A HISTORY OF
FORT LOGAN, (CAMP BAKER)
MONTANA

by

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PREFACE

This thesis presents the history of Fort Logan, Montana. The whole of the subject matter involves the decade of the 1870's, in which the fort existed as an active military establishment.

It is my purpose to show first, that Fort Logan existed as part of a military policy to establish a chain of military posts in the Montana Territory for the protection of the pioneers, and second, to show what importance the fort had as a business and social center for the Smith River Valley.

Perhaps a more fundamental reason for the writing of this thesis lies in the need for fully documented history of Montana. It is my opinion that much of the history of the Treasure State has long been neglected, and that all too many events have been buried with its pioneers.

With the above thoughts in mind, I hope that this work will serve as a link in building a more complete chain in the history of our State.

I would like to express sincere thanks to the staff of the Montana Historical Library for their kind consideration and the many privileges granted me. To Thomas A. Clinch, A.B., M.A., Carroll College, I am especially grateful for his sponsorship of my entire thesis. Also I am indebted to those who contributed valuable information and technical assistance. Finally, I wish to thank all those who in any way assisted me in the writing of this thesis.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. THE BACKGROUND OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FORT LOGAN (CAMP BAKER)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. MILITARY ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. PART 1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of the Post</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART 2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Activities of the Fort</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART 3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Life of the Post</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. PART 1</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Question of Necessity</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART 2</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandonment and Dedication</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter I

Background of the Establishment of Fort Logan (Camp Baker)

The Civil War had claimed the attention of the United States military for the first half of the 1860's. Following this bitter struggle many people sought a new way of life by taking a fresh start in unsettled territory. Settlement in the West, and in particular the Montana Territory, was a challenge sufficient for any of the new home-seekers. This westward movement brought about the settlement of new localities. With the settling of these new regions there followed a need for protection of the pioneers from an earlier "home-steaders", the American Indian. It is not my purpose here to explain why there existed animosity between the pioneer and Indian, but suffice it to say that they did not always see "eye to eye".

For protection, our pioneers looked to the military, and in response there followed a new military policy in the West. Military posts were established near important points of travel or areas of settlement. From these posts the United States Cavalry would patrol the surrounding area. The people tended to adopt the fort nearest them as a "mother" or "home fort". In addition to the protection which these forts offered, they also served as points of communication, as trading posts, and in general as social centers for the community and the adjacent territory.

With this general picture in mind, it is possible to proceed to the particular army post which will be treated in this thesis.

In 1867 Fort Ellis was established on the Gallatin River, three miles east of the present city of Bozeman, Montana, by order of Brevet Major General Alfred A. Terry, Commander of the Department of the Dakotas. During the same year Fort Shaw was established
in the northern part of the Territory on the Sun River. Fort Ellis was named after Colonel Augustus Van Horn Ellis and Fort Shaw was named after Robert G. Shaw, killed in an attack on Fort Wagner in 1863. Fort Ellis served to protect the fertile land of the Gallatin Valley, while Fort Shaw guarded the plains in the north. Between these two posts there appeared to be a need for increased army protection for the central portion of the territory. The discovery of gold, silver, lead, and copper in the Confederate Gulch and Copperopolis regions brought about the demand for a military post. This demand was answered on November 30, 1869, when Major General Winfield Scott Hancock established a one-company post thirteen miles east of Diamond City near the entrance to the pass of the Little Belt Mountains. This was considered to be a temporary post and was to be an adjunct of Fort Ellis. According to the memory of R.N. Sutherlin, it was Captain Benson with a detachment of troops from Fort Shaw who located the post. The location at this time was the west bank of the Smith River opposite Sheep Creek, but by the following summer in 1870 it was moved about ten miles up the Smith above a stream known as Camas Creek, eighteen miles from Diamond City. The first location is described on the report of the Assistant Surgeon Clarence Swen of the United States Army in a report on army barracks:

Camp Baker, Montana Territory, is situated in latitude 47° north, longitude 111° west, at an elevation above the sea of about 7,000 feet. It is on Smith's River, or

1. Confederate Gulch received this name by reason of the fact that a group of Southern soldiers made the discovery of gold in this area.
Deep Creek, which empties into the Missouri about fifty miles below. The nearest post is Fort Shaw, situated about seventy miles northwest in a direct line and 200 miles by road. A reservation has been selected about twelve miles south of here, and a new post will be built. The buildings are of pine logs and consist of seven small huts, each 16 by 25 feet, roofed with pine slabs covered with earth, lighted by a small window in the door, and warmed by open fireplaces; three are used by officers' quarters, and have board floors; the one used for headquarters offices, and the three remaining occupied by enlisted men, have dirt floors; the other buildings are the stables, 116 by 26 feet, the post bakery, 16 by 15 feet, and the commissary storehouse and company cook house in the same building, 42 by 15 feet. The hospital and guard house are in tents. 5

It is interesting to point out that Clarence Bowen's report made note of the fact that the fort was established to protect Diamond City and other mining camps from Indian depredations because this area was considered to be one of the most dangerous localities in the territory. 6

In contrast to the precise report of an army man is the note made by John Moore in his memoirs of his days in the Smith River Valley, written in 1826: "In the winter of 1869 and '70 a company of United States soldiers came over and built a temporary post on the

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4. Smith River was also called Deep River or Deep Creek until it became confusing to distinguish it from another Deep Creek in the same country.

5. War Department Report on Barracks and Hospitals, 1870
   Clarence Bowen, Assistant Surgeon, p. 409.

6. Ibid., p. 409.
Moore Ranch that they called Camp Baker..." Moore also states that he and his brothers furnished lumber for the fort, which is most likely accurate since they did operate a sawmill at that time.

At this first location,ewan reports that the troops obtained their water from Smith River by hauling it to the camp in barrels. This water was muddy and warm. There were no gardens at the post but the commissary stocked a variety of canned fruits and vegetables. As for fresh meat, the vicinity was well stocked with game, and the neighboring ranchmen supplied beef, in addition to fresh milk, butter and eggs.

Medical supplies were limited. A few such articles were obtained from Fort Ellis and others were expected from the east.

The supplies would come either by steamboat up the Missouri from St. Louis to Fort Benton, or by Union Pacific Railroad to Corinne, Utah Territory, and by wagon to the post. Mail came to the post twice a week, but it was slow in arriving, to say the least. Two weeks were taken for a letter to reach Washington, D.C. &

Despite the crude beginnings of the new army post it was maintained throughout that first winter and it was not until August 16, 1870, that it was moved to its permanent location. This time Camp Baker was located one mile south of the Smith River at latitude 46° 59' 48" North; longitude, 34° 76 West.

There is some question in the mind of the author regarding the naming of Camp Baker. The common concept

9. Circular Number 8, War Department, Surgeon-General's report of Acting Assistant Surgeon, George Scott Oldmixon, May 1, 1875, pp. 394-96.
is that the name was taken from that of Major E.M. Baker of Fort Ellis; however the minutes of the Miner's Council of Diamond City in session on October 18, 1864, report the following:

Resolved 1st That this Gulch be named and known as Confederate Gulch.

Resolved 2nd That this District be named and known as the Baker District from the fact that William J. Baker of Saline County, Missouri discovered the Gulch upon which it was located.

Later, in the year 1870, the County Commissioners of Meagher County ordered that the Diamond City Township should be known as Road District Number (1), and this District would run from Confederate Gulch, through Diamond City, to "what is known as Fort Baker east of Diamond." This would indicate a possibility that the name could have been derived from the Baker District. This matter would carry more importance, perhaps, if the post had kept the name of Baker, but this was not to be the case.

With a new location, Camp Baker acquired facilities for a two company post. A report of the buildings by 1872 included:

Quarters for 100 men, built of logs, in good condition; officer's quarters, two log and one frame building, in good condition; hospital, 44x30 feet, built of logs; store houses, two 60x30 feet each, block house, two story log

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12. Meagher County Commissioners Record, Volume 1, p.106 March 7, 1870.
building -- all in good condition.13

The enlisted men's quarters was 100 by 25 feet, which was divided into a dormitory 77 by 26 feet, a sergeant's room 16 by 14 feet, a property room of the same size, with a 6 foot hallway between the dormitory and the two other rooms. The barracks was partitioned by canvas to separate the two companies. Heat was furnished by wood stoves, and the men slept on iron bedsteads, supplied with the usual bedding.

In one of the buildings for officers resided the commanding officer and a company officer. This building had two sets of quarters of four rooms each. The front rooms were fourteen by sixteen feet and the rear rooms were fourteen by nine feet. In the frame building resided the medical officer and a company officer. This building also had two sets of quarters of four rooms each, but two of the rooms were attics. These buildings had fire places, but also required wood stoves because of the severe winters. Their buildings were plastered and the woodwork was painted. The headquarters building also housed some of the officers.

The post hospital had a center ward twenty-nine by nineteen feet with a capacity of six beds. At one end of this ward was a dispensary and a steward's room, each fourteen by eleven feet. At the other end were two rooms of similar size, used as a kitchen and a storeroom respectively. For ventilation the rooms had doors and windows and trap doors in the ceiling.

The quartermaster store house was sixty by thirty feet and was built of adobe, while the commissary store house was the same size but built of logs.

There was a post bakery capable of producing 120 rations per day. The post library was built of logs.

and roofed with canvas, eighteen by ten feet. The guard house was a two story log building. The lower story was occupied by the guard and the upper story by the prisoners. There were also stables and a blacksmith and carpenter shed.  

Meagher County, in which Camp Baker was located, extended at this time from the Missouri River on the west to the Missouri River on the east, thus including the principal portion of the land within the great bend of the Missouri River, an area of over 10,000 square miles, containing mountains, valleys, plains, with mineral, agricultural, timbered, and pastoral lands.

The valley of Smith River is about fifty miles long, with a width that varied from twenty miles to less than three. At the fort it is barely three miles in width. The valley is noted for its heavy growth of bunch grass and the pine-topped hills, with cottonwood, willow, and aspen growing along the streams.

The early pioneers found a large wild game and fish supply for food, as well as numerous fur bearing animals to trap for their pelts.

One of the earliest records of a white man making camp in the vicinity of Fort Logan was Captain John Mullan. At the time, Mullan was a lieutenant in charge of a surveying party under Governor Isaac Stevens surveying a railroad route from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean. The date recorded for his encampment near the present site of the fort is September 20, 1855.

Among the early settlers who featured in the activities of the post may be mentioned the Moore brothers, whose sawmill furnished the lumber for the post;

15. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, May 14, 1876, p.2.
16. Ismay Journal, August 27, 1876, p.3
Frank Day, who served as a blacksmith; Charles W. Cook who worked in the placer mines in Confederate Gulch and established a large ranch near White Sulphur Springs; C.T. Rader, who had a stop-over house near the present site of the fort; and R.N. Sutherlin, who founded the first newspaper in Diamond City in 1875.

It is well to remember that these early pioneers faced no easy task. The soldiers and settlers had a long journey across the plains or up the Missouri, a journey plagued with many hardships and danger. It was a heroic mold of people who came west, and it is doubtful if their stamina and courage could be matched today.

When Camp Baker was moved to its present site in the summer of 1870, the post was under the command of Captain George S. Hollister of Company G, 7th Infantry, who remained in command until May 19, 1872. At this time the post came under the command of Captain H.B. Freeman of Company A, 7th Infantry, and continued under this company to November of 1875. Freeman had been assigned to the 7th in 1870. He was decorated for "gallant and meritorious services" in the battles of Murfreesboro, Tennessee and Chickamauga; also awarded a medal of honor for distinguished gallantry in the battle of Stone River, Tennessee. He died in 1915.

Freeman's command was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel C.C. Gilbert. Gilbert remained in command until 1876. He was another hero of the Civil War, and received decorations for the battles of Shiloh, Richmond, and Perryville. He retired in 1876 and died in 1903. Major Guido Ilges of the 7th Infantry followed Gilbert in commanding the fort. His command was short lived, as he remained only part of 1879, being succeeded by the final commander, Major A.L. Chipman of the 3rd Infantry.17

CHAPTER II

MILITARY ACTIVITIES

Through the summer and fall of 1869, the settlers were plagued with Indian raids on their livestock—horses in particular. The Indians became so bold as to approach in daylight and run off the white man's horses. No doubt the people of Smith River Valley were happy to know of the prospect of an army post in their vicinity.

In the winter of this same year, Colonel Baker led an expedition formed at Fort Shaw to hunt these thieving Indians. Baker and his men surprised a band of Bloods and Piegon on the Marias River. They succeeded in thoroughly wiping out this band. One report stated that 173 Indians were killed and 300 horses were captured. The extent of losses to Baker's expedition were exceedingly slight. Only one man was killed and one wounded. There were some accusations to the effect that this battle had been a wanton slaughter of women and children, but the general opinion was that what had been done was of necessity. An article in the Helena Daily Herald reported:

"While we cannot help feeling deep regret that a necessity, like that which called forth this extreme measure, should exist, it is impossible to conceive how it could have been avoided. To let things continue as they were, was beyond the remotest bounds of reason. And all peaceable means to put an end to the robberies and murders, that these savages were daily committing, had been tried and failed. It was the last step; a terrible, but also a just and effective one."

There was also public sentiment expressed by the

people of Helena at a town meeting. They were interested in talking with Colonel Baker, and many gave speeches in his behalf.

A report of a letter written by General Sherman to General Sheridan in which he defends the action taken by Colonel Baker in his raid on the Bloods and Piegans was given in the Helena Daily Herald. Sherman stated that Baker's reports were true, and that no Indians were killed wantonly. He also referred to the problem of white immigration into Indian reservations. He foresaw that the two-fold problem of the army would be to protect the white settlers and also the Indians' land.

At this time there was also fear of the Sioux Indians who had made known their intention of driving the miners out of the Yellowstone and Musselshell Valleys. The military did not expect any trouble to come as a result of this threat, but they advised the people in this region to take precautions. The army at the same time took steps to increase manpower at the various posts in Montana Territory.

The mettle of the military was put to the test in 1876. In this year there ensued a movement to corner the Sioux Indians. The part that the "Montana Column" had to play in the famous Custer battle of the Little Big Horn proved to be of secondary importance. Colonel John Gibbon led the "Montana Column", composed of all the available troops from Forts Shaw, Ellis, and Camp Baker. The actual battle of the Little Big Horn took place before these troops arrived.

21. Ibid., February 2, 1870, p.3.
22. Ibid., March 26, 1870, p.1.
23. Ibid., April 22, 1870, p.3.
Had Custer waited for them they would no doubt have added greatly to his effectiveness. Their principal part in the action lay in the removal of the wounded of the Seventh Cavalry. They also trailed the Indians for a short distance, but to no avail.  

During the round-up of the Sioux, Captain William Logan was reported to be commanding H Company in charge of supplies, which at the time were located at Fort Pease awaiting word from Custer and Cooke.  

In recalling the Custer event, Mr. John Hayman in 1924 said that he had been a member of D Company, and one of eight men left to garrison the post while his company and that of Captain Clifford were on the Rosebud with General Terry. Mr. Hayman was discharged in 1876. Also in 1924, Mrs. Kneen of White Sulphur Springs reported that she remembered that a Lieutenant Loder and twenty men had killed twenty-five Indians down on the Musselshell.  

Soldiers from Camp Baker were mobilized with troops from Forts Ellis, Shaw, and Missoula under the leadership of Colonel Gibbon in 1877 to march to the Big Hole. Here they battled with the braves of Chief Joseph, Looking Glass, and White Bird. Pertinent to the history of Camp Baker was the third dispatch of Colonel Gibbon to Governor Potts that Lieutenant Bradley and Captain Logan were killed at the Battle of the Big Hole.  

The escape of the Nez Perce Indians following the battle put the entire territory in a state of alarm.

27. The Helena Daily Independent, August 24, 1924, p.20.  
28. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, August 16, 1877, p.3.
Local newspapers followed the events with every issue. On August 23, 1877, the *Rocky Mountain Husbandsman* reported the following:

A courier left Camp Baker on Friday last for the Musselshell, in search of a battalion of cavalry, which have been patrolling in that region for the past month, with dispatches ordering them to repair at once to the headwaters of Snake River for purpose of intercepting the Nez Perces. 29

The people of the Smith River Valley became especially alarmed when they heard that the Nez Perces were apparently heading for the lower Musselshell and Judith Basin region. They knew that these Indians were acquainted with their land and were aware of the horses that could be captured in the county. With most of the Baker garrison out trailing the Nez Perces, the post was practically unprotected. The people of the valley were advised to carry arms. 30

The fears of the ranchers were not unwarranted. By September of 1877 there were reports of raids by the Nez Perces to capture horses. Some names of the ranchers that may be remembered by a few people of the Smith River Valley today were: Irvine Stone, William Luppold, Thomas Cooper, and I.O. Procter. It apparently seems that Captain Clifford and one private were the only available force that could be spared from Camp Baker at the time. These men were accompanied by about a score of citizen volunteers which constituted a scouting party in search of the raiding band of Indians. Captain Combe, the Commander of the post at this time, issued arms to the people and supplied them with ammunition. 31 The scouting party never came in contact

with the Indians, but they reported themselves as having been within sixty miles of the main Nez Perce force. 32

Whether the people of Meagher County were certain of the identity of the tribe to which the raiding Indians belonged is questionable. Following the raid in Smith River Valley, a war party of sixteen Indians was reported near Highwood. These Indians were identified as renegade Piegans, and were coming from the Camp Baker direction. 33

Two of the soldiers returning to Camp Baker, following their participation in the Big Hole Battle, gave interesting accounts of their experiences. One of the men was Sergeant Wright of Company E, 7th Infantry. Wright reported that he had charge of a squad detailed to capture the Indian horses. His squad of twenty nearly succeeded in gaining possession of the horses, but the Indians suddenly discovered their presence, and they were forced to withdraw. Four of his squad were killed and six wounded. Wright himself was hit on the forehead by a glancing shot, but he remained in combat until the heaviest of the fighting was completed. Another sergeant, P.C. Daley of Company D told of his experiences in the battle. Daley was in charge of a howitzer. He and his men were cut off from the main fighting force. Two of his men were killed, but he and another soldier stayed with their field piece until the Indians closed in on them. Daley attributed his escape to the anxiety of the Indians to secure the ammunition the fleeing soldiers had left behind. Sergeant Daley received a slight wound on the temple. 34

32. Ibid., October 4, 1877, p.9.
33. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, as taken from The Benton Herald, October 11, 1877, p.7.
34. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, August 23, 1877, p.3.
In November of 1877 the fort took on reinforcements in the form of Company G of the 3rd Infantry, Lieutenant Hanna commanding. Note was taken by R. W. Sutherland of the number of women and children who came with the company. He said it "reminded one quite forcibly that the brave boys of the 3rd had been quartered where there were more of the genial influences than exist in the Far West." 35

Soon after their arrival, the 3rd Infantry were sent to the Musselshell area to patrol. Supplies were shipped to them by wagon. Such outfits as Merke and Patterson and the Diamond "R" were among those which had contracts to furnish these supplies to the military and the settlement of Carroll, also in the Musselshell area. Lieutenant Hanna and his men served as escort for some of these supply trains. 36

Three companies were garrisoned at Camp Baker early in 1878, with Colonel Gilbert in command. Despite the fact of three companies being there, the total number of officers and men did not exceed one hundred. As was mentioned above, First Lieutenant Hanna was in command of Company G, 3rd Infantry. Lieutenant Row was the acting quartermaster. Of the other two companies, B and D, 7th Infantry, only Captains Combs and Clifford were there. Lieutenant Van Orsdale, of Company D was stationed at Fort Shaw for the winter. Company D had dwindled to a mere eighteen men in addition to its officers as a result of heavy losses in the Big Hole the previous summer. Dr. R.W. Whitefoot was the post surgeon at this time, and was much respected by both the troops and the citizens of the vicinity. 37

35. Ibid., November 13, 1877, p.5.
36. Ibid., December 15, 1877, p.3.
37. Ibid., January 10, 1878, p.2.
Indian raids were still a problem for the people of the Smith River Valley and consequently for the military. In May a band of Indians which was presumed to be Nez Perce made a raid on the Moore and Lewis ranches where they killed one of the sheepherders. The people figured they were trying to get horses to get back through to their native land in Idaho. The ranchers notified Colonel Gilbert at the post and he and Captain Clifford led a group of recruits, along with some of the settlers to search out these raiders. They managed to shoot one of the Indians and drove the rest into the mountains of the White's Gulch and Avalanche Gulch country. Here the fighting ceased for the night. The next morning it was discovered that the Indians had left the horses and slipped away on foot. Captain Clifford received a slight wound in the course of the engagement. Throughout the remainder of that summer there were a few straggling Indians coming through the valley.36

Because of the difficulty of telling a friendly from an unfriendly Indian, the people of the county got up a petition to send to General Sherman against the journeyings of the Flathead Indians across their county. According to military policy, all Indian hunting parties were supposed to be accompanied by military escort through established settlements. The people of Meagher County felt that this was not sufficient protection in that most of the depredations were occurring outside of the settlements. Whether their petition was granted is not known, but henceforth the people did not seem to be bothered from any more Indian raids.39 Fifty recruits arrived in June of 1878 to bolster the strength of Camp Baker.40 This would seem to be another example

40. Ibid., June 15, 1878, p. 3
of "closing the barn door after the horse had been stolen;" however, the added number of men on the post gave reassurance to the settlers that the military was doing their best to protect them.

Perhaps the most far-reaching event in the history of this military post occurred in 1879. During this year a number of military posts received a change of name. The order was given by General Sheridan on the last day of 1878. Among the forts listed to receive a new name was Camp Baker. The section referring to Baker read:

Camp Baker, Montana, as Fort Logan, in honor of Capt. William Logan, 7th Infantry, killed August 9, 1877, in action with Nez Perce Indians, at Big Hole Pass, Montana.41

The new name of Fort Logan was not received with unmixed feelings. An article in the Rocky Mountain Husbandman is pertinent in bringing out this fact.

The name of Camp Baker has by order of Lieutenant General Sheridan, been changed to Fort Logan. As this it will ever be known to the army, but it will always be Baker to the people of Meagher. It is well to do honor to the brave and gallant Logan who gave his life for his country on the bloody field of the Big Hole, and we shall ever honor his name and be glad to see it commemorated. But it is to Col. Baker that the people of Meagher owe the peace and security enjoyed the past eight years. His prompt chastisement of the Blood and Piagans on that memorable winter night, December, 1869, when the thermometer was 20° below zero, won for him a place in the hearts of this people, and they will ever do honor to his name. 42

42. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, January 23, 1879, p. 3.
Despite this sincere loyalty in 1879, the new name gradually replaced the old name. To this day the remains of the old fort are referred to as Fort Logan and not Camp Baker.
CHAPTER III
Part 1
DEVELOPMENT OF THE POST

In 1866 it was realized by both the War Department and the Indian Office that there were unstable conditions among the Indians in Montana; however, there was an optimistic attitude that the Territory would have a peaceful existence based on the treaties made with the Indians. Further optimism existed with the army policy of establishing military posts in the Territory.43

The following two years witnessed the settlement of many ranchers in the western Montana valleys. Large scale ranging of the large cattle herds became increasingly difficult. The ranchers knew that good grazing land existed on the plains to the east, but to obtain this land meant to secure more treaties with the Indians. The resulting pressure by these ranches did lead to the contraction of large reservation areas, but also resulted in the usual punishment to the Indians. One of the notable examples already mentioned was the Piegan massacre.44

Large herds of cattle began to be moved, first into the Sun River Valley and eventually by 1870 into the Musselshell Valley. Camp Baker assumed the responsibility of guarding the passes through to the Prickly Pear Valley and was also used as a market for some of the beef. By 1875, some 10,000 cattle were located on the Musselshell.45

The pass through to the Prickly Pear area was part of the Fort Ellis to Fort Shaw via Camp Baker route. The road was established in September of 1870 as part of the plan for Fort Ellis to aid the newly established

44. Supra, p. 2 Footnote no. 19.
garrison of Camp Baker in maintaining order. The road covered a distance of approximately one hundred miles and followed the mountain ranges most of the way. The usual military procedure was to patrol the road weekly.

The building of roads was an important function of the army following the establishment of its forts. The many toll roads, bridges and ferries required the quartermaster of incoming troops to pay as much as two or three hundred dollars in tolls in order to come into Montana. The roads built by the army served both military and civilian needs. It is interesting to point out that the road from Fort Ellis to Fort Shaw was considered to be one of the most important of the military routes.

As stated previously, the road from Diamond City to Camp Baker was referred to as Road District Number (1) One. The Meagher County Commissioners also provided for a supervisor for this district. The man appointed for 1870 was J.T. Moore, whose memoirs served as information for some of this thesis.

The road to Diamond City was part of the line of communication to the east. The stage ran from Diamond City to Helena and thence to Corinne, Utah, which was located on the Union Pacific. Another possible route east was from Helena by stage to Fort Benton, at the head of steamboat navigation on the Missouri River. The former route was more apt to be open all year, while the latter was open only during the summer months. Mail was delivered over this road and by 1875 it arrived three times a week.

46. Ibid., p. 205.
47. Ibid., p. 214.
48. Supra, p. 5, Footnote no. 12.
49. Meagher County Commissioners Record, May 2, 1870 p.111.
With the settlement of the Lower Smith River Valley there came a need for a direct mail route through to Fort Shaw. The people of this area sent a petition to Congress early in 1876. Their petition asked for a direct route between Fort Shaw and Camp Baker with post offices set up along the way.51

R. W. Sutherlin, editor of the Husbandman, took up the crusade for this postal route by writing a letter to the Territorial Representative, Martin Meginnis. He listed the following three points in favor of this proposed route:

1. The area is one of the largest and best stock-growing areas in Montana and a road with regular mail coming through would increase the value of their land and help to settle the land.

2. The people of the Lower-Smith River Valley must travel 20-30 miles to get their mail.

3. Material benefit to the military.52

The action of Congress on matters of this nature are often slow and this case of the mail route was no exception. As time elapsed, the people found more reasons for having their mail route. They stated that direct communication with the County Seat in Diamond City was a necessity. The approval of the officers at Fort Shaw and Camp Baker was added to the list of reasons for this route,53 but still they did not receive any report from Washington.

A full year passed (1877) before word was received that Congress had approved of the bill for the establishment of the mail route. By this time the

51. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, April 6, 1876, p.3.
52. Ibid., April 15, 1876, p.2.
53. Ibid., May 25, 1876, p.2.
people of the Lower Smith River had built a school house and the community was growing rapidly. 54 This flash of good news was followed by a summer of expectation, but without any evidence of the new post offices. In October of 1877, Delegate Maginnis was contacted in regards to this matter. 55 Maginnis reported that the contract had been let, but the person who was awarded the contract had apparently been given an extension of time to establish the post offices. The hope of the people then was that postal service might be established at least as far as the Lower-Smith River from Fort Shaw during the winter and all the way through to Camp Baker by spring. 56

This hope was also lost. The next report from Maginnis came in January of 1878, when he sent blanks for the establishment of post offices. He stated that service would go into effect as soon as the offices were established. 57

A happy resolution of the whole problem occurred in April of 1878, some two years after the first petition had been sent to Congress. A post office was established on the Lower Smith River. The name of the new post office was Chestnut. At last the heretofore isolated party of the County had been linked with outside civilization. 58

Improvements were made on the post itself in 1876. It was rumored at this time that Camp Baker was to be the main supply fort of the Territory. A

54. Ibid., April 12, 1877, p.3.
55. Ibid., October 11, 1877, p.3
56. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, Taken from The Benton Record, Nov. 29, 1877, p.2.
57. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, January 31, 1878, p.2.
58. Ibid., April 25, 1878, p.3.
firm by the name of McCain, Thompson, and Company received orders to furnish 40,000 feet of lumber for these improvements. 59 Although the post never received the designation as the main supply post, it continued to be improved for another three years. As late as May 1879, Major Guido Ilges was ordering new improvements. Major Ilges had trees planted around the parade ground, porches built in front of the dwellings, gardens planted, and a general clean-up of the entire post. 60 In another project, Major Ilges attempted to set up a telegraph line between Fort Logan, Helena, and Fort Ellis. This line would connect Fort Ellis with Bismarck, via Logan, Shaw, Benton, Aseinobin, and Buford. 61 This project, and all other improvements except those made to the inside of the buildings, was halted in the fall of 1879 when Major Ilges received word to limit all improvements. This added to the rumor that the post was to be moved to the Musselshell. 62

Part 2

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF THE FORT

Settlers with an eye for business found the military posts to be good prospects. The army's policy was to ask for sealed bids when supplies were needed. The year 1870 marked the first of these calls for sealed bids for Camp Baker supplies. An advertisement appeared in The Helena Daily Herald on March 2, 1870, entitled "Proposals for Military Supplies." 63 This advertisement was issued by order of the Chief Quartermaster of the Department of Dakota, St. Paul, Minnesota.

59. Ibid., July 27, 1876, p.3.
60. Ibid., May 15, 1879, p.3.
61. Ibid., Loc. cit.
62. Ibid., October 30, 1879, p.2.
63. The Helena Daily Record, March 2, 1870, p.1.


The bids were to be based on a one year period, beginning on June 30, 1870. The expected need for Camp Baker was 600 cords of wood, 400 tons of coal, and over 700 tons of hay. In comparison, Forts Shaw and Ellis required over 3500 cords of wood, 400 tons of coal and 700 tons of hay each. The requirement for Fort Benton was: 1323 cords of wood, 1564 tons of coal, 130 tons of hay, and 72,016 pounds of barley and oats.

The above call for bids was followed in April by another call for the supplying of fresh beef to the same military posts. The sealed bids in duplicate form were to be submitted no later than midnight of May 12, 1870. The number of companies to be supplied at each post was as follows: Fort Shaw, four; Ellis, five; Camp Baker, one; Fort Benton, one. 64

No record was found revealing the names of those to whom contracts were awarded at this particular time; however, in 1876, the following report was given in the Rocky Mountain Husbandman.

The following were the lowest bids for supplying Camp Baker, for the ensuing year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Bidder</th>
<th>Bid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Majors</td>
<td>$4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>R.B. Danston</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>C.T. Baker</td>
<td>10.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef</td>
<td>B.R. Sherman</td>
<td>5.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other records were found in which evidence points to the fact that citizens furnished supplies to the fort. P.J. and Sanford Moore had the wood contract for several years. 66 One A. Parker had the freight contract from Diamond City to Camp Baker, where he delivered the freight to Judge William Gaddis, the post trader. 67

64. Ibid., April 21, 1870, p.3.
65. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, May 4, 1876, p.3.
66. Ibid., November 30, 1876, p.3.
67. Ibid., August 30, 1877, p.3.
At times it was the government which did the selling, instead of the settlers. This notice was uncovered in *The Helena Daily Herald*:

Public sale of Government Horses:  
At Camp Baker, M.T., on Wednesday, June 29th, 1870, at 12 o'clock noon.  
Will be sold at public auction  
Thirteen (13) Government Horses  
Terms: Cash on the day of Sale.

By Order of General Hancock  
(Signed) Edwin R. Parks, 1st Lt.  
15th Inf., Acting Assistant Quartermaster. 68.

On one occasion the relations between the settlers with grain contracts and the government became strained. By the middle of December in 1875 the farmers had fulfilled their part of the contract. 69 To make good on the contract these farmers had hauled in their last bushel not leaving any grain for seed. The government did not make any payment to them by the end of 1875, consequently the farmers had to borrow money at two per cent per month to pay their taxes. When the Spring of 1876 arrived and the government still had not paid for the grain, the farmers were faced by empty seed bins and anxious creditors. By the time their money arrived, the loss suffered by the farmers amounted to nearly eighty cents per hundred. This delinquency was not the fault of the quartermaster at Camp Baker but lay with some other branch of the government disbursing system. 70.

The payment of the troops appears to have been more punctual than the payment of the grain contractors. Note is taken by R.M. Sutherlin in January of 1875 of the army paymaster, Major Blaine, making a regular trip

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to Camp Baker to settle with the "boys in blue." 71

To illustrate another aspect of the close relationship between the military and the settlers, it is interesting to note that the post hospital and staff were of service to the community as well as to the military. 72 Even when the post was disbanded, the post trader, William Gaddis, remained behind to operate his store for the community. 73 Many of the soldiers upon completion of their term of service would settle in the vicinity of the post. William Gaddis had the pleasure of recommending many of these troops for positions of employment within the county. 74

Part 3

SOCIAL LIFE OF THE POST

The manner of living and type of activity that existed at an army post in the decade in which Camp Baker existed was a far cry from those of a military post of the present. The main difference lay in the fact that this post of the 1870's tended to be absorbed into the community, where it was located. (It did not exist as a separate, restricted, and specialized unit of society.) As previously mentioned, 75 the army posts were an important factor in the life of the community in which they were located. Not only important in a military or economic sense entirely, but also in a recreational aspect.

Notable in this respect was a ball held at Camp Baker in 1873 which was sponsored by the Good Templar soldiers of the post. About forty couples were present

71. Ibid., January 20, 1875, p.3.
72. Ibid., December 9, 1875, p.3.
73. Personal Interview with Charles Gaddis, son of William Gaddis.
74. The Helena Weekly Herald, April 9, 1870.
75. Supra, p.1.
from the surrounding section of the country. The members of the 7th Infantry string band were present through the kindness of Colonel Gilbert. The music was reported as delightful under the direction of Professor Winters, and dancing lasted from eight in the evening until dawn. Those who attended the dance had great praise for the soldiers who sponsored this ball. The dance was given in the new hall built by the soldier members of the Order of Good Templars. Of Company H, with fifty-one men, thirty-five were members of this lodge, and as a result, this company was credited as being one of the most orderly companies in the army.76

During the summer months the men on the post organized baseball teams. Occasionally they played the town team of Diamond City. On one occasion this report of a game played between two of the post teams appeared in the County paper:

There was a match game of baseball at Camp Baker last week, between the "Stars" and "Stripes," the latter winning. Score 16 to 15. Time, two hours and five minutes.77

The warm hospitality of Fort Logan was demonstrated by a Christmas party which the soldiers gave for the children of the community. The commander of the post was Major Ilges who was sick in a Helena hospital at the time, but he ordered that the party take place without his presence. He delegated Lieutenant Loder to represent him in his absence. One private dressed as Santa Claus, drove across the parade grounds in a sleigh pulled by eight horses. He distributed gifts made by the women of the post to some sixty-two children. After the party was over, Major Parker

76. The Helena Weekly Herald, December 11, 1873, p.7.
77. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, May 24, 1877, p.3.
furnished transportation for the children.  

There were other events at the fort which were more sombre in tone. Among these was the storehouse fire which threatened the entire camp. Life at the fort was not without tragedy either. A sergeant by the name of Van Arden committed suicide in his quarters in March of 1878. It seems that he ended his life by placing the muzzle of the rifle to his chest and pulling the trigger with his toe.

Illustrative of life at the post are the letters written by the wife of Paye Roe, an officer at Camp Baker in 1875. The following are interesting cases in point:

Camp near Helena, Montana Territory  
November 1877

The company has been ordered to Camp Baker a small post nearly sixty miles further on. We were turned off from Helena road and the rest of the command at the base of the mountains, and are about to the new station, which, we are told, is a wretched little two-company post on the other side of the Big Belt range of mountains. I am awfully disappointed in not seeing something of Helena, and from our friends and to such an isolated place, but it is the company’s turn for detached service.

After Mrs. Roe had been at the post for a time she had this to say:

This post is far over in the Belt Mountains and quite cut off from the outside world, and there are very few of us here; nevertheless, the days pass wonderfully fast.

78. The Helena Weekly Herald, January 9, 1879, p.4.
79. Rocky Mountain Husbandmen, November 25, 1875, p.3.
80. Personal Interview with Charles G. Saddig, March 10, 1877.
81. Frances Roe, Army Letters from an Officer’s Wife, p. 173.
and they are pleasant days also.
And then we have our own little exci-
citements that are of intense inter-
est to us, even if they are never
heard of in the world across the ice
and snow. 82

Upon her return from a trip to Helena for a visit,
Mrs. Roe gave this account:

Home seems very cozy and attractive
after the mountains of snow and ice
we crossed and recrossed on our lit-
tle trip to Helena. The bitter cold
of those canons will long be remem-
bered. But it was a delightful change
from the monotonous life in this out-
of-the-way garrison, even if we did
almost freeze on the road and it was
more than pleasant to be with old
friends again. 83

These accounts show that life was not glamorous
at Camp Baker. It was a life of duty in carrying out
the menial day-to-day routine. These were the frontier
days in the pageant of our growing nation, and the roles
were portrayed by a sturdy brand of actors.

82. Ibid., p. 179.
83. Ibid., p. 185.
CHAPTER IV

THE QUESTION OF NECESSITY

The decade of the existence of Fort Logan was marked by much controversy regarding the necessity of the post. As early as April of 1870, Major E.M. Baker wrote the following from Fort Ellis to Department Headquarters:

I earnestly request that the authority be granted me to remove Company G, 13th Infantry from Camp Baker, as, in my opinion, there is no more necessity for a company at Camp Baker, than there is in front of the Headquarters of the Commanding General of the Department. 84

Perhaps Baker felt that there was no necessity for the post's existence since he had been the one to dispose of the main source of trouble by wiping out the Piegans in 1869. Apparently Department Headquarters did not completely agree with Baker at this time.

Three years later in 1873, Captain H.B. Freeman, the Commander at Camp Baker, confirmed the opinion of Major Baker. Freeman stated that there had not been any Indian trouble in the area to warrant army operations. The Blackfeet and Piegans had not been in the region for some time and the friendly Flatheads occasionally came through on authorized hunting expeditions. Colonel John Gibbon suggested that the camp be moved to the Musselshell River where it would be in a better position to regulate Indian migration on the plains. This suggestion was very much opposed by the Smith River pioneers, consequently the fort continued as a two-company post. 85

General Terry was the next military figure to indicate that Camp Baker might be abandoned. The

85. Ibid., p. 213.
rumor got back to the people in Meagher County that Terry favored the abandonment of Camp Baker, and again a protest was raised. H.N. Sutherlin wrote an article which embodies the sentiments of the people. He pointed out that Camp Baker was established in response to a request of the Smith and Upper Missouri Valleys which were being raided by the Sioux Indians from the South and the Piegans from the North. Sutherlin further maintained that if the post were withdrawn it would again leave these northern and southern passes open for raids. He thought that the central location of the fort should merit for it a promotion to the supply post for the neighboring forts. 86

In the following year, 1876, General Terry continued plans for the removal of Camp Baker. These plans were temporarily halted when appropriations ran short. As a result of the issue the settlers had a slight change of mind. They began to concede the necessity of a fort on the Musselshell, but still not at the expense of losing Camp Baker. 87 One ray of hope came with a letter from the Secretary of War, Alphonso Taft, in April of 1876 to the Rocky Mountain Husbandman. Taft informed the editor that a fort might be built at the mouth of the Big Horn River, in which case Camp Baker would be left to protect the area which would have been covered by a fort on the Musselshell. 88

An interruption in this controversy was provided by the outbreak of Indian hostilities later in 1876. The military had their hands full with Indians who were on the warpath and the question of moving a small army post was temporarily removed from the agenda.

The next report concerning the necessity of Camp

86. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, December 16, 1875, p.2.
87. Ibid., February 10, 1876, p.3.
88. Ibid., April 13, 1876, p.3.
Baker came from the high ranking person of General William Tecumseh Sherman in the fall of 1877. Sherman was favorably impressed with the location of Camp Baker, and he suggested that it might be a permanent military garrison. At this time General Sherman was making a tour of the western states, and it was his opinion that the Territory of Montana needed the "fostering care of the government, especially the military." The fact of the matter was that hardly anyone could question the importance of Camp Baker with the Nez Perce Indians trailing through the central part of the Territory to the east of the fort. As mentioned earlier in the military activities of the post, the Nez Perce did cause trouble in the Meagher County area, and at a time when the post was undermanned.

A movement for more military posts was renewed in 1878. R.N. Sutherlin printed articles emphasizing the necessity of having more forts, especially in the eastern and southern sections of Montana. He noted the unfriendliness of some of the eastern tribes, the Bannacks in particular. He further stated that the Montana delegate to Congress, Martin Meginnis, was trying to persuade Congress for appropriations for such forts. The people of the county added their sentiments for the establishment of a post in the Musselshell by originating a petition to this effect. This petition did not contradict the previous attitude of the settlers. They still wanted to have Camp Baker, but many of them had cattle grazing in the Musselshell area, and they wanted more military protection.

89. Ibid., September 6, 1877, p.2.
90. Ibid., November 18, 1877, p.7.
91. Ibid., February 21, 1878, p.2.
92. Ibid., July 18, 1878, p.3.
The military responded to the call for more frontier outposts by making preparations for a fort on Beaver Creek, near the foot of the Bear Paw Mountains in the eastern part of the Territory. Two companies were removed from Camp Baker and combined with the companies that had been stationed at the Helena fair grounds during the previous winter of 1877-78. These companies then marched to the Milk River country to establish the new post of Fort Assiniboine. The plans of the army were to work on the new post until fall, then return to Fort Shaw for the winter.

According to historian Merrill Burlingame, Fort Assiniboine was established in 1879 to answer a need developed by outbreaks along the northern border. The fact that the post was not finished until 1879 indicates the correctness of the plans of the troops who were building the post, that is, the need of returning to Fort Shaw to spend the winter of 1878-79.

One of the companies to leave Camp Baker for Fort Assiniboine was Company E, 7th Infantry, Captain Clifford, Commanding. This company was highly regarded by the people of the Smith River Valley. Captain Clifford was thought of as a brave man as well as a fine gentleman. The loss of these veteran soldiers in exchange for raw recruits was especially disappointing to the settlers.

Another veteran officer was transferred in the fall of 1879. After spending the summer at the mouth of the Musselshell, Major Ilges of the 7th Infantry went to Fort Benton for the winter. The rest of the 7th Battalion was sent to Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

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93. Note: The two companies removed from Camp Baker were replaced by Company G, 3rd Inf., Major Parker, Comm.
96. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, August 29, 1879, p.3.
97. Ibid., October 30, 1879, p.3.
During the same fall in which the 7th was transferred, Colonel Thomas H. Ruger made a report to the effect that there would be no further necessity of continuing Fort Benton and Fort Logan, also that Fort Shaw had lost much of its usefulness. He further suggested that a post at the forks of the Musselshell could guard the route of the Indians who crossed from the Yellowstone to the Missouri on Buffalo hunts. The elimination of Indian depredations in the Smith River Valley strongly supported the report of the Colonel.

Two prominent men in the history of Montana, Samuel T. Hauser and Granville Stuart, featured in the controversy over the removal of Fort Logan. The following is a letter written by Stuart to Hauser in February of 1880:

I could have a splendid range on the lower Musselshell, but the d---d Sioux would be after our horses all the time, unless you and Magianis can induce our imbecile government to remove Fort Logan (Camp Baker) out of the middle of this settlement and put it at the Big Bend of the Musselshell, or better still a little further N. E. at the mouth of Box Elder Fork, which would enable us to put our cattle on the very garden spot of Montana E. & S. E. of the Judith & Little Snowy Mountains. Try Gen. Sherman & Sec'y of War a little on that--it's ridiculous leaving Fort Logan where it is when the settlements are from one to two hundred miles beyond it already & just as much exposed to Indians as tho there was no such post at all....

The results of this letter were apparent in the spring of the same year. Martin Magianis wrote a letter to General Sherman, urging him to take action on obtaining a new post on the Musselshell. He suggest—

ed that Fort Logan be sold and that the money realized from its sale be applied on the new fort. Maginnis again listed the reasons for the necessity of a post on the Musselshell. General Sherman favored these proposals and proceeded to confer with General Terry, who also agreed to the plan. Maginnis' letter was forwarded to the Secretary of War, Alexander Ramsey, with the notations of the approval of both Sherman and Terry. Ramsey submitted the proposal to the Senate and the House of Representatives on April 1, 1880, with the recommendation for an appropriation of $50,000 to build the new post. 100

When the bill (H.R. No. 5894) came before the House of Representatives for discussion, Maginnis was instrumental in getting it passed. On April 20, 1880, he reported to the House of Representatives that he had been unanimously directed by the Committee on Military Affairs to report their approval of a bill for the sale of Fort Logan and the building of a new post on the frontier. The committee also requested the immediate passage of this bill, in view of the public need. The bill was composed of two sections, the first section pertaining to the establishment of a new post in the Musselshell area, and section two pertaining to the sale of Fort Logan. There was a provision in section two which empowered the Secretary of War to reserve such portions of the buildings or materials from public sale that might be profitably removed to the new post. In summary, the report from the Committee on Military Affairs stated that Fort Logan was no longer on the frontier and that it should be moved out about a hundred miles to the existing frontier, which lay on the scene of Indian raids. The report also pointed out that the troops had to be continually sent from Fort Logan to the Musselshell country, and

100. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, April 15, 1880, p. 21.
that their transportation was expensive, their service inferior.

The fact that summer was a dangerous season for Indian raids made immediate action on this bill a necessity. Following the third reading of the bill, it was passed by the House of Representatives. 101

When the bill came before the Senate it received an amendment which provided that Fort Logan might be disposed of in parcels as the Secretary of War might direct. With the above amendment the bill was approved by the Senators. 102

The bill became a law on May 8, 1880, with the signature of Rutherford B. Hayes. 103 With the President’s signature, the fate of Fort Logan was sealed.

Part 2

ABANDONMENT AND DEDICATION

The final summer of military occupation at the fort was largely spent in the field by the troops under the command of Major Dangerfield Parker. Major Parker took the available troops from the fort, which amounted to thirty-nine soldiers, and went down to the Musselshell River, where he made camp near the present site of Martinsdale. From this camp the soldiers went on scouting parties to the upper Sweetgrass, Musselshell, and Judith Valleys. 104

Also in the summer of 1880 the old lumber from Fort Logan was hauled to the site of the new post which was called Port Maginnis. The government was paying sixty dollars per thousand for the transportation of this lumber. According to R.N. Sutherlin, new lumber could be acquired for as little as thirty-five or forty

101. Ibid., May 6, 1880, p.2.
102. Ibid., May 20, 1880, p.3.
104. Rocky Mountain Husbandman, May 6, 1880, p.2.
dollars per thousand. 105

The new post of Fort Maginnis was located approximately one hundred miles east of White Sulphur Springs, at the east base of the Snowy Mountains. Originally the site had been used as an Indian trading post. 106 The adjacent country was well adapted to stock raising and little difficulty was had in raising grain and vegetables.

Lieutenant and Mrs. Faye Roe, formerly stationed at Fort Logan, were among the first to be sent to Fort Maginnis. Mrs. Roe had the following to say about the new location:

It is not surprising that politicians got a military post established here, so this wonderful country could be opened and settled, for the country itself is not only beautiful, but it has an amount of game everywhere that is almost beyond belief. 107

The dismantling of Fort Logan was completed in the fall of 1880. By order of the Secretary of War the buildings and the military reservation containing 2400 acres were sold at public auction. Judge William Gaddis, the sutler of the post during the entire existence of the fort, purchased the land and building for $4,525. 108 Before the military withdrew from Fort Logan they removed the barrier from the entrance to the post, which complied with the army regulation stating that no barriers should be left standing when a post was abandoned. This regulation prevented an enemy force from using the barrier. 109

105. Ibid., September 2, 1880, p. 3.
Actual abandonment of Fort Logan took place in October of 1860. The following entry was made in the War Reports section of the Executive Documents (1871-72):

October 27, 1860, Fort Logan abandoned, Company I, Eighteenth Infantry, leaving this day on route to Fort Shaw. One non-commissioned officer and one private, Company I, Eighteenth Infantry, were left at the post in charge of public property. 110

Sergeant Ernst Rackovich was the non-commissioned officer mentioned in the above report. Rackovich was a native of Prussia, and had served six years in the Prussian army, and twelve years in the army of the United States. 111

The military activities of the post had ended, but Fort Logan is not to be forgotten. In 1924 the Daughters of the American Revolution officially dedicated the fort. A large crowd gathered at the site of the old fort's block house on a warm Sunday afternoon in August. The principal speaker of the day was Sidney M. Logan, son of Captain William Logan, in whose honor the fort had been named. Logan gave a lengthy oration in which he mentioned the highlights of the history of the fort. Also present among the old pioneers were R.N. Sutherlin and Charles Cook. 112 Below is the inscription that was engraved on the bronze plaque which the D.A.R. placed on the blockhouse.

ORIGINAL BLOCK HOUSE
Part of Camp Baker established 1869. Post moved to present site 1870. Name changed to Fort Logan 1876 in honor of Captain William Logan killed by the Nez Perce Indians in the Battle of the Big Hole August 9, 1877. Garrisoned

111. The Helena Independent, August 24, 1924, p.4.
as a military post 1869-1879. Abandoned by Government 1880.
Restored and Dedicated to Posterity
BY
ORO MINO CHAPTER
DAUGHTERS OF THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION
Helena, Montana
August 17, 1914
(Insignia)

The block house on which the above plaque was placed still stands on the site of Fort Logan. The other buildings have either been burned, torn down, or used for ranch purposes. Charles Gaddis, who had been born on the post in 1879, made the fort his ranch home until 1947. His father, Judge Gaddis died in 1908, and was buried in Washington D.C. 113

The final military tribute paid to Fort Logan occurred in 1931. Through the information supplied by Charles Gaddis, the bodies of the soldiers buried at the fort were removed to a national cemetery to be honored with other American dead. 114

113. Personal Interview with Charles Gaddis, Helena, Montana, March 10, 1957.
114. Ibid., Loc. cit.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Fort Logan was first established as Camp Baker in the winter of 1869. The initial establishment was a one company, temporary adjunct of Fort Ellis. The following summer this post was moved ten miles up stream on the Smith River towards present day White Sulphur Springs. Camp Baker had the responsibility of protecting the central part of Montana between Fort Shaw on the north and Fort Ellis on the south. There were two reasons for an army post in this area: (1) Indians were raiding the livestock of the settlers, and (2) A military force was needed for the patrolling of the mining route through to the Prickly Pearl Valley.

During the decade of its existence this army post sent men to fight in the Battle of the Little Big Horn and the Battle of the Big Hole. In Meagher County the soldiers had several skirmishes with renegade Indian raiders.

Fort Logan served the Smith River Valley, not only as a military post, but also as a business and a social center. The officers and enlisted men were highly respected by the civilians. Some of the soldiers became residents of Meagher County after being discharged from the army.

On December 31, 1872, the name of the post was changed to Fort Logan, in honor of Captain William Logan, killed in the Battle of the Big Hole.

Fort Logan was abandoned in the fall of 1880, in favor of a new post on the Musselshell River, one hundred miles east of White Sulphur Springs, Montana. The land and buildings were sold to Judge William Gaddis, the post settler, for a sum of $4,525.

The fort was officially dedicated by The Daughters of the American Revolution on August 17, 1924. The
D.A.R. placed a bronze plaque on the side of the original block house.

Since its abandonment, the fort has served as a ranch for various families. The block house is the only building left today which would remind an onlooker that the site was once a military outpost.

Conclusions

The history of Fort Logan represents an important phase in the history of the settlement of the West. The settlers required the protection of the military, and this was provided for the common defense through the establishment of a chain of outposts on the frontier.

The fact that Fort Logan was established gave impetus to the settlement of the central portion of Montana. Perhaps the military engagements with the Indians were few, but the presence of the fort served as a constant reminder that the settlers would be protected.

Far from unimportant were the non-military functions which the post performed. Fort Logan served as the business and social hub of the Smith River Valley.

The important fact is that Fort Logan did fulfill a need. When this need no longer existed the government moved the post to the Musselshell area where military protection was needed for the settlement of a new frontier.
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