, others seem to use the terms interchangeably, while others prefer one or the other. For definitions of both militarization and militarism see Michael S. Sherry, *In the Shadow of War: The United States since the 1930’s* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), xi; M. V. Naidu, “Military Power, Militarism and Militarization: An Attempt at Clarification and Classification.” *Peace Research* 17, no. 1 (1985): 2–10; Aaron B. O’Connell, *Underdogs: The Making of the Modern Marine Corps* (Harvard University Press, 2014), Introduction; and Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 15.

useful in that it combines the material and the discursive. We should avoid a false division between the material manifestations of militarization (munitions factories, declarations of war, and soldiers in combat) and the ideologies and discourses of militarism that shape a given state or community. Rather, we should emphasize the interconnectedness of what Wayne Lee calls the cultural and the operational.⁴⁸⁰ Militarization certainly shapes politics and economics, but it also exercises a cultural influence on the stories and beliefs transmitted about war and violence.

Discourses, in turn, shape human actions, including the actions of soldiers, through a process that Mary Renda calls “cultural conscription.” Renda, drawing on feminist critic Joan Scott, views discourses as historically situated structures of beliefs, terms, statements, and ideas. Discourses are shaped by power and are thus uneven; some carry more weight than others, and discourses of militarization have been a potent force in the United States. These militaristic discourses shape and are shaped by US culture, a process that is ever-shifting and dynamic.⁴⁸¹ This flexibility is important, because it is what has allowed ideas and representations about Indians to continually give definition to American counterinsurgency-culture across three centuries up to the present. Dower, Sherry, and O’Connell focus mostly on the twentieth century and more recent US history, but we might think of the related ideologies of manifest destiny, Indian-hating, and playing-Indian as a particular form militarism that has shifted over time, becoming an increasingly *cultural* preoccupation once Native military resistance ended. As the United States transitioned from continental expansion into a more global form of militarization, the discursive baggage of the Indian Wars—“Indian Country,” the surround, the ambush, the

⁴⁸⁰ Military history has paid increasing attention to the cultural dimensions of warfare and militarism since the 1960s. See: Wayne E. Lee, “Mind and Matter-Cultural Analysis in American Military History: A Look at the State of the Field.” *The Journal of American History* 93, no. 4 (2007): 1116–42, 1119.

⁴⁸¹ Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 17-25. See also Nan Enstad, “Fashioning Political Identities: Cultural Studies and the Historical Construction of Political Subjects,” *American Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (December 1, 1998): 745–82.

savage, the warrior, the guerilla, and more—were all grafted onto US militarism, particularly in the province of irregular warfare and counterinsurgency. This happened despite a lack of doctrinal continuity from the Indian Wars within the US military. What this means is that soldiers have continued to image their enemies (and themselves) as Indians, even as the Indian Wars were absent from formal training and strategy.

In what follows, I will investigate how and why the Indian Wars continues to be an alluring object of study for contemporary military professionals, both as a source of strategic insight and a set of ideological rubrics that help soldiers to make sense of foreign and domestic conflicts. In the nineteenth century the US Army developed and codified an approach to Indian Fighting that combined indiscriminate violence with biopolitical measures aimed at regulating and controlling Native life. This proto-counterinsurgency doctrine, a blend of material practices and cultural attitudes, travelled overseas to the Philippines and was used to devastating effect during the US occupation of the islands. However, the US military did not maintain a strategic or tactical continuity around “Indian fighting” and counterinsurgency after the occupation of the Philippines. It was in cultural venues, both within the military and without, that the Indian Wars persisted.

In the years after World War I most of the previous generation’s Indian Fighters retired from the Army. Many lived long enough to see their frontier service translated into one of the most enduring and definitive representations of the American experience. The Indian Wars were the stuff of nostalgia and the culture industry. Former officers discussed their role in these conflicts in historical societies like The Order of the Indian Wars, but not the pages of field manuals or strategic documents. This makes situating the Indian Wars in the chronology of US militarism difficult. They seem to predict the development of counterinsurgency warfare in the

twentieth century, but they left only a fleeting institutional record, making it a challenge to draw a direct line between the practices of nineteenth century soldiers and their modern counterparts. The connections are more convoluted, weaving in-and-out of civilian and military culture, leaving behind traces in military practice that emerge and disappear. The US military spent much of the twentieth century disavowing the importance of counterinsurgency. And yet, modern soldiers continue to talk about the Indian Wars and to see them as a tool for understanding the War on Terror.

This raises several related questions. To what extent do the Indian Wars influence contemporary warfare, with such an amorphous record of strategic and tactical continuity? Given the nineteenth century historical precedents for counterinsurgency that I uncovered in the previous chapters, is there a consistent ideological orientation towards colonized populations, a counterinsurgency-culture, expressed through military violence, which can account for this gap? Is the intellectual approach to warfare championed by contemporary counterinsurgents seriously engaging ideas such as “culture,” “human rights,” and other social scientific and humanistic questions? What follows is a brief survey of the fluid movement of the Indian Wars throughout American culture during the twentieth century, with an emphasis on the enduring hold these conflicts have held on the US military. After, this chapter will show how the War on Terror has moved Native people back to the forefront of US military discourse as a set of strategic lessons for modern counterinsurgency warfare. In doing so, I demonstrate the influence of cultural attitudes and ideologies on the supposedly cold calculation of “strategy.” When contemporary soldiers and theorists talk about “culture,” whether the culture of nineteenth century Native peoples or the modern enemies of the US military, they are more often referring to a particular discourse *about* an indigenous culture. This is the foundation of counterinsurgency-culture: a

colonial discourse about race and indigeneity standing in for a serious engagement with Native peoples and their culture. Ultimately, I will outline the contours of America's counterinsurgency-culture and the role that Native people and the Indian Wars have played in its development.

When we go looking for strategic continuity between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries, we find that counterinsurgency is as much about a cultural attitude towards ones enemies as it is about applying a technical form of warfare. And those attitudes have colonial roots.

Twentieth-Century Indian Wars

Founded in 1896 by Colonel B.J.D. Irwin, the Order of the Indian Wars served to “perpetuate the memories of the services rendered by the military forces of the United States in their conflicts and wars against hostile Indians within the territory or jurisdiction of the United States, and to collect and secure for publication historical data relating to the instances of heroic service and personal devotion by which Indian warfare has been illustrated.”⁴⁸² A military society with elaborate ceremonies and traditions, the organization met yearly to induct new members, honor those that had passed away, and to listen to papers delivered on relevant historical topics. The tone of the meetings was largely nostalgic; nowhere in the record of proceedings does the discussion situate the Indian Wars in relation to twentieth-century conflict. In his address at the 1921 meeting Charles King declares that “it is all a memory now, but what a memory to cherish!” He goes on to argue that

A more thankless task, a more perilous service, a more exacting test of leadership, soldiery, morale and discipline no army in Christendom has ever been called upon to undertake than that which for eighty years was the lot of the little fighting force of regulars who cleared the way across the continent for the emigrant and the settler... There never was a warfare on the face of the earth in which the soldier, officer of man, had so little go gain, so very much to lose.⁴⁸³

⁴⁸² John M Carroll, and George S Pappas, *The Papers of the Order of Indian Wars*. (Fort Collins: Old Army Press, 1975), Article II.

⁴⁸³ Carrol and Pappas, *The Papers of the Order*, 46.

Although the order has continued into the present in a reduced form, the 1941 meeting was the last in which a major address was given and published. As recorded in the proceedings,

Before they were to meet in session again – and none knew the next meeting was to be the last – the United States was to enter into World War II after an attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The end of an era had been long in coming. The Indian fighter was no longer the subject of hero worship by the young, of admiration by the middle-aged and of envy by his peers. The remaining Order of Indian Wars membership – by virtue of a sneak attack – became *ancient* history, and no longer *just* history... It was an unfitting death of an image so long loved, admired and respected by Americans.⁴⁸⁴

For the Order, the Indian Wars were the stuff of nostalgia and myth, the translation of the real experiences of the order's members into a heroic narrative about US history. The tone is almost petulant, the attack on Pearl Harbor becoming the final nail in the coffin of public interest in the lingering nostalgia for frontier violence, the racialized “sneak attack” refigured as a hallmark of Japanese aggression rather than Indian treachery. For this organization of annual dinners and contrived ceremonies an era was over, but the Indian Wars had penetrated most aspects of American popular culture, and were still present in the military, baked into the language of conflict in persistent ways.

As the “Order” spent the first half of the twentieth century hosting nostalgia-filled dinners and lamenting the demise of the frontier hero, their still-enlisted peers in the military were kept busy with the nearly continuous conflict of the World Wars and the smaller interventions, policing actions, and occupations that placed US soldiers all over the globe. And while the Order worked to preserve the memory of the Indian fighter, the military did little to translate that experience, and the subsequent experience in the Philippines, into any sort of permanent counterinsurgency doctrine. The Indian Wars left almost no doctrinal impact on military education.⁴⁸⁵ Soldiers in the Philippines did not receive training in counter-guerilla

⁴⁸⁴ Carrol and Pappas, *The Papers of the Order*, 255.

⁴⁸⁵ Andrew Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1998), 10

measures and had to rely on their experiences in wars with Native people. As a result, the Philippines-American War saw some limited continuity of tactics and strategies, but no widespread application of the already-amorphous “Indian fighting” that had dominated the previous decades. It was up to individual officers to apply their experiences as they saw fit, experiences that were filtered through a colonial mythology that was deeply entangled with the more pragmatic side of combat, as I showed in the previous two chapters.

The Philippines-American War has been largely forgotten in US historical memory. That amnesia has extended, in part, to the US military. In the aftermath of the war in the Philippines the military failed to create any doctrine or educational record that would preserve lessons learned during the occupation. Military professional journals discussed the conflict sparingly. In the years after the war soldiers at places like the War College or the new school at Fort Leavenworth did not receive instruction in guerilla warfare, even though that type of combat had defined the war in the Philippines.⁴⁸⁶ An official history was commissioned by the government, written by Captain J.R.M. Taylor and titled *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States*. However, it was repeatedly censored by Secretary of War Taft and other government officials, for fear that it would harm the ongoing colonial relationship that the US had with the Philippines government. Taylor was largely critical of Filipino revolutionaries, and while he included a discussion of US tactics, politicians that blocked publication worried that the book would reignite the debates over US atrocities in the conflict.⁴⁸⁷

The Philippines Insurrection was not the only casualty of political censorship following the war. In 1902, Captain M.F. Davis compiled a collection of telegraphic circulars and orders

⁴⁸⁶ Keith B. Bickel, *Mars Learning: The Marine Corps Development of Small Wars Doctrine, 1915-1940*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 42-47.

⁴⁸⁷ John M. Gates, “The Official Historian and the Well-Placed Critic: James A. LeRoy’s Assessment of John R. M. Taylor’s ‘The Philippine Insurrection against the United States,’” *The Public Historian* 7, no. 3 (1985): 57–67.

issued by General James Franklin Bell, regarded as one of the most successful US generals in the Philippines, while commanding troops in the provinces of Batangas, Laguna, and Mindoro. A record of Bell's orders and strategic thinking was in high demand from soldiers anxious for a counterinsurgency manual. In his introduction to the pamphlet, Davis noted that frequent requests from Army officers, both those who had served under Bell and others, led to his compiling the documents for distribution. The orders cover in detail Bell's approach to counterinsurgency, including the reconcentration of Filipino populations, the destruction of food, supplies, and dwellings, the treatment of prisoners, and the execution of insurgents.⁴⁸⁸ The document was never distributed outside of the Philippines, likely due to the descriptions of harsh counterinsurgency tactics, the very measures that were currently under-fire by anti-imperialist politicians.

Bell was aware of the discomfort counterinsurgency warfare engendered in civilian observers, and even some of his soldiers. In an address to his officers when he took command of Batangas, Bell noted that he much preferred a policy of conciliation but warned that they would "unquestionably be required, by a sense of duty, to do much that is disagreeable."⁴⁸⁹ Ultimately Bell's counterinsurgency manual never saw widespread distribution nor application, and has only recently been revived by the Army's Combat Studies Institute and published in a series of strategic essays inspired by the War on Terror.⁴⁹⁰ Army historian Andrew Birtle calls the *Telegraphic Circulars* a lost "gem" of counterinsurgency theory, similar to George Crook's *Resume of Operations Against Apache Indians*, another proto-counterinsurgency document that

⁴⁸⁸ J. Franklin Bell, "Telegraphic Circulars and General Orders," Headquarters, Third Separate Brigade, December 1, 1902.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Robert D. Ramsey III, *A Masterpiece of Counterinsurgency Warfare: BG J. Franklin Bell in the Philippines, 1901-1902* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, United States Army Combined Arms Center).

failed to make inroads into US military doctrine.⁴⁹¹ The resurrection of Bell's *Telgraphic Circulars* in the context of the War on Terror is somewhat ironic given his prescient analysis: "Judging from experience in this war, a much greater length of time is always required to settle claims and outstanding obligations of the government, after a campaign is concluded, than is required to successfully conclude the campaign itself."⁴⁹² Clearly this has been an elusive lesson for the US military, a reminder of the imperial hubris that encouraged George W. Bush to declare "Mission Accomplished" in Iraq in 2003.

In the years after the Philippines-American War the Army would return to its consistent focus on large-scale conflict, and it would be in the Marine Corps where guerilla conflict and irregular warfare would find some doctrinal footing, culminating in the *Small Wars Manual*, published in 1940, which chronicled the Marines' experiences in the occupations and interventions of the early twentieth century in Central American and the Caribbean.⁴⁹³ This document joined an emerging canon of strategic writing on counterinsurgency warfare, primarily from European writers chronicling the struggles of colonization and decolonization in places like Algeria and Malaya.⁴⁹⁴ This writing, particularly the work of French strategist David Galula, influenced US soldiers and politicians promoting counterinsurgency warfare in the decades after World War Two. There are traces here and there, but it cannot be said that Indian warfare made a great impact on American military doctrine in the twentieth century.

The ephemeral traces of Indian warfare in US military doctrine contrast sharply to the near-permeation of frontier mythologies into a militarized US culture. Although there was little-

⁴⁹¹ Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency*, 138-139.

⁴⁹² Bell, *Telegraphic Circulars*, 52.

⁴⁹³ Bickel, *Mars Learning*, 224-225.

⁴⁹⁴ A thorough history of this writing can be found in Laleh Khalili, *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

to-no strategic continuity linking the Indian Wars to twentieth-century conflict, Indian people and the mythologies of colonization continued to give definition to America's counterinsurgency-culture, from the Native soldiers who routinely found themselves tapped for "scouting missions" in World War One, to the guerilla-fighting US Army paratroopers adorned in war paint that fought in World War Two.⁴⁹⁵ Indeed, culture and doctrine are not discrete categories. Aaron O'Connell has shown how the unique culture of the US Marine Corps bolstered their reputation and influenced broader military doctrine and strategy. Militarism is not simply technical, doctrinal, or political. Culture plays an important role, from war stories, to the development of new military technologies, a reliance on military metaphors, and the growth of military prestige. The marines that O'Connell writes about utilized their institutional culture to push the US military towards irregular warfare, counterinsurgency, and peacekeeping during the Cold War, the very skills they had developed in the first part of the twentieth century. They would be utilized by US counterinsurgents with increasing frequency starting in the 1960's.⁴⁹⁶

America's counterinsurgency-culture expanded during the Cold War, highlighted by John F. Kennedy's "new frontier." A slogan for the 1960 presidential campaign, Kennedy introduced his "new frontier" at the Democratic National Convention that year:

I stand tonight facing west on what was once the last frontier. From the lands that stretch 3000 miles behind me, the pioneers of old gave up their safety, their comfort and sometimes their lives to build a new world here in the West... Today some would say that those struggles are all over—that all the horizons have been explored—that all the battles have been won—that there is no longer an American frontier. But I trust that no one in this vast assemblage will agree with those sentiments. For the problems are not all solved and the battles are not all won—and we stand today on the edge of a New Frontier—the frontier of the 1960's—a frontier of unknown opportunities and perils—a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁵ For Native soldiers in WW1, see Thomas A. Britten, *American Indians in World War I: At Home and at War*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999.)

⁴⁹⁶ O'Connell, *Underdogs*, 13-22.

⁴⁹⁷ "1960-7-15 Democratic National Convention." Accessed June 19, 2018. <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/AS08q5oYz0SFUZg9uOi4iw.aspx>.

A central element of the “new frontier” foreign policy was an emphasis on counterinsurgency as a means to counter the Soviet Union and the revolutionary struggles underway all over the globe. Reference to the frontier put those conflicts, and the US response, in terms that the nation could understand: the world was a dangerous and turbulent place, and only a vigorous US foreign policies backed by strategic military power could prevent the slide towards chaos. This framing, a conceptual outgrowth of colonial expansion, racialized global revolutionary activity as dangerous, backwards, and savage. As US counterinsurgency developed under Eisenhower and expanded under Kennedy, a central tenant was that so-called insurgencies had to be the result of external foreign influence – in most cases from the USSR. This effaced the presence of a local political culture responsible for the upheaval; such erasure has been a consistent element of US counterinsurgent thinking going back to the Indian Wars.⁴⁹⁸ And, as Richard Slotkin has shown, the conscription of Cold War-era counterinsurgency into a frontier mythology revived that particularly American fantasy of the not-quite-Indian warrior, “who combines the amoral pragmatism and technical expertise of the gunfighter with the skill in handling natives that belongs to the ‘man who knows Indians.’”⁴⁹⁹ The Indian Fighter is not-quite-Indian, just as the counterinsurgent is not-quite-insurgent. America’s counterinsurgency culture celebrates the country’s own insurgent past while often actively working against other revolutions; just as it combines Indian-hating with a culture of playing Indian.

The cultural politics of Cold War counterinsurgency was defined, in part, by references to continental colonialism. Nowhere was this more evident than in Vietnam. It was common for US

⁴⁹⁸ As Greg Dowd shows in *Spirited Resistance*, early Americans often saw their Native enemies as the pawns of France, Spain, or Great Britain. Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

⁴⁹⁹ Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*. (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 2-3; 446-447.

soldiers in Vietnam to refer to enemy territory as “Indian Country.” This was only one dimension of a conflict intersected by the United States’ history of colonialism, anti-black racism, and race-war in Asia during the Philippines-American War and World War Two. Questions of race were an intimate part of day-to-day life during the war in Vietnam. Take the following exchange during the Dellums Committee Hearings into war crimes in Vietnam. In response to a question from the congressional panel about the effect of anti-Vietnamese racism on the race relations among US soldiers, Gary Battles relates a story that occurred while he was pinned down in a foxhole with two other soldiers, one a black man, the other a Native man from Arizona:

Mr. Battles: It so happens that I was with a guy from Arizona, who was an Indian, and this colored person and I were in the same foxhole, the three of us, and things were pretty bad and we felt we were going to be wiped out.

So we got down into some conversation like, “You black bastard, what’s going to happen now?” He sort of hit me on the shoulder and the Indian says, “Look, you both came to my country.”

Mr. Burton: What was that last part?

Mr. Battles: The Indianhead said, “Look, you both came to my country.” I’ll tell you, I’m not a bit proud that I am white. But it is a racist war.⁵⁰⁰

This Native soldier, who is reduced to an “Indianhead” in the story (a reference to Indian sports mascots), manages to leverage a critique against both US colonialism and the war in Vietnam, binding the two together. The full dimension of the colonial entanglements at play in that foxhole are perhaps lost on Mr. Battles, who nonetheless is aware of the degree to which racial ideas shaped his experience of Vietnam, with both his fellow soldiers and the enemy. During the congressional investigation of the My Lai massacre, Colonel K.B. Barlow similarly referred to “Indian Country” as the area “where most everyone is enemy and the U.S. forces dealing more directly with the guerillas and local Viet Cong forces that habitually operate in the areas

⁵⁰⁰ Ronald V Dellums, and Citizens’ Commission of Inquiry on U.S. War Crimes in Vietnam, *The Dellums Committee Hearings on War Crimes in Vietnam; an Inquiry into Command Responsibility in Southeast Asia*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 242-244.

occupied by the civilian populace.”⁵⁰¹ Indian Country was the location of guerrilla warfare and unseen enemies, the realm of ambushes and insurgents embedded in noncombatant populations.

In the twentieth century Indian Country moved overseas to places like Vietnam, but the language of settler-colonialism has proved adaptable to non-military (and paramilitary) contexts as well. Look no further than the New York Police Department’s infamous 41st Precinct in the Bronx, better-known by its nickname Fort Apache, likely a reference to the John Wayne film of the same name. According to legend the precinct got its nickname on a busy night in the early 1970s. With the phones blaring, a harassed desk lieutenant answered a call and quickly hung up, saying “I don’t have time for that. This is Fort Apache.”⁵⁰² Stories about one of New York’s most violent police precincts spawned books, a Paul Newman movie, and an enduring legend about urban unrest in the 1970s. In the introduction to his book *Fort Apache*, former officer Tom Walker remembers the precinct as “a place that found it’s only equal in the grassy plains of Custer’s last stand, a precinct that came to be affectionately known to the four hundred police officers who manned this historic and tiny outpost as Fort Apache.”⁵⁰³ For Walker his small corner of New York City was equivalent to Custer’s last stand, otherwise known as the Battle of Little Bighorn in which a coalition of Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho people, along with their allies, annihilated George Armstrong Custer’s 7th Cavalry. The supposed “last stand” is perhaps the most well-known manifestation of an iconic ideological twisting of US settler-colonialism in which invasion is reframed as a last stand or surround. A military column attacking Native people becomes an enduring figure for surrounded, heroic, and doomed soldiers.

⁵⁰¹ United States, “Investigation of the My Lai Incident: Report of the Armed Services Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services,” House of Representatives, Ninety-First Congress, Second Session, under Authority of H. Res. 105 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1970), 774.

⁵⁰² Larry McShane, “Veterans Remember ‘Fort Apache,’” *Los Angeles Times*, June 30, 2002.

⁵⁰³ Tom Walker, *Fort Apache* (New York: Avon, 1977), vii.

Similarly, Walker narrates his police force as an embattled unit maintaining a tenuous control over the uncivilized urban masses. They are the occupants of a police station covered in Apache arrows. He writes that “the only vestige of civilized authority here was the police department. The people struck me as being rather primitive in their approach to city life.”⁵⁰⁴ These “last stands,” whether on the plains of Montana or the streets of New York City, are explicitly racialized, with the supposed threats posed by indigeneity, blackness, and immigrant populations justifying military (and paramilitary) responses. The racial discourse of “Fort Apache” justifies the cowboy-authoritarianism of NYPD policing that Walker narrates. As Jordan Camp has shown, anxieties over the restructurings and growing inequalities of capitalism during the 1960’s and 70’s were transformed into consent for increasingly harsh regimes of law and order, what Camp calls “a long counterinsurgency against the Black freedom, labor, and socialist alliance that took shape in the struggle to abolish Jim Crow racial regimes.”⁵⁰⁵ Here the histories of slavery and colonization are intertwined, as American counterinsurgency-culture works to normalize the repression that emanates from the racial violence that created the United States. Extending Camp’s claim, given the persistent hold that “Indian Country” has held on military imaginaries, it seems that there has been an even longer counterinsurgency waged against Indians both real and imagined, and the various Fort Apaches of Arizona, New York, and Iraq exemplify that history. Counterinsurgency keeps dragging Indian Country to the forefront of US military discourse. Indeed, in some cases it seems that defining a population as “Indians” is a prerequisite for prosecuting a counterinsurgency.

⁵⁰⁴ Walker, *Fort Apache*, 16.

⁵⁰⁵ Jordan T. Camp, *Incarcerating the Crisis: Freedom Struggles and the Rise of the Neoliberal State*. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 5.

Author Elliot Ackerman, a veteran of the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, notes as much in an interview for the *LA Review of Books*. His novel, *Green on Blue*, is told from the perspective of an Afghani militiaman named Aziz, whose only interaction with the United States is through a Special Forces soldier named Mr. Jack, an adviser to Aziz's unit. Mr. Jack names the squads he advises the "Tomahawks" and the "Comanches," and he adorns their trucks with war paint. Aziz notes that Mr. Jack "had great affection for the American West... He thought we Afghans did not understand what it meant to be named after the Indians of his country, but we understood. To us, it seemed a small, but misguided sort of insult. For our tribes had never been conquered."⁵⁰⁶ Ackerman, in the interview, notes that while the American West was not "front and center" while he wrote the novel, "the American counterinsurgency campaign was, and so by default, the Indian Wars became a layer in understanding how Americans behave in these types of wars. The common thread between Vietnam, Afghanistan, or Iraq to the Indian Wars is counterinsurgency."⁵⁰⁷ In other words, it was counterinsurgency which motivated Ackerman to inject the resonances of Indian Country into his novel, resonances that would have been familiar to a veteran of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Afghanistan becomes a literary Indian Country in another novel inspired by the War on Terror, *Wynne's War* by Aaron Gwyn. In an interview Gwyn notes that he "always wanted to write a Western, but I wanted to write a contemporary Western, and I didn't know how that could happen. I always imagined it would have to be Mexico or South America. Then I read Doug Stanton's book [*Horse Soldiers*, about horse-riding Special Forces soldiers in Afghanistan] and I thought, 'It's on.'"⁵⁰⁸ In conversations with veterans Gwyn kept hearing that Afghanistan

⁵⁰⁶ Elliot Ackerman, *Green on Blue: A Novel*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015), 51.

⁵⁰⁷ Brian Castner, "Afghanistan: A Stage Without a Play," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, Accessed January 3, 2018. <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/afghanistan-stage-without-play/>.

⁵⁰⁸ Castner, "Afghanistan."

looked “like a Western, especially eastern Afghanistan, it looks like Monument Valley. And I’m just thinking, wow, these guys are doing this hardcore shit in this place that looks like a John Ford film.”⁵⁰⁹ Gwyn, who grew up in Oklahoma, makes the connection between Afghanistan and Indian Country explicit: “Oklahoma is not the West... It’s not the South, it’s not the Southwest, it’s not the Midwest, it’s its own thing, and what it really is is Indian Territory, the place all the Native Americans are pushed after the White Man has gobbled up everything else... So I wanted to write about Afghanistan as though it were Oklahoma, and Oklahoma as though it were Afghanistan.”⁵¹⁰

In the years after the terror attacks of September 11th the Global War on Terror has brought Indian Country once more to the forefront of military discourse. For soldiers and military theorists this has resulted in a blurring of the lines between culture and strategy. There is not a clear strategic continuity in the history of US counterinsurgency warfare. It is the cultural representations of Indians, the films, novels, the Fort Apaches and the paratroopers in war paint, that have enabled the modern US military to seek a usable history in the violence of continental expansion. It is America’s counterinsurgency-culture, not its counterinsurgency theory, that enables the endless repetition of Indian Country, Indian Country, Indian Country. But of course, culture and strategy, ideology and the material are never fully separate. And the remainder of this chapter will explore how these cultural resonances influence, and in some cases stand in for, military strategy. Indeed, Indian Country and Native people have never been more prominent in the literatures of US military strategy and theory. And this has everything to do with the centrality of colonialism to the history of US counterinsurgency warfare.

⁵⁰⁹ For example, Ford’s 1948 film *Fort Apache*.

⁵¹⁰ Castner, “Afghanistan.”

Colonialism and Counterinsurgency in US Military Theory

In a prescient analysis, a 1995 Master of Military Arts and Science thesis completed at the US Army Command and General Staff College warned that “the Army’s next adversary may very well be much like the plains Indians... One of the problems of today is that our military is convinced that there is no one in the world that can match our military. The leaders of the Indian Wars thought the same thing.”⁵¹¹ Ten years later, if you were to peruse the strategic writing coming out of the various US military command schools, the prediction would seem to be confirmed: the military’s next adversaries *were* just like Indians, and the United States had once again underestimated the enemy’s ability to confound the nation’s seemingly overwhelming military power. As soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq talked about the dangers of Indian Country, strategic publications, conferences, and research coming out of places like the US Army War College, the Naval Postgraduate School, the US Army Command and General Staff College, and the US Army Combat Studies Institute were suddenly paying increasing attention to the United States’ history of colonial violence. Soldiers and historians could no longer complain that the Indian Wars had been ignored in US military doctrine. Indians were everywhere, and it had everything to do with the rise of counterinsurgency warfare.

In 2006 the US Army and Marine Corps published Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*. Designed to address a twenty-year doctrinal gap, the manual was a frank admission of the failures of the War on Terror. It acknowledged the US military’s long history of excellence in conventional warfare and simultaneous unwillingness to address the unique demands of unconventional warfare, a blanket term for the various interventions, occupations, and small-scale conflicts that have been the quiet and continuous subtext to the more visible

⁵¹¹ Alan T. Mabry, “Systemic Problems Within the Army During the Indian Wars (1865-1881)” (Master’s Thesis, Army Command And General Staff College, 1995), 76-77.

history of the Civil War and the World Wars. In his forward to the published edition, Lieutenant Colonel John A. Nagl acknowledged that “the sad fact is that when an insurgency began in Iraq in the late summer of 2003, the Army was unprepared to fight it.” The enemy in Iraq “waged war from the shadows” and confounded a military more equipped for large scale conventional warfare against organized armies.⁵¹² The military was unprepared not because this was an entirely new form of warfare, but because of an institutional amnesia and rejection of counterinsurgency history.

In Nagl’s view the Vietnam War was to blame. The Army had “purged itself” of irregular and unconventional warfare in the aftermath of Vietnam, unwilling to incorporate the lessons of that conflict. This had left the military unprepared for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as various military institutions scrambled to update everything from strategies to basic equipment. This included one of the military’s primary institutions of doctrinal development and higher education. The Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth rushed a temporary counterinsurgency manual out in 2004, and in 2005 Lieutenant General David Petraeus returned from a celebrated tour in Iraq to assume command of the CAC and oversee US Army doctrinal development. This may have seemed like an odd posting for an Army general fresh from the front lines whose star was on the rise, but it demonstrated the military’s commitment to developing an updated approach to counterinsurgency warfare.

Petraeus and his Marine Corps counterpart General James Mattis moved quickly to produce an updated counterinsurgency field manual, involving civilian journalists and workers at Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the process. The result was Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*. The manual touched a nerve, and was downloaded millions of times when

⁵¹² United States Army and United States Marine Corps, *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), xiii – xx.

first made available online. The University of Chicago Press released a commercial edition featuring an expanded introduction by academic Sarah Sewall, who called the manual an unprecedented collaboration between military and civilian thinkers, with an emphasis on human rights and population security.⁵¹³ The interest in the new manual was part of a broader outpouring of academic and military writing on counterinsurgency and the United States' history with irregular warfare in the years after September 11th, a history that remained largely invisible to the broader public outside of the experience with Vietnam. The manual acknowledged as much in the overview of section one: "For more than two centuries, the United States military has been called upon to defeat insurgencies like the Whiskey Rebellion in the eastern United States, the Native Americans on the western plains of the United States, the Boxer Rebellion in China, Pancho Villa in Mexico, Augusto Sandino in Nicaragua, and the Viet Cong in Vietnam."⁵¹⁴ In spite of this lengthy history, the manual argued that US counterinsurgency skills had atrophied, the lessons and experiences of this centuries-long history of irregular warfare forgotten. The failures of Vietnam loomed large, a scar on the collective memory of the US military and particularly the practice of counterinsurgency and irregular warfare. To excavate a usable history of counterinsurgency the Indian Wars and the war in the Philippines emerged as the counters to Vietnam; successes in irregular warfare that could serve as a blueprint for the War on Terror.

The Combat Studies Institute at the CAC, the same organization that published the field manual on counterinsurgency, issued a series of papers on the Global War on Terror in which the Indian Wars figure prominently as the US military's earliest experience with counterinsurgency. These publications draw a link between Indian fighting and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

⁵¹³ *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, xxxiii.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid*, 1-1.

The study *In Search of an Elusive Enemy: The Victorio Campaign* by Kendall D. Gott makes this connection explicit. The introduction to the text, which deals with the US Army campaign to capture or kill Apache leader Victorio and his followers, argues that the case study has extreme relevance for the contemporary Army:

The commanders of the 9th and 10th US Cavalry Regiments faced a skilled adversary who used unconventional tactics and methods as well as an international border to seek sanctuary. However, it could just as easily have featured the stories of Osceola, Aguinardo, Pancho Villa, or Osama Bin Laden. The similarities to challenges that US and coalition forces face in Afghanistan and Iraq are striking.⁵¹⁵ This sketches a long narrative of US counterinsurgency, which stretches from the Seminole Wars of the early nineteenth century, to the Apache Wars, the war in the Philippines, violence on the border with Mexico, all the way to the hunt for Osama bin Laden. While the comparison to Bin Laden in part evokes the contours of war in the rugged environments of Afghanistan, it also traffics in the image of the Apache war leaders as intractable and particularly vicious enemies of the United States, a connection that was similarly recycled in 2011 when Bin Laden's code name was "Geronimo" during the operation that accomplished his death, much to the disgust of Apache people.⁵¹⁶

Another publication in the Global War on Terrorism series titled "Circle the Wagons: The History of US Army Convoy Security" draws similar parallels between the War on Terror and the Indian Wars. Focused on the rise of attacks on transport convoys in Iraq, the author, Transportation Corps historian Richard Killblane, sketches a history of US Army convoy security with a focus on the lessons learned (and then forgotten) in Vietnam. But Killblane's title, "Circle the Wagons," is not a casual metaphor, and he spends a portion of the study on the

⁵¹⁵ Kendall D. Gott, *In Search of an Elusive Enemy: The Victorio Campaign*. (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2012), iii.

⁵¹⁶ Karl Jacoby, "Operation Geronimo Dishonors the Indian Leader," *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 2011. <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/may/10/opinion/la-oe-jacoby-geronimo-20110510>.

Army's experience in the Indian Wars. Killblane calls continental expansion a guerilla war, and he shows how Native attacks on convoys, the archetypal "ambush," became a recurring American trope. "Circle the Wagons" went from an anti-Indian tactic to a figure of speech. In many ways this was how "Indian Country" became such an enduring descriptor for enemy territory: "Before and after the Civil War, the Army fought a guerrilla war against Indians on the prairies and deserts of the western and southwestern United States. From the moment the wagon train left the fort's security, it faced the constant threat of ambush by hostile war parties. From then on, 'Indian country' has referred to a contested area without any secure rear area."⁵¹⁷

Killblane offers a convincing history for the origin of Indian Country's enduring appeal for soldiers, and just as "Circle the Wagons" draws a comparison between the Indian Wars and the Iraq War, so too did "Indian Country" become a common way to describe the increasingly hostile landscape of the War on Terror, particularly Iraq. In a presentation at the 2006 Combat Studies Institute Symposium, at which Petraeus was the keynote speaker, Lieutenant Colonel Peter Newell discussed the efforts to build up the Iraqi Security Forces and remarked that "I can't tell you how many of my own soldiers, my Iraqi soldiers, were ambushed on the way home for relieve, or on their way back to work, only because they lived on in what we considered Indian country."⁵¹⁸ Conceptualizing enemy territory as Indian Country was nothing new. What changed in the years after 9/11 was the degree to which Indian Country, and the Indian Wars more broadly, were taken up in strategic and military-intellectual spaces like Fort Leavenworth. These papers from the Global War on Terrorism Series are just one example of the military's newfound interest in the Indian Wars. However, the most extensive example is the various

⁵¹⁷ Richard E. Killblane, *Circle the Wagons: The History of US Army Convoy Security* (Leavenworth: Army Command And General Staff College, 2005), 4.

⁵¹⁸ Kendall D. Gott, and Michael G. Brooks, *Security Assistance: U.S. and International Historical Perspectives* (Leavenworth: Army Command And General Staff College, 2006), 631.

Master's Thesis projects that officers rising in the ranks have produced at the military's various institutions of higher education and training. The remainder of this chapter will focus on these documents.

The Fort Apaches of Iraq, the Geronimos of Pakistan, and the transportable Indian Countries surround US troops wherever they go in the world, validated by strategic writing that has rediscovered the always-insurgent-Indians as a mechanism through which to understand the War on Terror. These include thesis projects written by US military officers at places like the US Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth (for Majors) and the US Army War College at the Carlisle Barracks (for Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels), and at similar schools run by the other branches of the military. These projects represent the academic and professional interests of rising officers in the US military and thus offer a window into the historical, theoretical, and practical concerns of military leaders.⁵¹⁹ Consistent with the broader military discourse around the War on Terror, recent projects often emphasize counterinsurgency, guerilla combat, and irregular warfare. Indians both real and imagined figure prominently in these texts.

In the years since September 11th the volume of projects that consider US continental expansion and wars with Native people has increased. The number of theses completed in the Master of Military Arts and Science program at the US Army Command and General Staff College that mention the phrase "Indian Country" since 2001 is equal to the number for the 1970's, 80's, and 90's combined. The increase is even more dramatic for monographs written by students at the School for Advanced Military Studies, a program for higher ranking officers. Since 2001 the number of projects at the SAMS that mention the phrase "Indian Country" was

⁵¹⁹ Thomas A. Bass, "Counterinsurgency and Torture," *American Quarterly* 60, no. 2 (June 13, 2008): 233–40.

58, compared to just 13 in all the years prior to 2001. To pick a more specific topic, the number of SAMS monographs that mention celebrated Indian Fighter George Crook since 2001 are thirteen, compared to just three in all the years prior. These increases mirror the increase in projects that discuss counterinsurgency warfare more generally at military command schools. I do not want to give the impression that every student is writing a thesis focused on the Indian Wars. In fact, topics vary widely. The point is that the number of projects that engage the Indian Wars has increased, in some cases sharply, with the advent of the War on Terror.⁵²⁰ Like the Counterinsurgency Field Manual these projects acknowledge the challenges posed by the Global War on Terror and argue that the Indian Wars contain valuable lessons for the modern military, particularly in regard to counterinsurgency warfare. The remainder of this chapter will focus on several characteristics that are common to these studies: an uncritical use of the word “insurgent” that positions Native people as the always-insurgent foils to US militarism; an emphasis on historical lessons that paradoxically render counterinsurgency ahistorical and apolitical; and a form of counterinsurgency “culture talk” in which simplistic readings of insurgents as primitive or tribal supposedly offer special insight into counterinsurgency, best exemplified by widespread interest in the (in)famous Indian fighter George Crook.

Always-Insurgent Indians

In many ways Indians have always been insurgents to the colonists of North America. Hundreds of years before the words “guerilla” and “insurgent” saw widespread use the Native peoples of North America were described by European colonists as skulking, elusive, and savage, language that predicted the way in which various insurgencies throughout history have been characterized. Portrayed as internal threats to an always-already established colonized

⁵²⁰ These documents can be found online at the Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library Digital Library, <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/>

reality, Native people were the specters at the edges of colonial expansion, a constant menace both material and existential. Few of the fighters that have been labeled insurgents have been able to shake these enduring tropes of elusive and supposedly uncivilized violence, the hallmarks of the insurgent.

It is no coincidence that depictions of violent Indians both predate and predict the terms in which later insurgents have been described. “Insurgent” is, or at least should be, a highly contested category. The technical definitions of “insurgency” applied by governments and militaries fall woefully short of describing the complicated cultural and political dynamics of rebellions, anti-colonial movements, civil-wars, military occupations, and the host of diverse conflicts lumped together as “insurgencies.” But that is precisely the point – if Indians were some of the first insurgents, then “insurgent” must be a deeply colonial concept that is normalized as a neutral descriptor, just as the ongoing colonialism of the United States is normalized at the expense of Native sovereignty. Insurgency typically carries competing claims of sovereignty and political authority defined by the imposition of imperial power. It is not simply that we should challenge the word “insurgent” for political reasons (although that may often be a valuable project); it is that the history of this category, particularly as used by the US government and military, emerges from the process of continental expansion and settler-colonialism, and carries with it colonial logics and ideologies. Now, more than ever, Indians are simply and uncritically “insurgents” in military writing, particularly writing that attempts to apply historical lessons to the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. The term does not have to be nuanced, massaged, or argued for. Ongoing Native sovereignty, the reality of conquest, and the historical obfuscation of Native independence and political superiority at different points in history are submerged when Indian = insurgent.

As one writer put it in a thesis submitted less than a year after September 11th, “As the United States engages in the war on terrorism in Afghanistan, it is prudent that military leaders relook [sic] the lessons of America’s Indian Wars... if insurgency is becoming the predominate [sic] form of warfare for third world countries, American senior leaders must understand its nature.”⁵²¹ The increasing preoccupation with insurgency as well as guerilla, asymmetric, and irregular warfare drove these military officers to seek out historical examples to apply to Afghanistan, Iraq, and the broader War on Terror. Writers have noted the ways in which “terrorist” became at once increasingly broad and narrow after the September 11th, applicable to a range of different groups and individuals, but defined almost entirely in Muslim and Arab terms.⁵²² The same could easily be said of “insurgent,” which became a shorthand for those contesting US occupations or allied governments all over the world. These writers, then, were not only looking for historical examples of counterinsurgency or guerilla warfare; they were looking for historical examples of insurgents.

A Master’s Thesis completed at the Command and General Staff College a year after the surge of troops into Iraq in 2007 explicitly connects contemporary insurgency to indigenous resistance to colonialism. The author argues that insurgency defined the entirety of North American colonization: “From the first European settlers to set foot on the North American continent, the conflict with Native Americans was a counterinsurgency war that ran parallel to the development and westward expansion of the United States. It was not just a conflict that was defining the American experience; it was a key formative experience for the U.S. Army during the first 115

⁵²¹ Lowell S. Yarbrough, “Asymmetrical Warfare on the Great Plains, A Review of the American Indian Wars - 1865-1891” (Master’s Thesis, Army War College, 2002), 18.

⁵²² See Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004); Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004).

years of its existence.”⁵²³ Nothing normalizes the conquest of North America like situating Native people as insurgent to colonial invasion from the moment settlers set foot on the continent.

Numerous scholars have dissected the ideologies and practices of manifest destiny, the doctrine of discovery, and the various legal, political, and ideological structures that divested Native people of their land. These are persistent, indeed, persisting concepts which continue to legitimize the occupation of Native land. This thesis, and many like it, is not simply historical but comparative. It attempts to glean a usable history from colonialism for application to the War on Terror. The way in which Indians-as-insurgents are discussed in these texts thus speaks to how “insurgents” were uncritically conceptualized by soldiers waging the War on Terror. It was enough to resist US political authority to be labeled an insurgent, a categorization which jettisons historical contexts of invasion, conquest, or empire. The history of Indian warfare has been responsible, in part, for carrying this ideological construction through US history into the present. Despite their pretention to making a strategic argument, many of these writers are simply recycling frontier mythology.

As Indians were increasingly remembered as insurgents, indigenous sovereignty, something Native nations continue to retain, was transformed into a rebellion against US political authority. Operation Neptune Spear, the 2011 mission in which Osama Bin Laden’s mission codename was “Geronimo,” was not the only instance in which a Native leader was compared to an international terrorist. As one Lieutenant Colonel put it in a research project at the US Army War College:

Both the Apaches and the Islamists possess a charismatic group of leaders. The Apaches were led by Cochise, Natchez, Victorio, Geronimo and others, names that still echo throughout the world. Today the leaders include Osama bin Laden, Mullah Omar and dozens of others unknown to most American citizens but important in their regions stretching throughout the Middle East, Asia, Europe and pockets of the United States. All these historical and current leaders preach a fantasy ideology that seek to have the US

⁵²³ Wesley M. Pirkle, “Major General George Crook’s Use of Counterinsurgency Compound Warfare during the Great Sioux War of 1876-77” (Master’s Thesis, Army Command And General Staff College, 2008), 2.

depart from “their” territories and for “the people” to return to an imagined life that is forever gone.⁵²⁴

This grouping of Apache, Taliban, and Al Qaeda leaders is not a casual analogy; all are described as preaching a “fantasy ideology” in which claims to “their” territory are specious and illegitimate. In other words, Apache leaders, according to the writer, like the leaders of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, desire to return to a primitive way of life incompatible with a US-dominated modernity. This sort of linking of counterinsurgency to supposedly primitive or anti-modern cultures will be a recurring theme of these documents.

Military historians spent the twentieth century lamenting that the Indian Wars made little-to-no doctrinal impact on the US military. And yet this flood of strategic writing focused on the Indian Wars was able to effortlessly resituate the Indian Wars as America’s counterinsurgency history. As one Army War College study puts it, “The United States has a history of military operations in a counterinsurgency from which to draw lessons and look for best practices... The lessons learned from the Indian Wars recognize the multifaceted approach necessary for counterinsurgency operations, but specifically disrupting the Indians from within gets at the type of operations that keep the United States from looking like an oppressor.”⁵²⁵ These oblique references to “disrupting from within” and not looking like the oppressor gesture towards the doctrinal development the US Army underwent in the nineteenth century, development that was masked in ways this project attempts to make visible.

The frontier Army fought Indians, but they were perhaps even more concerned with *governing* Indians, with control, regulation, and cultural transformation. As the above-quoted author puts it, “During the Indian Wars of the nineteenth century, the United States adapted

⁵²⁴ James M. Suriano, “Lessons Learned from MG George Crook’s Apache Campaigns with Applicability for the Current Global War on Terror” (Master’s Thesis, Army War College, 2003), 1.

⁵²⁵ Joseph G. Rehak, “Discrete Operations in Support of Global Counterinsurgency Operations” (Master’s Thesis, Army War College, 2007, 3-4.

tactics to the conflict and developed principles for fighting a counterinsurgency. Primary principles were close civil military coordination, firm and fair governance, and reform of education and business.”⁵²⁶ In other words, the nineteenth century US military was developing the population-centric approach to counterinsurgency that found primacy in the counterinsurgency field manual, they simply did so decades before the term was invented. Crucially, these elements that most resonate with contemporary military officers, the population-centric measures, are the elements of settler-colonialism still very much in effect, a structural and ongoing occupation beyond what the US achieved in either Iraq or Afghanistan. However, civil-military coordination was never as cohesive as this author seems to think. In fact, government institutions and the US Army were frequently at odds. We might more accurately say that the military attempted to *take on* those governing measures usually reserved for civil authorities. Here the connections between the Indian Wars and the War on Terror again reads more like déjà vu than continuity. Fair governance, business reform, and functioning civil infrastructure were certainly not hallmarks of the US occupation of Iraq, particularly in the early stages.

Some of the Master’s Thesis projects make this connection between ongoing settler-colonialism and global counterinsurgency explicit. As one officer put it in their thesis for the Command and General Staff College:

The United States government still manages the consequences of it [the Indian Wars] today through the United States Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs. While Native American tribes may no longer have the capacity to fight a protracted insurgency against the United States government, significant issues still occur, even as late as 2016,

⁵²⁶ Rehak, “Discrete Operations,” 4.

demonstrated by the large-scale protests of the Dakota Access pipeline by the Standing Rock Sioux.⁵²⁷

This writer frames ongoing-colonialism as an ongoing counterinsurgency, and the extreme, militarized response to the Standing Rock protests supports this conclusion, at least from the perspective of US government and capital interests. As scholars have shown, global empire always “comes home,” and so does counterinsurgency.⁵²⁸ The lines of militarized SWAT police officers facing down water protectors at Standing Rock reinforce this reality.

Ahistorical History Lessons

US Army Combat Studies Institute publications open with the phrase “The Past is Prologue!” – A motto that encapsulates an institutional desire to apply historical examples to contemporary conflicts. As the 2006 *Atlas of the Sioux Wars*, published by the Combat Studies Institute, argues, “while historical analogies are always fraught with danger, many of the difficulties faced by US soldiers fighting today parallel the tactical and operation dilemmas faced by soldiers fighting during the Indian Wars. Our goal is to learn from the experiences of 19th-century soldiers.”⁵²⁹ This is a desire echoed by most military graduate theses that discuss the Indian Wars. They seek to retranslate the Indian Wars back from an enduring cultural trope into a usable military history. This move is intended as a corrective to both the lack of doctrinal development that occurred during the nineteenth century and the broader military amnesia around small-wars and counterinsurgencies. The Indian Wars are a ready example on which to draw, viewed, for the most part, uncritically as a success. They offer up seductive comparative

⁵²⁷ Nicholas J. Cruz, “General George Crooks Development as a Practitioner of Irregular Warfare During the Indian Wars” (Master’s Thesis, Army Command And General Staff College, 2017, 3.

⁵²⁸ See Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).

⁵²⁹ Charles D. Collins and William Glenn Robertson, *Atlas of the Sioux Wars* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006).

frameworks to wars in places like Afghanistan or Iraq: deserts, mountains, and tribes. The Indian Wars become case-studies; they offer historical examples that can be applied to the present. Critically, the “case” almost always has to do with perceived tactical or cultural similarities divested of political and historical context. In other words, these are historical case studies *outside of history*. As Laleh Khalili shows in her careful historiography of Western counterinsurgency doctrine, counterinsurgency rejects politics and history, turning insurgency into a series of technical problems to be solved, removed from their historical context.⁵³⁰ To Khalili’s analysis I would add “culture” as an object of counterinsurgency problem-solving. The ready comparison that strategic writing makes between Arizona and Afghanistan, between the northern plains and the streets of Baghdad, has more to do with cultural ideas about Native people and the Indian Wars than it does actual history. It betrays the ways in which cultural depictions of Indians structure the American discourse around insurgency.

A recent Master’s Thesis completed at the Command and General Staff College argues that “The history of the United States provides many examples, which yield fruitful insight into the very nature of Irregular Warfare, perhaps none more so than the struggle to subdue the Native Americans in the American West.”⁵³¹ The author, like many other modern counterinsurgents, elevates the Indian Wars to the primary example of irregular warfare in US history. Many of the theses use a similarly simplistic compare-and-contrast formula to offer recommendations for the War On Terror, peppering their highly technical accounts with words like “tribal,” “civilized,” and “primitive.” These words traffic in a long history of Native representation that serves to collapse the distance and difference between nineteenth century North America and twenty-first century Afghanistan:

⁵³⁰ Khalili, *Time in the Shadows*, 5.

⁵³¹ Cruz, “General George Crook,” 2.

In both the Indian Wars and Afghanistan, the United States has been far superior in numbers, technology, and wealth. The enemy in each case was cunning and ruthless, and seemed to adroitly counter our main advantages in a manner that suited their strengths. The enemy in both cases was a tribal based society with a warrior ethos that put a premium on fighting ability. These cultures liked to fight: whether against tribal competitors or when appropriate united against a common invading foe. It cannot be assumed that as in most civilized societies, the populace even desires a peaceful solution. When war is all that is known, it becomes the norm. If it is a culture's nature to be warlike, then it is extremely difficult to change. The United States government took a similar approach in each case by attempting to apply western models of governance, when in reality those models would never work. These tribal societies were primitive, and existed for hundreds, if not thousands, of years without a semblance of an organized governing body.⁵³²

These reductive comparisons between Native people and the various anti-US forces in Afghanistan rely on a simplistic and erroneous understandings of tribal societies. Indeed, the above-quoted passage does not cite any secondary literature for the conclusions drawn about the inherently warlike societies of Afghans and Native peoples in North America. And while we might not hold a Master's Thesis project to the same standards as a published piece of scholarship, this mode of historical comparative analysis is consistent across much of the recent literature on counterinsurgency. These writers, COINdinitas as they are often known, tend to flatten out the diverse histories and motivations of groups that have found themselves defined as insurgent to US authority. In the above example, the invasion and conquest of North America is invisible, as is the complicated colonial history of Western and Soviet influence on Afghanistan. Instead, the differences are rendered as cultural; insurgent tactics emanate from a societal warrior ethos. These depictions of Native people are amplified by the deluge of movies, television, novels, art, and other cultural representations that have proliferated images of violent Indians in US culture. As Hannah Gurman has argued, a perception of threat, criminality, and potential for violence, relative to US interests, functions as the true barometer for insurgency in much of the

⁵³² Michael G. Miller, "Red Cloud's War: An Insurgency Case Study for Modern Times" (Master's Thesis, Army War College, 2011), 44.

literature on counterinsurgency.⁵³³ And Native people are the original, enduring threat in the colonial imaginaries of the United States.

Even when military studies of counterinsurgency history attempt to focus on technical comparisons they serve to reinforce the overwhelmingly cultural place that the Indian Wars occupy in US military doctrine. As one study of the Nez Perce argues,

The insurgents and terrorists in today's GWOT are often similar to the Nez Perce of old. They take advantage of the local lay of the land. They use local transportation, in this case indigenous vehicles, versus the horses of old, but the parallels are evident. Today's terrorist feed off of the local population similar to how the Nez Perce fed from the land. The similarities could go on and on, but the key point to focus on is how the US military must NOT be like the US Cavalry of old in pursuit of the Nez Perce.⁵³⁴

This particular officer is highly critical of the US military's approach to the war with the Nez Perce in 1877, cautioning that this particular conflict should offer lessons on what *not* to do in

Afghanistan. Focused less on cultural differences and more on tactical and strategic practices,

this study seems, at first glance, to jettison some of the cultural baggage that defines modern

counterinsurgency theory focused on the Indian Wars. The author notes that the US Army

underwent an internal evaluation of the pursuit of the Nez Perce, publishing a collection of

recommendations for cavalry training solicited by General Oliver Otis Howard.⁵³⁵ However, the

thesis cites an 1862 cavalry manual titled *Cavalry Tactics* as the source of these

recommendations, a manual published fifteen years before the Nez Perce War occurred.⁵³⁶

Perhaps a simple citation error by the thesis writer, this mistake nonetheless emphasizes the

fleeting-to-nonexistent record that the Indian Wars left in written US military doctrine. Howard's

⁵³³ Hannah Gurman, ed. *Hearts and Minds: A People's History of Counterinsurgency* (New York: The New Press, 2013), 7.

⁵³⁴ Scott E. Pfau, "The Nez Perce Flight to Canada: An Analysis of the Nez Perce-US Cavalry Conflicts: Applying Historical Lessons Learned to Modern Counterinsurgency and Global War on Terrorism Operations" (Master's Thesis: Army Command and General Staff College, 2006), 22.

⁵³⁵ Pfau, "The Nez Perce Flight," 19-20.

⁵³⁶ Philip St George Cooke, *Cavalry Tactics; or Regulations for the Instruction, Formations, and Movements of the Cavalry of the Army and Volunteers of the United States*. (New York: J.W. Fortune, 1864).

recommendations made it into a report that was then published in the *Army and Navy Journal*, but ultimately they had little impact, failing to become permanently entrenched in written or institutional doctrine.⁵³⁷ They certainly were not published in a manual that appeared fifteen years earlier. This confusion emphasizes the difficulty that contemporary soldiers have in applying “lessons” from the Indian Wars to the War on Terror. We should view these sorts of comparative analysis cautiously, attentive to the ways in which they rely on culturally-constructed ideas about Indians-as-Insurgents to compensate for the lack of an institutional record on Indian Warfare.

The historical lessons that officers attempt to glean from the Indian Wars are not only an academic exercise. They are studies undertaken by soldiers with combat experience, who pursue their Master’s research with an eye towards lessons applicable to future deployments and conflicts. This is the approach taken by a 2009 Master’s thesis written at the Naval Postgraduate School titled “The Future of Raiding: Lessons in Raiding Tactics from the Indian Wars and Law Enforcement.” In this study the Indian Wars and police techniques for disrupting street gangs are used as historical examples relevant to the War on Terror. The thesis argues “through the study of the Indian Wars from 1800–1890, and law enforcement raiding techniques used against gangs in the United States, that utilizing the appropriate raiding technique at the correct time and place under the appropriate circumstances can significantly disrupt or destroy networked terrorist organizations.” The purpose is technical and attempts to deploy historical analysis in pursuit of strategic and tactical ends. The author has combat experience, having deployed for forty months in both Iraq and Afghanistan from 2001 to 2007 in conventional and Special Forces operations. The study is thus personal for this particular officer: “One aim of this thesis is to explore raiding

⁵³⁷ Jerome A. Greene, “Nez Perce Summer, 1877: The U.S. Army and the Nee-Me-Poo Crisis,” *Montana Historical Society*, 2001, 331-332.

techniques that may be used in specific situations to help units like the ones to which I have been assigned.”⁵³⁸ The author continues to be involved in the Army’s developing counterinsurgency programs. These include the Security Force Assistance Brigades, designed to provide advice and assistance in the development of security forces in partner nations.⁵³⁹ This particular thesis thus offers a window into how an officer involved in the ongoing development of US counterinsurgency doctrine understands the Indian Wars in relation to the War on Terror.

“The Future of Raiding” draws a number of lessons from the Indian Wars that center on acceptable limits for military violence. The author grapples with many of the same questions that nineteenth century Army officers and politicians had to face, and arrives at similar conclusions that reframe the logic of defensive conquest that accompanied continental expansion into a modern biopolitical security discourse: US foreign wars and interventions are supposed to make the world safer, not more violent. Just as nineteenth century writers elevated Native people to a physical and existential threat that served to justify the invasion of Native land, the War on Terror has mobilized discourses of security to justify invasion, occupation, and the suspension of the rule of law in places like Guantanamo Bay, while simultaneously framing counterinsurgency around questions of development, aid, and “winning hearts and minds.”⁵⁴⁰ In the global discourse

⁵³⁸ Corey A. Brunkow, “The Future of Raiding: Lessons in Raiding Tactics from the Indian Wars and Law Enforcement” (Master’s Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2009, Abstract-3.

⁵³⁹ “Army Moves Closer to Establishing First Security Force Assistance Brigade.” Accessed January 10, 2018. https://www.army.mil/article/187991/army_moves_closer_to_establishing_first_security_force_assistance_brigade.

⁵⁴⁰ Security is a concept that rose to prominence after World War 2 and saw a burst of scholarly interest during the 1990’s and the War on Terror. It shifts the emphasis from the state (national defense) to individuals, and makes human security a global priority expressed in practices like humanitarianism and development. The War on Terror thus, according to Larrinaga and Doucet, exercises often-indiscriminate sovereign violence on subjects that have been redefined in biopolitical terms: violence increases global security, allows the global population to live. See Miguel De Larrinaga, and Marc G. Doucet. “Sovereign Power and the Biopolitics of Human Security.” *Security Dialogue* 39, no. 5 (October 1, 2008): 517–37; Giorgio Agamben, and Carolin Emcke, “Security and Terror” *Theory & Event* 5, no. 4 (January 1, 2001); Brad Evans, *Liberal Terror* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013).

of the War on Terror violence is pursued not solely to defeat enemies, but to make the world safe; you kill so that all may live. The author of “The Future of Raiding” argues that

We should always look to historical cases to find ways to improve our current techniques. It may be necessary to kill a large number of one’s enemy in order to defeat his will to fight... It is also important to treat civilians as well as captured enemy personnel with humanity. Taking family members captive, as the Plains Indians did so frequently, may be a logical and humane way to force terrorists to surrender (while this method may be called into question by current international laws of war). Finally, the ruthless cavalry techniques used against the Indians may be justified in some cases when it is required to kill your enemy and defeat his way of life in order to preserve your own.⁵⁴¹

In this fascinating passage the writer flirts with captive taking as a counterterrorism measure but ultimately dismisses it as a likely violation of the rules of warfare. However, we might question whether captive taking was restricted to the Plains Indians (it was not) or whether the United States refrained from a modern analog to captive taking (it has not). However, the interesting portions of this argument deal with killing; the necessity of killing large numbers of the enemy, and the latter claim that it may be required to kill your enemy in order to preserve one’s own way of life. In one paragraph we thus are taken from a sovereign formulation of total warfare (kill to eliminate the enemies' will to fight) to a biopolitical formulation (kill the enemy to preserve life).⁵⁴² This experienced counterinsurgent thus links the violence of the Indian Wars directly to the War on Terror and does so in a manner that emphasizes the biopolitical logic behind counterinsurgencies both in the nineteenth and the twenty-first centuries. The Indian Wars instituted a biopolitical logic into US colonial violence that persists, both in cultural depictions of “Indianness” and in the material conditions of ongoing US colonialism.

The history lesson is that increasing brutality may be the only way to handle outlaws and insurgents. The author argues that “the Indian wars offer an underutilized wealth of information

⁵⁴¹ Brunkow, “The Future of Raiding,” 4.

⁵⁴² For Foucault’s formulation of sovereign power and biopower, see Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76* (New York: Picador, 2003), 240-241.

concerning how governments should handle outlaw groups,” and later concludes that “Killing Indians in sufficient numbers and with increasing brutality after the Civil War did eventually break the will of most nomadic tribes, and caused them to move to reservations and live under United States protection and rules.”⁵⁴³ Examples including the Sand Creek massacre and the attacks on Lakota and Cheyenne during the winter of 1876 are used to demonstrate the effectiveness of this counter-raiding strategy, in which Native populations were targeted directly with violence. The author concludes that the indiscriminate violence of the Indian Wars “should never again seem to be necessary, but in dealing with people who believe their atrocities are justified by a higher power, such as salafi jihadists, this may be more applicable than most Americans realize.”⁵⁴⁴ The enemies of the various wars under the umbrella of the War on Terror cannot be reduced to salafi jihadists, and the consistent refrain of “terrorist” functions as a racializing move that helps to resolve the tension between liberal norms of government and the illiberal practices such as indefinite detention and extrajudicial killing.⁵⁴⁵ Racialized enemies can be subjected to exceptional forms of state violence in the service of protecting an amorphous global population, a discursive move that relies on simplistic notions of culture.

Counterinsurgency Culture Talk

In a 2005 issue of the *Military Review*, the professional journal of the US Army, anthropologist Montgomery McFate lamented that “once called ‘the handmaiden of colonialism,’ anthropology has had a long, fruitful relationship with various elements of national power, which ended suddenly following the Vietnam War. The strange story of anthropology’s birth as a warfighting discipline, and its sudden plunge into the abyss of postmodernism, is intertwined

⁵⁴³ Brunkow, “The Future of Raiding,” 6, 38.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid, 74.

⁵⁴⁵ Laleh Khalili outlines this relationship brilliantly in the introduction to *Time in the Shadows*. See Khalili, *Time in the Shadows*, 1-6.

with the U.S. failure in Vietnam.” In the conclusion to that same article, McFate argues that the “DOD yearns for cultural knowledge, but anthropologists en masse, bound by their own ethical code and sunk in a mire of postmodernism, are unlikely to contribute much of value to reshaping national security policy or practice.”⁵⁴⁶ It may sound strange to hear an anthropologist, a discipline that is no stranger to theory, bemoan the “abyss of postmodernism” and bemoan the decline of social scientific collaboration with the US military. However, Montgomery McFate is something of an outlier among twenty-first century anthropologists, intimately connected to the US military and the network of think tanks, private contractors, and policy groups that permeate America’s militarized culture. Currently a professor at the US Naval War College, McFate contributed to Field Manual 3-24, Counterinsurgency, and helped develop the US Army’s Human Terrain System, which placed social scientists inside military units.⁵⁴⁷ The HTS ended in 2014 and was a source of continuous controversy, including a 2007 statement from the executive board of the American Anthropological Association calling the program incompatible with disciplinary ethics.⁵⁴⁸ A longtime participant and advocate for social scientific collaboration with the US military, McFate’s efforts to incorporate “cultural knowledge” into the War on Terror and the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq was one element in a surge of what we might call “cultural thinking” in the US military since 2001.

In the same 2005 article McFate argued that coalition forces in Iraq “have been fighting a complex war against an enemy they do not understand. The insurgents’ organizational structure

⁵⁴⁶ Montgomery McFate, “Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of Their Curious Relationship.” *Military Review* 85, no. 2 (April 2005): 24–37, 24, 37.

⁵⁴⁷ “Bio | Montgomery McFate.” Accessed January 12, 2018. <http://montgomerymcfate.com/bio/>.

⁵⁴⁸ “CEAUSSIC Releases Final Report on Army HTS Program - Participate & Advocate.” Accessed January 12, 2018. <http://www.americananthro.org/issues/policy-advocacy/statement-on-HTS.cfm>.

is not military, but tribal. Their tactics are not conventional, but asymmetrical.” The answer, according to McFate, was increased attention to culture as a key military focus:

Countering the insurgency in Iraq requires cultural and social knowledge of the adversary. Yet, none of the elements of U.S. national power—diplomatic, military, intelligence, or economic—explicitly take adversary culture into account in the formation or execution of policy. This cultural knowledge gap has a simple cause—the almost total absence of anthropology within the national-security establishment.⁵⁴⁹

McFate was not alone in calling for increased attention to culture as a key component of the burgeoning counterinsurgency revolution in the US military, even if she may have been a minority among academic anthropologists. This preoccupation with culture would be enshrined in the counterinsurgency field manual published in 2006, which declared that “cultural knowledge is essential to waging a successful counterinsurgency.”⁵⁵⁰ However, the military’s increasing attention to culture as a key component of warfare was not without critics, both within the military and without. In 2007 a group of anthropologists formed the Network of Concerned Anthropologists, and, similarly to the aforementioned statement from the American Anthropological Association, questioned the ethical and academic implications of anthropologists participating in US military operations, what some dubbed “mercenary anthropology” and famous anthropologists Marshall Sahlins called “a planetary strategy of research and destroy.”⁵⁵¹ Anna Simons, an anthropologist and professor in the Department of Defense Analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School, took aim at both “parachute anthropologists” and “concerned anthropologists” in a 2011 article, decrying the former for

⁵⁴⁹ Mcfate, “Anthropology and Counterinsurgency,” 24.

⁵⁵⁰ *Counterinsurgency Field Manual*, 27.

⁵⁵¹ Catherine Lowe Besteman, *The Counter-Counterinsurgency Manual: Or, Notes on Demilitarizing American Society* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2009), iii.

overselling the usefulness of anthropology to counterinsurgency warfare, and the later for having a political axe to grind, too caught up in theoretical “naval gazing.”⁵⁵²

These controversies over the use of “culture” as a crucial element of US military strategy provide some context for my focus in the remainder of this chapter: military writing that emphasizes the importance of cultural understanding in both the Indian Wars and the War on Terror. Culture, understood in simplistic terms, is an attractive concept for the counterinsurgency experts of the War on Terror, because if violence and resistance can be understood in cultural terms it allows strategists to downplay or ignore the political and historical context of the various organizations, military and paramilitary forces, and resistance movements that are positioned as insurgents to the United States and its allies. It comes as no surprise that Native American peoples, perhaps the archetypal “savage” of the western colonial imaginary, have proven such an attractive comparative framework for analyzing the cultural aspects of the War on Terror. These arguments, couched in the language of military strategy, engage in what Mahmood Mamdani calls “culture talk.” These are discourses that de-politicize and de-historicize entire groups of people, focusing instead on a supposed “cultural essence” which explains any number of actions, including terrorism. Culture talk tends to position populations as either premodern or anti-modern, tribalists and fundamentalists opposed to a “modernity” that is code for US global hegemony. Two of the most visible originators of culture talk are Bernard Lewis, who coined the phrase “clash of civilizations” in his 1990 article “The Roots of Muslim Rage,” and Samuel Huntington, who, expanding Lewis’ argument, wrote in his 1993 article “The Clash of Civilizations” that “the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily

⁵⁵² Robert Tomes, William Natter, and Paul Brister, *Hybrid Warfare and Transnational Threats: Perspectives for an Era of Persistent Conflict* (CENSA, 2011), 83-91. For a military critique of the Human Terrain System, see Ben Connable, “All Our Eggs in a Broken Basket: How the Human Terrain System Is Undermining Sustainable Military Cultural Competence.” *Military Review* 89, no. 2 (April 2009): 57–64.

ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural.”⁵⁵³

The infusion of social scientific thinking into the US military approach to counterinsurgency is its own form of culture talk. In the strategic turmoil that resulted from the growing resistance to the occupation of Iraq, culture was elevated to a near-mythical key to counterinsurgency success, both as a method to “win hearts and minds” and to better deploy military violence in the complex environments of the War on Terror. Whereas Mamdani’s “culture talk” is the stuff of international studies and public policy, the culture talk of counterinsurgency has attempted to transplant academic discourse into the blood, sweat, and violence of the War on Terror. The counterinsurgency field manual includes extensive discussion of culture, race, ethnicity, and other categories of social organization and difference. But despite celebration of the field manual’s academic rigor, scholars have questioned just how scholarly the document’s deployment of social scientific thinking really is. David Price has noted numerous instances of the manual’s authors directly quoting academic work without using quotation marks and the widespread use of unacknowledged source materials. This simplistic regurgitation of anthropological concepts does little more than legitimate military occupation: critiques of colonialism, empire, power, and cultural domination can be discarded, and basic instruction in local manners and customs is translated into a more effective form of conquest and occupation.⁵⁵⁴ The culture talk of counterinsurgency, unsurprisingly, has served as a popular way to connect the Indian Wars to the War on Terror in recent military strategic writing. North American colonialism is the first and most enduring conquest that the US military has ever been

⁵⁵³ Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, 11-21.

⁵⁵⁴ Price, “The Counter-Counterinsurgency,” 72-75.

involved in, and perhaps no group of people has had their diverse cultures subjected to investigation, critique, and mythologizing than Native people.

Characteristic of these arguments is the idea that improved cultural understanding will translate into success in warfare. This is how culture talk divests analysis of political and historical context. According to a 2013 study titled “Savages in a Civilized War: The Native Americans as French Allies in the Seven Years War, 1754-1763,”

The modern army officer can learn much from the study of the French and Indian War. While a scholar would most likely focus on the British as the victors, the French, in defeat, also hold many valuable lessons for today’s soldier. These are lessons that we see executed day after day in the hybrid battlefields of Afghanistan and other places where the light footprint combined force will be used with an allied partner force. We find that knowledge of culture, of understanding your allies, and the very nature of warfare in your environment is key.⁵⁵⁵

This study examines the French army’s cooperation with Native allies during the conflict, allies who wage a form of “savage frontier warfare” that French officers often found distasteful. The author compares this history to contemporary partner forces in place like Afghanistan, who are deemed, through comparison to Native people, to be similarly savage and irregular, requiring a unique approach that begins with cultural understanding. He argues that “understanding an irregular force’s culture is crucial for success.”⁵⁵⁶ This is another way of saying that irregular warfare is a cultural practice, a primitive practice. Irregular warfare is “cultural,” it is backwards, and it requires special understanding that focuses on culture and not political context.

Much of the counterinsurgent culture talk deals with so-called “tribalism.” For these writers tribalism *creates* irregular warfare; in other words, insurgency emanates from the tribal (subtext: primitive) social structure of enemies in places like Afghanistan. Perhaps nowhere is this culture talk more prominent than the thesis titled “A Study of the Need for Cross-Cultural

⁵⁵⁵ Adam Bancroft, “Savages in a Civilized War: The Native Americans as French Allies in the Seven Years War, 1754-1763” (Master’s Thesis, Army Command And General Staff College, 2013), 128.

⁵⁵⁶ Bancroft, “Savages in a Civilized War,” Abstract.

Capability Development in the Members of the United States Military.” Cultural understanding is held up as the solution to the problems of colonial violence, capable of avoiding conflicts like the Nez Perce War and the Trail of Tears. Like others, the author emphasizes that unconventional or asymmetrical warfare demands a particular approach to culture: “Understanding how culture influences the many dimensions of society has become increasingly more important as military actions continue to expand outside the margins of symmetrical warfare.”⁵⁵⁷

The “tribalism” of Native peoples and groups in Afghanistan and Iraq forms the basis for these comparisons. As one study argues,

The American Indian Wars share some similarities with the Global War on Terror. The vast number of Indian tribes is comparable to the variety of terrorist groups that make up *al Qaeda*, as well as those groups not affiliated with *al Qaeda*. Additionally, the diversity of the tribal cultures of Indians is similar to the cultural differences faced throughout the Muslim world. Just as a Sioux is not a Cheyenne, Cherokee, or Apache, neither is an Arab the same as a Persian, Malaysian, or Balkan Muslim.⁵⁵⁸

At no point in this study is “tribe” or “tribalism” defined through reference to other scholarship.

The reference to tribal diversity has the opposite effect, “tribalism” itself being far more important than actual differences between Cheyenne and Apache (or Arab and Malaysian Muslims). Another study titled “There Shall We Be Also: Tribal Fractures and Auxiliaries in the Indian Wars of the Northern Great Plains” elevates conflict with “tribes” to a central component of US military history. The author argues that the United States has a continuous history of dealing with so-called tribal societies: “From its beginning in the American Revolution to its current conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States (US) Army has had to deal with tribal societies. In order to succeed in tribal societies it is essential that the US Army understand tribal

⁵⁵⁷ Michael W. Kamorski, “A Study of the Need for Cross-Cultural Capability Development in the Members of the United States Military” (Master’s Thesis, Army Command and General Staff College, 2006), 59.

⁵⁵⁸ John D. Cross, “Decisive Battle and the Global War on Terror” (Master’s Thesis, Army Command and General Staff College, 2005), 39.

structures and the fractures in tribal societies that present opportunities and possible solutions.”⁵⁵⁹ According to this study the Indian Wars offer perfect examples of tribal warfare to draw on: “The Indian Wars on the Great Plains from 1865-1890 clearly demonstrated that natural fractures and structures of tribal societies provide opportunities for the use of tribal auxiliaries.”⁵⁶⁰

The author arrives at the conclusion that tribes are fractured, and therefore open for exploitation through their lack of cohesion. This is consistent across many of these documents that discuss culture, particularly in the research that discusses the use of Native scouts by the US Army. According to the author, tribes are defined by their fractured nature, a lack of cohesion that the counterinsurgent can exploit: “One has to look no further than the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan to see that tribes play a significant role in current operations. Tribal rivalries and competition play a critical role as each tribe decides to support either the insurgency or the United States (US). A common technique developed in both Iraq and Afghanistan is the use of tribal auxiliaries or militias to assist in providing security and stability.”⁵⁶¹ This mirrors the frequent incredulity with which US settlers viewed Native resistance: in other words, how come Native tribes do not unite against us? This sort of viewpoint divests Native people (and all tribal people) of complicated motivating factors based on politics, economics, and more.

In this same thesis tribalism is linked to counterinsurgency, and insurgency is projected to be the future of warfare. Thus, tribalism is the future of warfare:

The current conflicts and the fact that tribal societies dominate large portions of the world indicate that the US Army needs to consider multiple ways to deal with conflict and issues in tribal societies. US Army doctrine is lacking when it comes to dealing with tribal structures or the possibility of using tribal auxiliaries. It should be an element of

⁵⁵⁹ Jason E. Warner, “There Shall We Be Also: Tribal Fractures and Auxiliaries in the Indian Wars of the Northern Great Plains” (Master’s Thesis, Army Command And General Staff College, 2008), Abstract.

⁵⁶⁰ Warner, “There Shall We Be,” 53.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid, 1.

any doctrine that discusses counterinsurgency, irregular, or guerilla warfare as tribal societies dominate many regions of the world in which the US could use tribal auxiliaries to support these styles of warfare. Current doctrine on counterinsurgency, guerilla warfare, and foreign internal defense mention the population or indigenous forces as critical, but do not go into the depth or discuss how to exploit tribal societies.⁵⁶² A thesis titled “Tribal Identity and Conflicts with Tribes” completed at the War College similarly argues that tribes are the future of warfare: “the preponderance of conflicts in our nation’s future will be against foes of a tribal nature. As such, it is not likely that these tribes will possess the assets or size of a nation-state. Understanding the tribal foe, their culture, and unique identity will be critical to strategic success for the United States.”⁵⁶³ These tribes are understood to be outside of time, history, and politics: “Tribes operate outside modern political, economic, and military systems.”⁵⁶⁴ For this author tribes exist at the fringes of a modernity they oppose. The argument is that the US military simply has to understand why tribes do what they do, no matter how irrational or barbaric it may be: “One of the issues the nation clearly has difficulties with is seeing things as our enemies see them. This is not to say that we should lower ourselves to their “barbaric” standards (though that is an option.) Rather we should attempt to understand why they do what they do. It is hard to be empathetic with a group that hunts down and tortures members of another group - particularly when both groups have the same language and similar customs and rituals.”⁵⁶⁵ Given that these tribal peoples supposedly operate outside the confines of politics or economics, the author attempts to apply a cultural frame of analysis to their “barbaric” practices. One is left to wonder where that metric leaves the United States. History tells us that killing and torture are not restricted to America’s “primitive” enemies.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶² Warner, “There Shall We Be,” 53.

⁵⁶³ Alan Clarke, “Tribal Identity and Conflicts with Tribes” (Master’s Thesis, Army War College, 2008), Abstract.

⁵⁶⁴ Clarke, “Tribal Identity,” 19.

⁵⁶⁵ Clarke, “Tribal Identity,” 6.

⁵⁶⁶ Paul Kramer, “The Water Cure” *The New Yorker*, February 18, 2008.
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2008/02/25/the-water-cure>.

Some of these military documents take seriously Native resistance to colonialism and acknowledge the pressures that resulted from conquest. The writer of a thesis titled “Uncomfortable Experience: Lessons Lost in the Apache War” is an example, noting, for instance, the influence that the reservation system had on Nazi Germany. But attention to conquest only goes so far. While discussing the invasion of Apache land in the southwest the author uses “lack of cultural understanding” as the reason that Apache people did not want to be removed to remote and unhealthy reservations. Culture becomes another way to get around talking about conquest. It is unlikely that greater understandings of Apache culture would have prevented Apache resistance to invasion. This sort of analysis is applied to the occupation of Iraq, and similar conclusions are drawn: “At the highest levels, the United States’ removal policy shares many parallels with the Bush administration’s decision to implement de-Ba’athification and disband the Iraqi national army in Iraq following Operation Iraqi Freedom. In both instances, the government failed to recognize the implications of their decisions, which were based on gross over-simplifications of cultural understanding.”⁵⁶⁷ One is left to wonder whether the presence of several anthropologists in the Bush administration would have resulted in a different geopolitical trajectory. It seems unlikely. But the pervasive idea that “cultural understanding” can minimize missteps in warfare shows just how deeply rooted counterinsurgency-culture is in the legacy of colonialism. Simplistic discussions of culture narrow the frame, reducing largescale questions of imperialism and conquest down to communities and individuals. The question becomes: “how can we keep them from resisting,” rather than “why are they resisting?”

⁵⁶⁷ Jason E. Martos, “Uncomfortable Experience: Lessons Lost in the Apache War” (Master’s Thesis, Air Command And Staff College, 2015), 15.

The Quintessential Counterinsurgent

No frontier officer gets more credit for understanding Native culture than George Crook, a US Army General who served all over the United States during the Indian Wars. The editor of Crook's autobiography calls the general "the acknowledged master" of Indian fighting. Robert M. Cassidy, a veteran of the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, refers to Crook in his 2008 book *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror* as "the quintessential counterinsurgent leader."⁵⁶⁸ Crook has proven a popular topic for US military officers that study counterinsurgency. He is the focus of more research projects completed by officers than any other topic from the Indian Wars and is mentioned in several of the publications from the Global War on Terrorism series from the Combat Studies Institute. Crook is something of a counterinsurgency legend in military Master's Thesis projects, a mythical frontier officer that demonstrates practical and tangible lessons for modern counterinsurgency. A study from 2001 titled "General Crook and Counterinsurgency Warfare" argues that "General Crook was one of the few senior officers who spent the majority of his military career conducting counterinsurgency operations. He left a written record of that history, a record that did not make its way into doctrine."⁵⁶⁹ Due to this lack of doctrinal continuity, more than a historical lesson, Crook is rendered as the precedent for contemporary counterinsurgency warfare. That same Master's Thesis claims that:

The antecedents of how the U.S. Army conducts its stability and support operations in the present day can be directly related to how the military conducted operations against the Indians in the nineteenth century. The current emphasis in stability operations on mobility, continuous operations, small unit leadership, and self-sufficiency are all directly

⁵⁶⁸ George Crook, *General George Crook, His Autobiography* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), XIII; Robert M. Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror: Military Culture and Irregular War* (Westport, Praeger Security International, 2006), 132.

⁵⁶⁹ William L. Greenberg, "General Crook and Counterinsurgency Warfare" (Master's Thesis, Army Command And General Staff, 2001), 1.

related to the U.S. Army's experience fighting the Indians. This continuity of experience needs to be understood by the military.⁵⁷⁰ But are they directly related? This entire project has focused on how the Indian Wars, while exercising a powerful and continuous hold on the US military, failed to make a lasting impact on military doctrine during the nineteenth century. This "continuity of experience" did not receive broad acknowledgement in the US military until the twenty-first century. Crook even wrote up a detailed "resume of operations" that outlined his approach to Indian warfare, defending his use of Apache scouts and his actions during the campaigns against Geronimo and the Chiricahua Apache. However, the military refused to publish the *Resume*, recognizing that it was Crook's attempt to defend his actions and unwilling to aggravate an already bitter debate over Crook's and Nelson A. Miles' responsibility for ending Apache military resistance.⁵⁷¹ Crook ultimately self-published his *Resume of Operations Against Apache Indians, 1882-1886* in limited quantities, but it has remained a scarce item, and certainly never entered formal US military doctrine.

Nevertheless, contemporary counterinsurgency thinkers hold Crook up as a crucial part of America's counterinsurgency legacy:

Crook had a clear and definitive set of operational and tactical procedures to conduct counterinsurgency operations that he developed through experience and experimentation. These counterinsurgency procedures, though never written down or codified, were passed on to following generations of army officers as a successful way of conducting a counterinsurgency campaign. Whether it is MacArthur on Luzon or Pershing in Moroland and Mexico, one can see the outline of Crook's techniques in these successful campaigns. A generation of officers served with Crook in the southwest, where they gained an appreciation of the complexities of combating an insurgency and the knowledge on how to solve those complexities and gain success in a counterinsurgency environment. This is the legacy that Crook left the United States Army.⁵⁷²

⁵⁷⁰ Greenberg, "General Crook," 1.

⁵⁷¹ George Crook, *Crook's Resumé of Operations against Apache Indians, 1882 to 1886* (Omaha, George Crook, 1886), 1-5.

⁵⁷² Greenberg, "General Crook," 112.

It is reasonable to assume that officers like MacArthur and Pershing carried an influence from Crook's southwestern campaigns with them across borders and overseas. Many of the officers who served under Crook and Miles in the southwest went on to lead the US Army during the Spanish-American War, the Philippines-American War, and World War One. But once these officers left the military Crook's knowledge would have left with them, so we can question just how much of a legacy Crook left behind. It is more accurate to say that there is a renewed interest in George Crook, interest driven by Crook's reputation as a frontier officer willing to take Native cultures seriously.

Take, for example, this analysis of Crook in a Master's Thesis completed by a Marine Corps Major at the USMC Command and Staff College titled "Redskins in Bluecoats: A Strategic and Cultural Analysis of General N/A George Crook's Use of Apache Scouts in the Second Apache Campaign, 1882-1886"⁵⁷³:

During General George Crook's Second Apache Campaign (1882-1886), his unique approach to the use of Apache scouts and his culturally sensitive leadership were so misunderstood by his contemporaries that it eventually led to his resignation of command and the imprisonment of all Chiricahua Apache scouts who faithfully served the US Army following General Nelson Miles' successful completion of the Apache campaign.⁵⁷⁴

The author's emphasis on culturally sensitive leadership evokes the sort of culture-talk discussed in the previous section, providing the basis for Crook's attractiveness as a historical example of counterinsurgency. According to this study, and others, Crook *understood* Apache people, at least more than his peers, making him the ideal counterinsurgency example for the War on Terror. As the author notes, this sort of cultural sensitivity is essential in a war with "indigenous

⁵⁷³ It is unclear whether the author is consciously playing on Fanon's *Black Skins White Masks* with the title, but in an Author's Note they address the charged language of the title, saying "The use of the term Redskin and Injun are being used in their then contemporary pejorative context to highlight the irony of different races and their interaction in the US Army, as identified by the colors red, white, and blue."

⁵⁷⁴ Michael J. Livingston, "Redskins in Bluecoats: A Strategic and Cultural Analysis of General George Crook's Use of Apache Scouts in the Second Apache Campaign, 1882-1886" (Master's Thesis, Marine Corps Command And Staff College, 2010) Executive Summary.

peoples” with whom the US military alternates between combat and the provision of humanitarian assistance: “The military, as an organization, is more understanding of the cultural dimensions of warfare today and how this makes a huge impact on the success of its current campaigns.”⁵⁷⁵ The bulk of the study focuses on Crook’s success utilizing Apache scouts in his operations. Crook did not attempt to turn Apache warriors into US soldiers; rather, he utilized their unique skills and experience in traveling and tracking in the arid southwest, and they proved extremely effective in enabling the US Army to track down and engage resistant Apache bands.⁵⁷⁶ The Army’s use of Native scouts generated plenty of resistance but Crook consistently defended the practice, and ultimately was vindicated by the integral role Apache scouts played in the final surrender of Geronimo and other Apache holdouts in 1886. As Crook argued in his *Resume of Operations*, “there has never been any success in operations against these Indians, unless Indian scouts were used either as auxiliaries or independent of other support.”⁵⁷⁷ At the very least, Crook was able to convince Apache individuals to enlist in the military and serve effectively, a cross-cultural step that many of his contemporaries balked at. Crook’s use of scouts is given particular weight for the supposedly “cultural” effect they have. As the thesis “Major General George Crook's Use of Counterinsurgency Compound Warfare during the Great Sioux War of 1876-77” argues, “A highly skilled conventional force fighting an insurgency will often face significant cultural, ethnic, linguistic and physical challenges. An irregular, indigenous force can fill the gap and meet many of these challenges by working in concert with the conventional force.”⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁵ Livingston, “Redskins in Bluecoats,” vi.

⁵⁷⁶ Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers: Indian Scouts and Auxiliaries with the United States Army, 1860-90* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 165-169.

⁵⁷⁷ Crook “Resume of Operations,” 21.

⁵⁷⁸ Pirkle, “Major General George Crook,” 4.

Crook is also famous as one of the more Native-friendly US generals, which, at least comparatively speaking, has some basis in reality. For example, when he resumed command of the Department of Arizona in 1882 he issued a general order that, among other directives, proclaimed that “officers and soldiers serving in the department are reminded that one of the fundamental principles of the military character is, justice to all—Indians as well as white men—and that a disregard of this principle is likely to bring about hostilities, and cause the death of the very persons whom they are sent here to protect.” Crook also ordered his officers to observe “the strictest fidelity” and to address Native complaints quickly and fairly.⁵⁷⁹

But we should not exaggerate Crook’s cultural sensitivity. In his *Resume of Operations* he calls the Apache “savage and brutal by instinct” and “tigers of the human race.”⁵⁸⁰ Similarly, in an article for the *Journal of the Military Service Institution*, Crook, in multiple places, compares the Apache to wolves and coyotes: “the Apache can be compared most aptly to the wild animal he fittingly calls his cousin—the coyote. The civilized settlements are his sheep-folds, and even supposing that a toilsome campaign results in destroying forty out of a band of fifty, the survivors are as much to be dreaded as ever, until the very last one can be run down, killed or got under control, and taught to labor for his bread.”⁵⁸¹ Crook certainly was not the only American in the late-nineteenth century to denigrate Apache people in racialized, bestial language. He was typical in that regard, no matter his reputation as a scholar of Native culture and a defender of Indian rights. And that is precisely the point: counterinsurgency culture-talk, whether in the nineteenth or twenty-first century, does not necessarily translate into empathy, respect, or an erosion of racist caricatures and depictions. And this is a crucial reminder:

⁵⁷⁹ Pirkle, “Major General George Crook,” 9.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁸¹ George Crook, “The Apache Problem,” *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* 7 (1886), 261-262.

conquest when prosecuted with greater cultural awareness *is still conquest*. Strategy is not the same as ethics, and cultural understanding does not necessarily translate into empathy.

According to the contemporary counterinsurgents that lionize Crook, it is the general's adaptability and cultural understanding that led to his success, a blueprint for the modern military: "General George Crook's ability to adapt to his enemy, and his understanding of the nuance and context required to fight a war against an unconventional foe, in what amounted to a true clash of civilizations, are the lessons that are as applicable to the modern United States military as they were on the American frontier."⁵⁸² Another study offers greater detail, emphasizing Crook's ability to overcome tactical and cultural barriers posed by differences in language, culture, social organization, government, and religion.⁵⁸³ But even these more technical descriptions are combined with similarly racialized cultural moves. In a 2003 US Army War College Strategy Research Project titled "Lessons Learned from MG George Crook's Apache Campaigns with Applicability for the Current Global War on Terror," we get a particular kind of cultural comparison: "Both the historical and current enemies have cadres of fighters who believe death in battle is to be sought out and embraced. These fighters make no distinctions between military forces and unprotected populations except to seek out vulnerable populations and to avoid pitched battles. Both enemies seek to fight a technologically simpler fight, and to do so in a manner that seeks to minimize the strengths of US forces."⁵⁸⁴ The lesson is that understanding Apache people, represented here as death-obsessed obstacles to progress, will lead to a smoother form of conquest. This analysis reduces the invasion of Apache land to a clash of cultures, with Crook positioned as an expert on Apache people. In Crook the proponents the

⁵⁸² Cruz, "General George Crook," 85.

⁵⁸³ Livingston, "Redskins in Bluecoats," 30.

⁵⁸⁴ Suriano, "Lessons Learned," 4.

humanitarian violence of counterinsurgency find a historical precedent. One officer, defending Crook's conduct in the Battle of the Rosebud during the 1876 campaign against the Lakota, Northern Cheyenne, and their allies, counters the oft-cited belief that Crook's strategic blunders ultimately resulted in the defeat of Custer at the Little Bighorn. Arguing that Crook's increasing use of Native auxiliaries was key, he argues that "the measure of Crook's campaign was not whether the Sioux were decisively defeated on the battlefield but whether or not the Sioux insurgency was defeated. Annihilation and destruction of the Sioux was not the desired endstate. Instead, the government's desired endstate was, as Secretary of War Belknap described, 'to compel these Indians to return to and remain upon their reservation.'"⁵⁸⁵ However, as I have shown in chapter two, strategies that fall squarely into the category of "annihilation" were absolutely compatible with compelling Native people to accept reservations. Mass destruction of Native life as a means to gain control of Native life became central to US military policy in the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

Indian Country, Indian Wars, Indian Country, Indian Wars... Perhaps at times this chapter has felt like a vinyl record locked into a single groove, endlessly repeating the same loop. I have emphasized this litany of Indian war resonances in order to explore the ways in which colonial violence continues to structure American counterinsurgency-culture. Permit me two more utterances from these endless Indian Wars. The first comes from Allan R. Millet, a retired Marine Corps colonel. In 2001, referring to the difficulties of conducting military operations in the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan, he argued that "It's like shooting missiles at Geronimo... you might get a couple of Apaches, but what difference does that make?"⁵⁸⁶ Here is a juxtaposition of the United States' absurd technological superiority and the disposable life of the Apache/Afghanis. Each

⁵⁸⁵ Pirkle, "Major General George Crook," 75.

⁵⁸⁶ Richard C. King, *Unsettling America: The Uses of Indianness in the 21st Century* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013), 59.

Tomahawk cruise missiles costs more than one million dollars, so why bother launching them into the mountaintops if all the US military has to show for it are a few enemy casualties, particularly if Geronimo/Bin Laden continues to escape? The arithmetic of colonial necropolitics allows for such calculations, and Indian people remain the rubric through which US imperialism imagines such hostile terrains, impenetrable even to the destruction of flying tomahawks. This is Indian Country as the place of imperial intervention, a site of violence and danger, forever the frontier of US militarism.

This chapter has been almost entirely focused on the ways in which non-Natives have twisted and shaped images of Indian people and histories of colonialism to serve the imaginative needs of US empire. It seems appropriate to end with a Native voice, in this case a Native veteran named Sergeant Eli Painted Crow, who served twenty-two years in the US Army, including a final tour in Iraq. The following is an exchange with journalist Amy Goodman on the news program Democracy Now! from 2007.

Amy Goodman: How did you end up becoming a peace activist, Sergeant Painted Crow?

Sgt. Eli Painted Crow: Well, this is very important for me, because being Native, I don't see this as a war, number one. I see this as an invasion that's committing a genocide to a nation, to a people. I see that we are over there, and we are doing the same thing that we did here with the indigenous people of this land, calling it democracy, calling it freedom. Well, it isn't freedom if it's imposed. And what I learned about the Iraqi people, while I was there, was they're very much like the indigenous people here. They have clans, they have circles, they have their ceremonies, they have their drum. There are so many similarities, and it just really hurt me to realize that here I'm a survivor of this attempted genocide on my people — and I say "attempted," because we're still here, even though they want to say we're not, we're erased, we're not even in the history books — and here I am over there doing the same thing that was done to me, and so I —

Amy Goodman: You said that in the military they refer to Iraq as "Indian country"?

Sgt. Eli Painted Crow: Well, they referred to — what they said in the briefing, they called enemy territory "Indian country." And I'm standing there, just listening to this briefing, and I'm just in shock that after all this time, after so many Natives have served and are

...serving and are dying, that we are still the enemy, even if we're wearing the same uniform. That was very shocking for me to hear.⁵⁸⁷

Sergeant Painted Crow's story about standing in a briefing and hearing the phrase "Indian Country" says more than any amount of analysis could. What must it feel like for Native soldiers to hear the phrase "Indian Country" while deployed, describing the very territory in which they risk life and limb? Historians of North American colonialism often talk about "facing east from Indian country," inverting common narratives of US history in an attempt to capture the perspective of Native people facing a settler-invasion.⁵⁸⁸ Native soldiers serving in places like Afghanistan and Iraq face Indian Country *from* Indian Country, and are uniquely positioned to recognize these imperial geographies for what they are: sites of invasion and conquest.

I have shown how counterinsurgency theory, particularly during the twenty-first century, has relied on comparisons between the Indian Wars and the War on Terror. Indian people have been positioned as the eternal-insurgents of US empire, the barbarians at the gate from whom counterinsurgency warfare supposedly keeps the world safe. These are comparisons that perpetuate colonial narratives of US history and legitimate racialized forms of violence. However, Sergeant Painted Crow twists these comparisons in her description of Iraq. Her list of similarities between Native North Americans and Iraqis—clans, circles, ceremonies, drums—serves as a critique of the US invasion and occupation, rather than a blueprint for more effective conquest. Iraq is not like Indian Country because it is full of savages, guerilla fighters, rugged terrain, and recalcitrant tribal peoples. Iraq is like Indian Country because both have experienced the full force of the United States' militarized imperial power. Sergeant Painted Crow articulates

⁵⁸⁷ "The Private War of Women Soldiers: Female Vet, Soldier Speak Out on Rising Sexual Assault Within U.S. Military," interview by Amy Goodman, *Democracy Now!* March 8, 2007. https://www.democracynow.org/2007/3/8/the_private_war_of_women_soldiers.

⁵⁸⁸ Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

a resonance of Indian Country not as an invocation of empire, but as a critique. In her telling, Indian Country is the place where the United States military should *not* be, the site of invasion, of conquest, of an unbroken colonial legacy.

Conclusion: Counterinsurgency at Standing Rock

2016 was a year of visceral and violent political moments, but few matched the historical intensity of the Dakota Access Pipeline protests carried out by the Standing Rock Sioux and their allies. Videos and images, many disseminated on social media, showed groups of water-protectors repeatedly targeted by police and paramilitary security forces with “less than lethal weapons.” The images evoked the so-called “Indian Wars” of the nineteenth century and they were a reminder of the ongoing violence of US settler-colonialism. Resistance to the pipeline forged networks of transnational indigenous solidarity even as the treaty claims of the Standing Rock Sioux were at times flattened by an environmentalism discourse that obfuscated Native sovereignty. The camps housing water-protectors attracted people from all over the world, including hundreds of US military veterans. In a public ceremony on December 5th, 2016, following a temporary break in the protests, a group of veterans issued a public apology to Native elders: “We came. We fought you. We took your land. We signed treaties that we broke.”⁵⁸⁹ Acutely aware of the role that the US military played in the conquest of Native people, these veterans sought to acknowledge that history and received a message of forgiveness from Lakota spiritual leader Leonard Crow Dog. After this brief reprieve in December 2016, the resistance continued into early 2017, when the protest camps were finally closed down following an executive order from newly elected President Donald Trump. In June of 2017 the pipeline began transporting oil.

⁵⁸⁹ Sandy Tolan, “Vets Came to Protest, but They Found Mercy,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 10, 2016.

Colonialism in the United States defies temporal boundaries, requiring analysis that can move fluidly between the past and the present. This project has done that, uncovering a web of cultural ideas and material practices that bind together the histories of US colonialism and militarism, a history that allows us to conclude that the “Indian Wars” are indeed everywhere, geographically and chronologically. The first two chapters of this dissertation showed how US settler-colonialism developed and practiced a form of warfare that blended civil governance with extreme violence, a “euthanasia politics” that sought to manage what was believed to be the inevitable extinction of Native peoples. In contrast to most histories of the “Indian Wars,” I have demonstrated that the violence of US continental expansion resulted in a codified doctrine of Indian fighting, a sort of proto-counterinsurgency that positioned Native peoples as insurgents in their own homelands. These military policies resulted in a series of extremely violent episodes, including the massacres at the Washita River in 1868 and the Marias River in 1870.

At the end of the nineteenth century the “Indian Wars” went global as the US acquired overseas territories following the Spanish-American War. Charting these transnational connections, in chapters three and four I explored how American soldiers in the Philippines imagined themselves as “Indian fighters” and instituted tactics that had been honed on the plains and deserts of the western United States. The “Indian wars” emerged as a crucial element of US imperial culture, a framework for imagining the violence of an ever-expanding US global power, even as the strategic lessons of the nineteenth century were submerged. However, these lessons would ultimately reemerge as counterinsurgency moved to the forefront of US military policy in the twenty-first century. Chapter five investigated the contemporary military discourse around counterinsurgency warfare and the lingering traces of colonialism embedded in it. Counterinsurgency theory, particularly during the twenty-first century, has drawn on the history

of the “Indian Wars” to better wage the War on Terror. These counterinsurgency policies, which refracted outwards from the colonization of North America, have rebounded back into Indian Country, as Native people in the United States continue to be viewed as insurgents at places like Standing Rock.

The #NODAPL protests offer a window into the contemporary manifestation of the militarized biopolitics I have traced out of these ongoing Indian Wars. The veterans who apologized at Standing Rock were likely focused on the military’s role in nineteenth century conflicts. But there were contemporary resonances as well. One Native veteran who attended the forgiveness ceremony noted that most veterans had received training in the sort of crowd suppression techniques used by law enforcement on the protesters at Standing Rock, linking domestic repression to the counterinsurgency tactics of the War on Terror: “We know that everyone on the other side of that has that training, so they know exactly the damage or the pain that they are inflicting.”⁵⁹⁰ Active-duty members of the military also took note of the historical continuities at Standing Rock. As one Army officer at the Command and General Staff College put it:

The United States government still manages the consequences of it [the Indian Wars] today through the United States Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs. While Native American tribes may no longer have the capacity to fight a protracted insurgency against the United States government, significant issues still occur, even as late as 2016, demonstrated by the large-scale protests of the Dakota Access pipeline by the Standing Rock Sioux.⁵⁹¹

This officer frames ongoing-colonialism as a perpetual counterinsurgency, and the extreme, militarized response at Standing Rock is evidence that indigenous sovereignty claims will continue to be met with violence. And while this writer mentions Standing Rock, the focus is US

⁵⁹⁰ Sandy Tolan, “Vets Came to Protest, but They Found Mercy,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 10, 2016.

⁵⁹¹ Cruz, Nicholas J. “General George Crooks Development as a Practitioner of Irregular Warfare During the Indian Wars,” (Master’s Thesis, Army Command And General Staff College, 2017, 3.

counterinsurgency strategy on a global scale. The main thrust of his argument is that the Indian Wars offer valuable strategic insight into the War on Terror: “The lessons the Indian Wars provide are still salient and must not be lost to posterity, especially for professional military study.”⁵⁹²

It is not coincidental that a Marine Corps officer would be connecting Native people, Standing Rock, and counterinsurgency in the year 2017. As I have shown, the US military has spent much of the twenty-first century preoccupied with counterinsurgency in response to the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. As officers scrambled to relearn and update the counterinsurgency tactics long relegated to the fringes of US military theory, the Indian Wars emerged as a historical “success,” an example on which to draw. These conflicts have always exercised a powerful cultural hold, particularly in the military. Enemy territory has often been “Indian Country,” from the Philippines, to Vietnam, to Iraq.⁵⁹³ US soldiers have imagined their enemies as “Indians” and imagined themselves as “Indian fighters,” with the history of continental expansion occupying a central place in America’s counterinsurgency-culture. But in the last 15+ years, at places like the Combat Studies Institute and the US Army War College, “Indian Country” went beyond a series of discursive resonances as officers offered recommendations for the War on Terror that attempted to draw strategic lessons from wars with Native people. The contemporary military discourse on counterinsurgency warfare now situates continental expansion as the earliest, and one of the most effective, examples of this form of warfare.

⁵⁹² Cruz, “General George Crooks Development,” 3.

⁵⁹³ Stephen W. Silliman, “The ‘Old West’ in the Middle East: U.S. Military Metaphors in Real and Imagined Indian Country.” *American Anthropologist* 110, no. 2 (June 2008): 237–47.

Critiques of US imperialism can follow similar tracks through time, tracing historical continuities and resonances. It is fair to question the utility of engaging uncritical definitions of “counterinsurgency” and “insurgents,” which risk normalizing histories of conquest. However, to simply dismiss “counterinsurgency” as a form of semantic colonialism is to miss an opportunity to explore the role the colonization of Native peoples has played in shaping patterns of military violence. The last thirty years of scholarship in Native American history has convincingly shown that Native people were often anything but “insurgents” or “guerillas,” in fact exercising a great deal of economic, political, and military power throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵⁹⁴ Nonetheless, politicians and soldiers defined them as such, and that discursive colonialism had violent consequences. In October of 1868 General Philip Sheridan ordered his now-infamous subordinate George Custer into the field in pursuit of “the small parties of Indians now operating as guerillas” on the southern plains. In fact, these were Cheyenne warriors defending their traditional territories, but by referring to them as “guerillas,” a critique of not only their tactics but also their political status, Sheridan positioned the Cheyenne as insurgent to an already-existing US authority. A month later Custer would massacre a Cheyenne village along the Washita River in present-day Oklahoma, part of a broader effort to subordinate the Cheyenne to the biopolitical transformations of the reservation system.⁵⁹⁵ This is just one example of many, and we can critique the repression at Standing Rock as part of an ongoing counterinsurgency, both domestic and global, that emerged from the period of US continental expansion and has continually reemerged at home and overseas.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹⁴ Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 6-7.

⁵⁹⁵ “P.H. Sheridan to W.T. Sherman to, October 15th 1868,” October 15, 1868. Container 75, Reel 80. Philip Henry Sheridan Papers.

⁵⁹⁶ For the domestic side of things, see Jordan T. Camp, *Incarcerating the Crisis: Freedom Struggles and the Rise of the Neoliberal State*. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016). Kelly Lytle Hernández makes a parallel argument when she situates Native people in the long history of US carceral practices. See Kelly Lytle Hernández,

This complex web of colonial histories played out at Standing Rock: veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq apologizing on treaty lands as paramilitary forces deployed counterterrorism measures against indigenous water-protectors, many of which were themselves veterans. Temporal boundaries seemed to blur as if America's long counterinsurgency had come full circle. Private security firm TigerSwan, hired by pipeline builder Energy Transfer Partners to disrupt the protests in coordination with law enforcement, utilized a range of counterinsurgency tactics against what internal memos described as "an ideologically driven insurgency with a strong religious component," elsewhere noting that the resistance to the pipeline "generally followed the jihadist insurgency model while active," and that "we can expect the individuals who fought for and supported it to follow a post-insurgency model after its collapse." Indeed, internal TigerSwan communications referred to future anti-pipeline protests as budding insurgencies that had to be met with counterinsurgency efforts: "While we can expect to see the continued spread of the anti-DAPL diaspora ... aggressive intelligence preparation of the battlefield and active coordination between intelligence and security elements are now a proven method of defeating pipeline insurgencies." *Pipeline insurgencies*. It would be easy to dismiss TigerSwan's rhetoric as alarmist hyperbole, but these are categorizations made by a company full of War on Terror veterans, soldiers serving the interests of both state and capital. In a disturbing blending of public and private interests, TigerSwan intelligence memos were regularly shared with State and Federal law enforcement, and contractors met with investigators from the North Dakota Attorney General's office, and collected evidence that would aid in the prosecution of water protectors.⁵⁹⁷

City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

⁵⁹⁷ Alleen Brown, Will Parrish, and Alice Speri, "Leaked Documents Reveal Counterterrorism Tactics Used at Standing Rock to 'Defeat Pipeline Insurgencies,'" *The Intercept*, May 27, 2017.

As the water protectors left the protest camp in February, 2017, TigerSwan continued to exaggerate the threat of violence. A memo from TigerSwan to the pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, warned that “The threat level has dropped significantly. This however does not rule out the chance of future attack... As with any dispersion of any insurgency, expect bifurcation into splinter groups, looking for new causes.”⁵⁹⁸ Warning of an “anti-DAPL diaspora,” one TigerSwan report predicted a flowering of insurgent cells similar to the aftermath of the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan:

The archetype of a jihadist post-insurgency is the aftermath of the anti-Soviet Afghanistan jihad. While many insurgents went back to their pre-war lives, many, especially the external supporters (foreign fighters), went back out into the world looking to start or join new jihadist insurgencies. Most famously this “bleedout” resulted in Osama bin Laden and the rise of Al Qaeda, but the jihadist veterans of Afghanistan also ended up fighting in Bosnia, Chechnya, North Africa, and Indonesia, among other places.⁵⁹⁹

Portraying pipeline protesters as terrorists was not a stretch, at least for US law enforcement, despite TigerSwan’s seemingly exaggerated comparisons to Al Qaeda. The repression and surveillance of so-called “eco-terrorists” in the years after 9/11 was widespread, and included the Animal Liberation Front, the Earth Liberation Front, Greenpeace, the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, PETA, and others. TigerSwan easily grouped the #NODAPL movement within the “eco-terrorist” umbrella, and company leaders continued to compare anti-pipeline protesters all over the United States to Islamic terrorists.⁶⁰⁰ If the conduct of TigerSwan, other private security firms, and both local and federal law enforcement during anti-pipeline protests is any indication, “counterinsurgency” is becoming one of the dominant paradigms through which law enforcement views domestic protest and civil disobedience, particularly in Indian Country.

⁵⁹⁸ Brown, Parrish, Speri, “Leaded Documents.”

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁰ Alleen Brown, Will Parrish, and Alice Speri, “TigerSwan Responded to Pipeline Vandalism by Launching Multistate Dragnet,” *The Intercept*, August 26, 2017.

More than a year after the end of the #NODAPL protests, in September of 2018, the Department of Justice held an anti-terrorism training in Montana, likely in preparation for possible Native-led protest of the Keystone XL oil pipeline. Montana law enforcement agencies and state officials also worked with their counterparts in North Dakota to learn how to combat indigenous water-protractors and their allies.⁶⁰¹ Perhaps we have entered the era of pipeline-insurgencies.

TigerSwan's counterinsurgency against Native water protectors and their allies returns us once more to the paradox at the center of this project, namely the consistent way in which Native people in the United States have been positioned as "insurgents" in their own homelands for hundreds of years. As one Army officer argued in 2003:

Both the Apaches and the Islamists possess a charismatic group of leaders. The Apaches were led by Cochise, Natchez, Victorio, Geronimo and others, names that still echo throughout the world. Today the leaders include Osama bin Laden, Mullah Omar... all these historical and current leaders preach a fantasy ideology that seek to have the US depart from "their" territories and for "the people" to return to an imagined life that is forever gone."⁶⁰²

Comparisons like these point to the enduring hold that Native people have on US culture as the always-enemies haunting the edges of the American imaginary. But they also call attention to the role settler-colonialism played in the development of proto-counterinsurgent ideologies that disavow indigenous sovereignty in favor of a biopolitical claim of ownership over Native lives. This is the intertwined history of cultural attitudes and political processes I have detailed in this project: "their" territory is only an illusion; their "way of life" has disappeared, and they have been reduced to a simulation, stereotype, or representation. The existence of Native nations is branded a fantasy ideology, and Native life, divested of its indigeneity, is claimed by the state. It is the persistence of such attitudes towards Native people that this project has tried to push back

⁶⁰¹ Will Parrish and Sam Levin, "'Treating Protest as Terrorism': US Plans Crackdown on Keystone XL Activists," *The Guardian*, September 20, 2018.

⁶⁰² James M. Suriano, "Lessons Learned from MG George Crook's Apache Campaigns with Applicability for the Current Global War on Terror" (Master's Thesis, Army War College, 2003), 1.

against, flipping “counterinsurgency” from a definition to a mode of critique that can account for the material and discursive effects of US colonialism. Counterinsurgency as a form of critique works to show how the US government and capital have a vested interest in continuing the centuries-long process of eroding and eliminating Native sovereignty.

In contrast to such blatant disavowals of Native sovereignty, the water-protectors at Standing Rock attempted to mobilize their own biopolitical discourse through the slogan “water is life,” but ran headlong into a far more entrenched biopower embedded in the colonial mechanisms by which the US continues to regulate the lives of Native peoples. A similar relationship exists between the assertion that “Black Lives Matter,” and the response from police and politicians that “security matters more” (to say nothing of the slogan “Blue Lives Matter”).⁶⁰³ In this project biopower has been a menacing and often violent theoretical framework, one that helps illuminate the ways in which individual Native lives and entire Native populations have been rendered, at different times, as killable, changeable, disposable, invisible, and hyper-visible, subjected to particular forms of state violence.

In contrast, #NODAPL and Black Lives Matter seem to both invoke what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri call a “power of life by which we defend and seek our freedom,” a biopolitics not of control, but of emancipatory potential, of the production of alternative subjectivities unbound by regimes of discipline, security, and repression. For Hardt and Negri biopolitics is a site of struggle, and not a totalizing force.⁶⁰⁴ What is at stake in these competing discourses is the political meanings and values attached to “life.” Water-protectors defend the increasingly precarious role that natural resources play in sustaining human beings. Black Lives Matter

⁶⁰³ Steven W. Thrasher, “Talking Happiness, Security, and Counterinsurgency with Laleh Khalili,” *Contexts* 15, no. 1 (February 1, 2016): 8–10.

⁶⁰⁴ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 56-61.

challenges the disposability of black bodies in the face generations of anti-black racism. In contrast, the normalization of counterinsurgency, at home and abroad, has further embedded biopolitics into the mechanisms of war, policing, and social control.⁶⁰⁵ “Life” under counterinsurgency is both under-threat and under-control; counterinsurgency mobilizes threats to life as a justification for the violence of security, and targets life as the object of military intervention. Under counterinsurgency, war not only makes the world safe, it *makes the world*, attempting to shape individual subjectivities, populations, and environments.⁶⁰⁶ In this world, water matters less than capital, and Black lives remain disposable under the United States’ racialized systems of security and control. As the archetypal “savages” of the Western colonial imaginary, Native people have been integral to the counterinsurgency discourses that define the world as dangerous, in need of intervention. “Indian Country” continues to be a threat, and its inhabitants continue to be targeted with the violent reforms of counterinsurgency.

It is appropriate that I would conclude this project with a discussion of #NODAPL and the repression at Standing Rock. The population-centric warfare that dominated US counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan was reduced under the Obama administration, which saw the expansion of special operations under the Joint Special Operations Command and an increase in drone warfare, a further mechanization of warfare that stood in stark contrast to the intimate, community-based counterinsurgency championed by Petraeus and other COINdinitas during the Bush administration and the early part of the Obama administration. Instead of committing to large-scale developmental warfare and long-term

⁶⁰⁵ For the relationship between counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and domestic law enforcement, see Laleh Khalili, *Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 245-246.

⁶⁰⁶ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. (New York: Penguin, 2005), 22-23.

deployment of troops, President Obama's counterterrorism strategy combined drones and Special Forces with an emphasis on foreign partnerships. This meant working "by, with, and through" the governments in the countries the United States sought to intervene, a practice Laleh Khalili calls indirect rule, a common feature of imperial counterinsurgencies during the twentieth century.⁶⁰⁷ And, for all his rhetoric about travel bans and border walls, the Trump presidency has largely continued this commitment to indirect rule while expanding the military's ability to conduct air strikes and drone attacks.⁶⁰⁸ If these trends continue then US global power may become increasingly diffuse, if no less decisive. What remains consistent is the invisibility of ongoing settler-colonialism. In a recent speech regarding Middle East policy in Cairo, Trump's Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared that "For those who fret about the use of American power, remember this: America has always been, and always will be, a liberating force, not an occupying power... when the mission is over, when the job is complete, America leaves."⁶⁰⁹ The United States remains committed in Afghanistan and Iraq, with the war in Afghanistan recently entering its seventeenth year, but the true hypocrisy of Pompeo's claim is located in Indian Country, an occupation that numbers in the hundreds of years.

It remains unclear where American warfare, and counterinsurgency in particular, is headed. It is possible the strategies championed by the *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* a decade ago will fade away in the face of technological advances, as drones and yet-undreamed innovations continue to change the shape of warfare. However, similar arguments were made in the 1990's, and that did not prevent the US military from deploying large numbers of troops to

⁶⁰⁷ Khalili, *Time in the Shadows*, 247-248.

⁶⁰⁸ Daniel J. Rosenthal Schulman Loren DeJonge, "Trump's Secret War on Terror," *The Atlantic*, August 10, 2018; Dan De Luce, Seán D. Naylor, "The Drones Are Back," *Foreign Policy*, accessed October 24, 2018; Joshua A. Geltzer, "Trump's Counterterrorism Strategy Is a Relief," *The Atlantic*, October 4, 2018.

⁶⁰⁹ "Mike Pompeo's Cairo Speech on Mideast Policy and Obama," *Haaretz*, January 11, 2019.

sustained (and in the case of Afghanistan, still ongoing) wars and occupations. As has been the case throughout US history, the current “America first” nationalist rhetoric will likely prove compatible with a robust global imperialism. Which brings us back to Standing Rock. Perhaps we know exactly where counterinsurgency is headed: once more into Indian Country, into the police departments of American cities, and into the ranks of private security firms promoting the interests of capital and resource extraction.

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