



# The US Army Post Civil War 1865-1898





# Themes to stress:



- Reading from chapters 13 and 14:
- Going from a large convention force to a more historically “normal” force.
- New missions and challenges- Reconstruction and Indian Wars
- Looking inward- professional development
- Technology implemented or ignored



**Army Career, 1876?**





# Relevance to Today?



**The Civil War and large volunteer army**



**Massing on Mexico border- show of force**

**Non-standard missions- stability and support**

**Non-standard missions- fighting an irregular enemy**

**Professional education improvements**

**Questioning relevance of traditional branches**

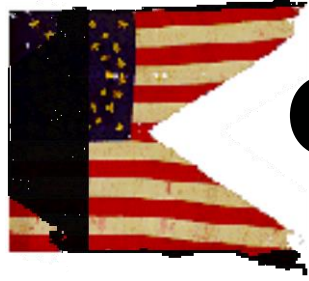


# Size of the Army

## (Post Civil War Army)

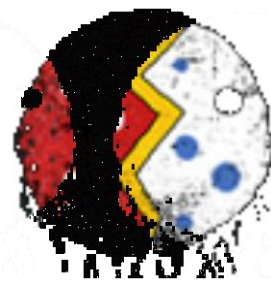


- **Volunteers**
  - 1.2M in May 1865
  - 400K by Nov 1865
  - 11K in 1866
  - 0 in 1867
- **Regular Army**
  - Held at 54K in 1866
  - 37K in 1869
  - 27.5K in 1876
  - <25K in 1877 (field strength)
  - Stays at this level until 1898



# **Organization of the Army**

## **(Regular Establishment)**



- **1861-65 - 19 regiments of infantry, 6 of cavalry, 5 of artillery**
- **1866 (Reorganization) - 45 regiments of infantry, 10 of cavalry, 5 of artillery, 6 black regiments (38<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, & 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry, 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry), 4 Veteran Reserve Corps**
- **1869 (Consolidation) - 25 regiments of infantry, 10 of cavalry, 5 of Artillery, 4 black regiments (24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry), up to 1000 Indian scouts**
- **No brigades, divisions, or corps**
- **Smallest Army ever in proportion to U. S. population (63 million in 1890)**





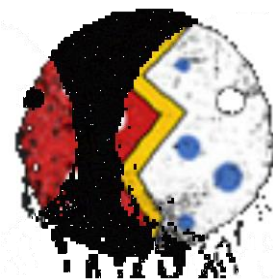
- 
- A detailed black and white illustration of a man with a long beard and a wide-brimmed hat, holding a rifle, standing in a dense forest. He is looking towards a path where another figure is visible in the distance. The scene is framed by large trees and foliage. The man in the foreground is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark trousers, and is holding a long-barreled rifle. The forest is lush with various plants, including large trees and ferns. In the background, a path leads into the distance, and another figure can be seen walking away. The overall style is that of a classic adventure story illustration.



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# Reconstruction



- **Army was the primary instrument of Congressional Reconstruction**
- **Reconstruction Act of 1867, divided the eleven ex-Confederate States, excluding Tennessee, into five military districts.**
- **After about 1867, only 8,100 troops were stationed in the South.**
- **Never large enough to guarantee rights of freedmen or overawe Southern population**
- **Last Federal troops finally removed from South in 1877**

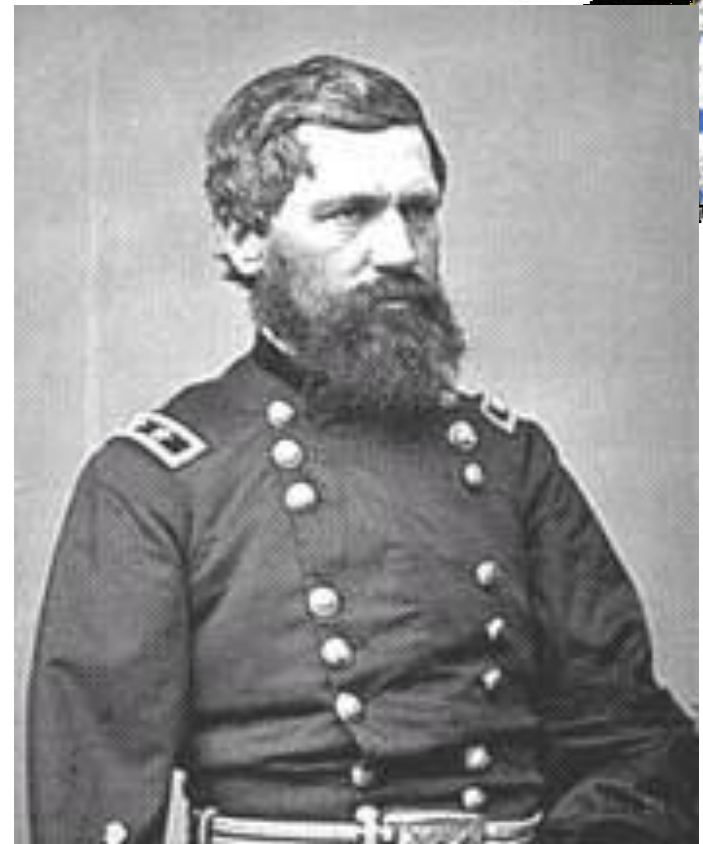




SCHOOL OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR FREEDMEN, VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI.—[FROM PAGE 201.]



PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR FREEDMEN, IN CHARGE OF MRS. GREEN, AT VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI.—[FROM PAGE 201.]



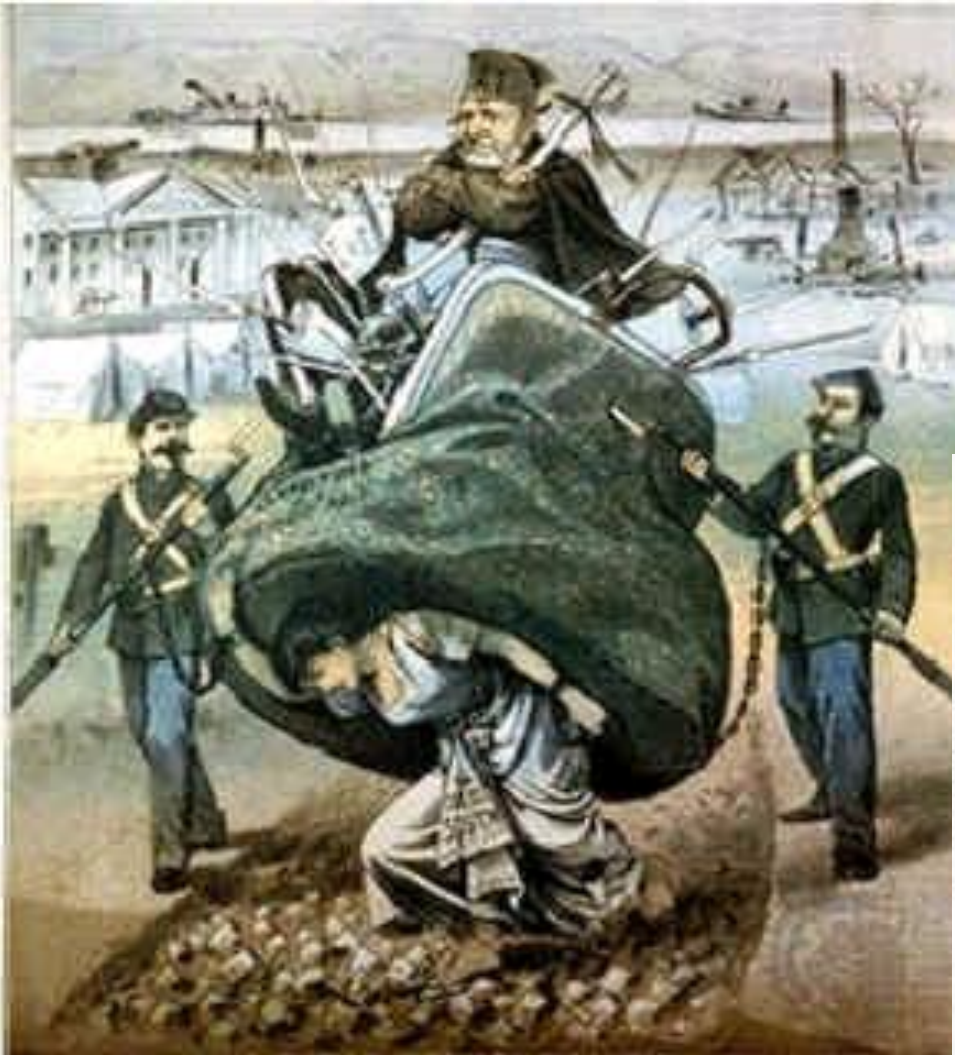
*Top: Primary school for  
Freedmen, Vicksburg, MS*

*Bottom: Primary School for  
Freedmen in charge of Mrs.  
Green, at Vicksburg, Mississippi.*





# Scalawags



# Carpetbaggers





# US Army role- Radical Reconstruction



**Maintain order**

**Military districts**

**Enforce laws:**

Voting

Fight white supremacists groups

Place in the middle between local officials, citizens, and freed blacks- everyone against them.

**Sherman (Commanding General after Grant):**

*“No matter what change we may desire in the feelings and thoughts of the people. . .we cannot accomplish it by force. Nor can we afford to maintain . . . an army large enough to hold them in subjugation.”*

Neither Republicans or Democrats *“seems to care a damn of the service of the country.”*



# Results of Reconstruction



## Positive

- States rejoin Union
- Democratic rule continues
- No (violent) vengeance on the losers
- African-Americans make some gains:
  - Slavery ends
  - Freedman schools, public education
  - Income grew
  - Legalized families

## Negative

- Southern economy remains backwards
- Corruption taints rebuilding effort
- For African-Americans:
  - Never met promises of **14th** (male suffrage), **15th Amendments** (no right or vote denied based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude)
  - Allows Jim Crow laws to “legally” circumvent amendments
  - Blacks still subject to a century of racism and discrimination





# Civil Disturbances



- **Generally labor disputes and strikes**
- **Over 300 - Most notable cases:**
  - **Railroad strikes of 1877 - preserve order**
  - **Pullman Strike of 1894 - strike-breakers**
  - **Militia (National Guard) called upon even more than Regular Army**
- **Major success during this period came in 1887 when Congress raised annual appropriation to militia from \$200,000 (since 1808) to \$400,000**



# Army Challenges



- **Army was isolated from American society**  
**Duty was:**
  - Distant from population centers (frontier)
  - Distasteful (policing strikes)
- **Intellectual trends against a army**
- **“Business Pacifism”**

**Wars are obsolete**

**Therefore armies are unnecessary**

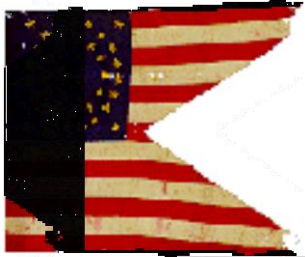


# Isolation of the Army on the Frontier

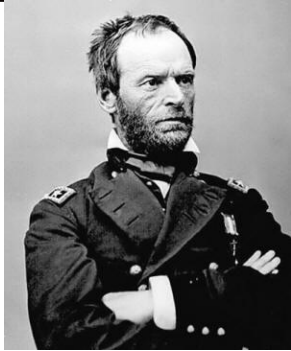
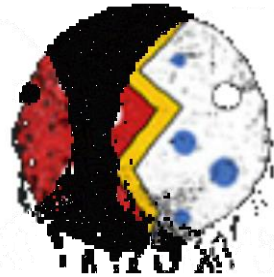


Argument that it created the ethos of the Army still seen today:

- Professional education system
- Self policing
- Apolitical officer corps
- Expected to operate with little guidance of oversight



# Development of Army Professionalism



**GEN William Sherman**

*Creation of School of  
Application for  
Infantry and Cavalry  
1881*



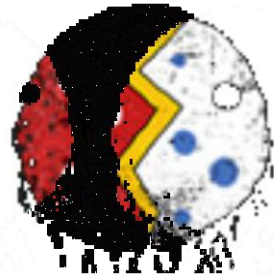
**COL Emory Upton**  
*The Military Policy of the  
United States  
1904*



**RADM Stephen Luce**

*Creation of Naval War  
College, 1884*





# **Professionalism (Doctrine)**

**No guiding head, no ‘Official’ Army Doctrine**

- **Unofficial**

- **Cavalry Journal**
- **Army-Navy Journal**
- **Journal of the Military Service Institution of the US**
- **Emory Upton (a voice crying in the wilderness, dies young and insane)**

- **Official**

- **Only bright spot - “CGSC” at Fort Leavenworth**
- **In 1881, not the same school as today, but the mission is very similar**



# Officer development



- **Lieutenant to Captain - Seniority in the Regiment**
- **Major to Colonel – Seniority in the Arm**
  - LT to Major – 24 to 26 Years
  - Major to Colonel – 33 to 37 Years
- **Aging Officer Corps - No Retirement Pension Until Late 1880s**



**Fredrick Benteen**  
**Captain**  
**(1866 – 1883)**

**“There will not be one-fourth part of the present field officers in the Army physically capable of supporting the hardships of an active campaign. They will be worn-out old men.”**

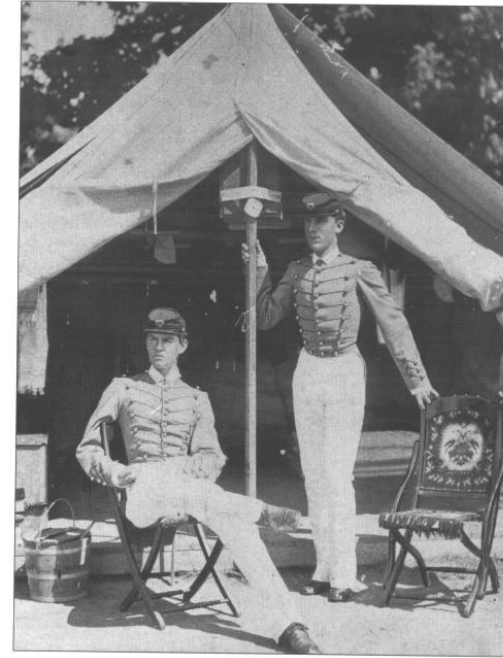
*Army and Navy Journal*



# Training



- Colonel: \$3,500
- 2d Lieutenant: \$1,400
- Sergeant: \$264
- Privates: \$156



**“Small salaries are best for young officers who know little of the real value of money. It teaches them to avoid extravagance and practice economy.”**

***Congressman Banning***



# Soldiers



- **Foreign Paupers**
  - 50% of the Ranks
  - Outstanding Soldiers and NCO's
- **Turnover**
  - Death
  - Desertion
  - Discharge
- **Training**
  - 21 Year Old Recruit
  - 3 to 4 Weeks
  - Basic Skills
  - Weak Horsemanship and Marksmanship







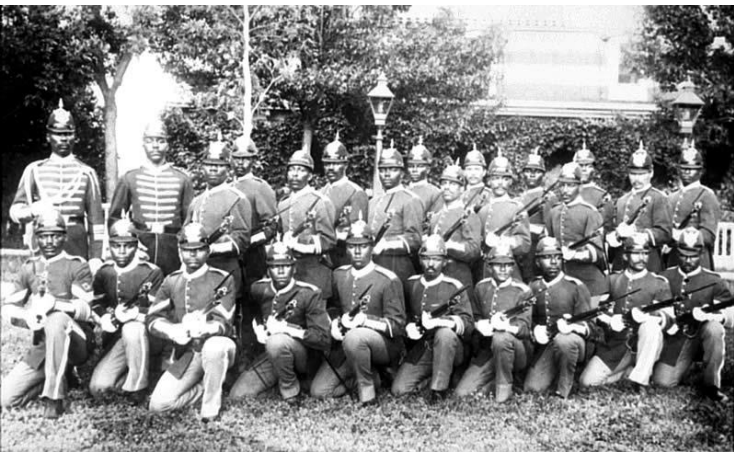
# Other sources of manpower



- **“Buffalo Soldiers”**

- 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry
- 38<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry
  - Combined into 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry

**4% desertion rate vs 24% Army average**

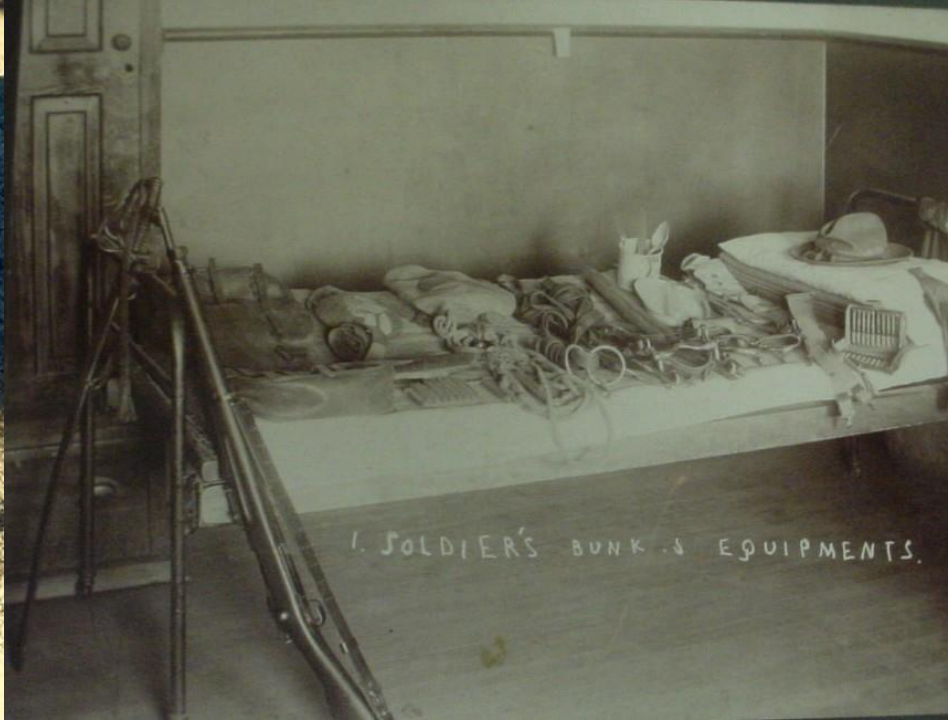
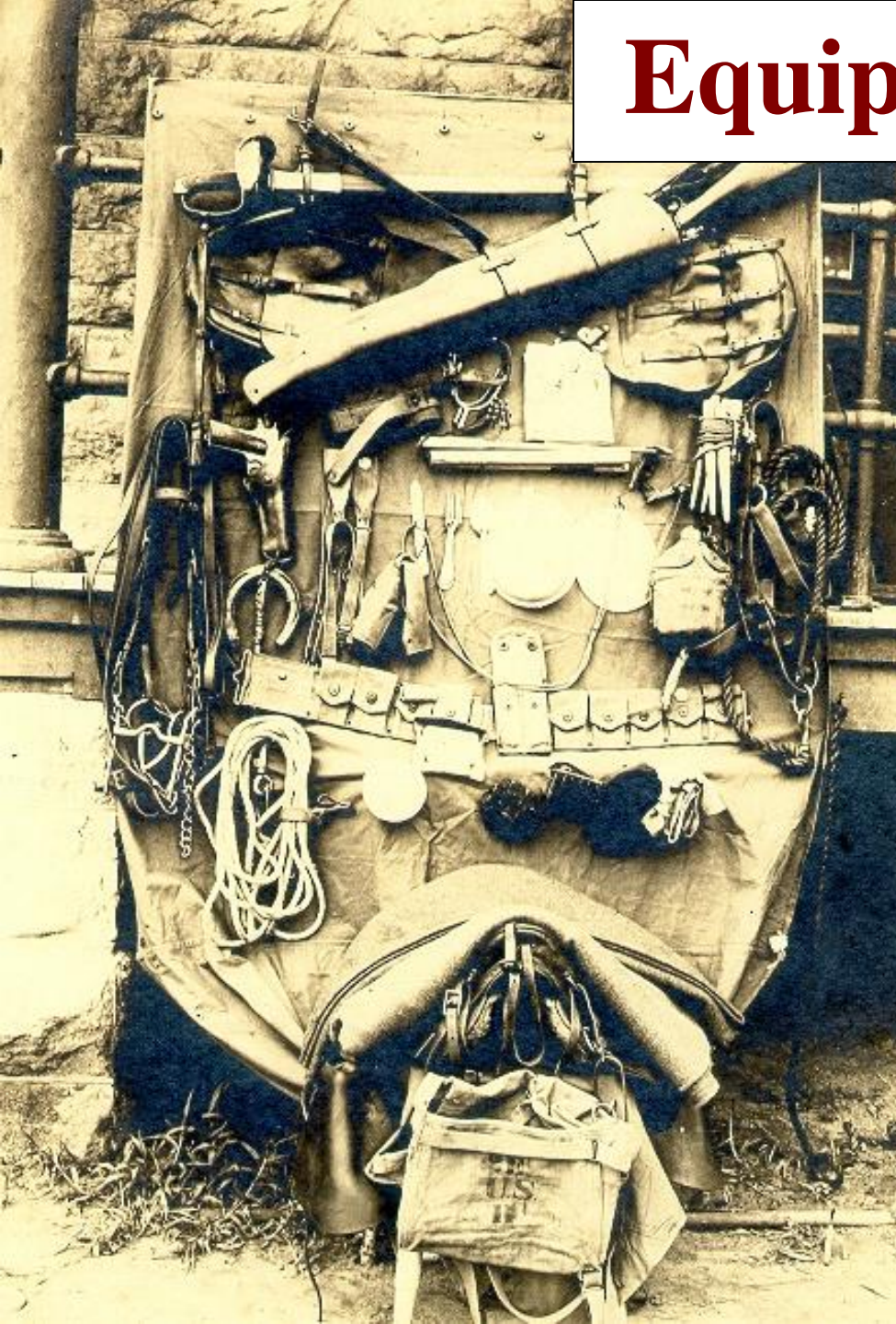


## “Indian Scouts”

- Various tribes
- Played on natural tribal hostilities



# Equipment





# **Training (Weapons)**



- **Civil War weapons were obsolete but plentiful**
- **Army made the decision to maintain a single shot rifle**
- **Adopted a center-fire cartridge**
- **Artillery remains muzzle-loading until Spanish-American War**
- **With no allocated funds, marksmanship training is non-existent until 1890s (after several disasters)**
- **Enemy is often better armed and supplied**





# Indian Pacification



- **Best known role of the 19<sup>th</sup> century US Army**
- **Fought 943 engagements between 1865 and 1898**
- **The Army never used more than 4000 troops except in the Sioux War of 1876 and the Nez Perce War of 1877**
- **Included two disasters**
  - **Fetterman (80 men) in December 1866**
  - **Custer (250 men) in June 1876**
- **Nature of the struggle**
  - **Indians usually fought using hit-and-run tactics**
  - **Army struggled with tactics and strategy**





# Army Opponents

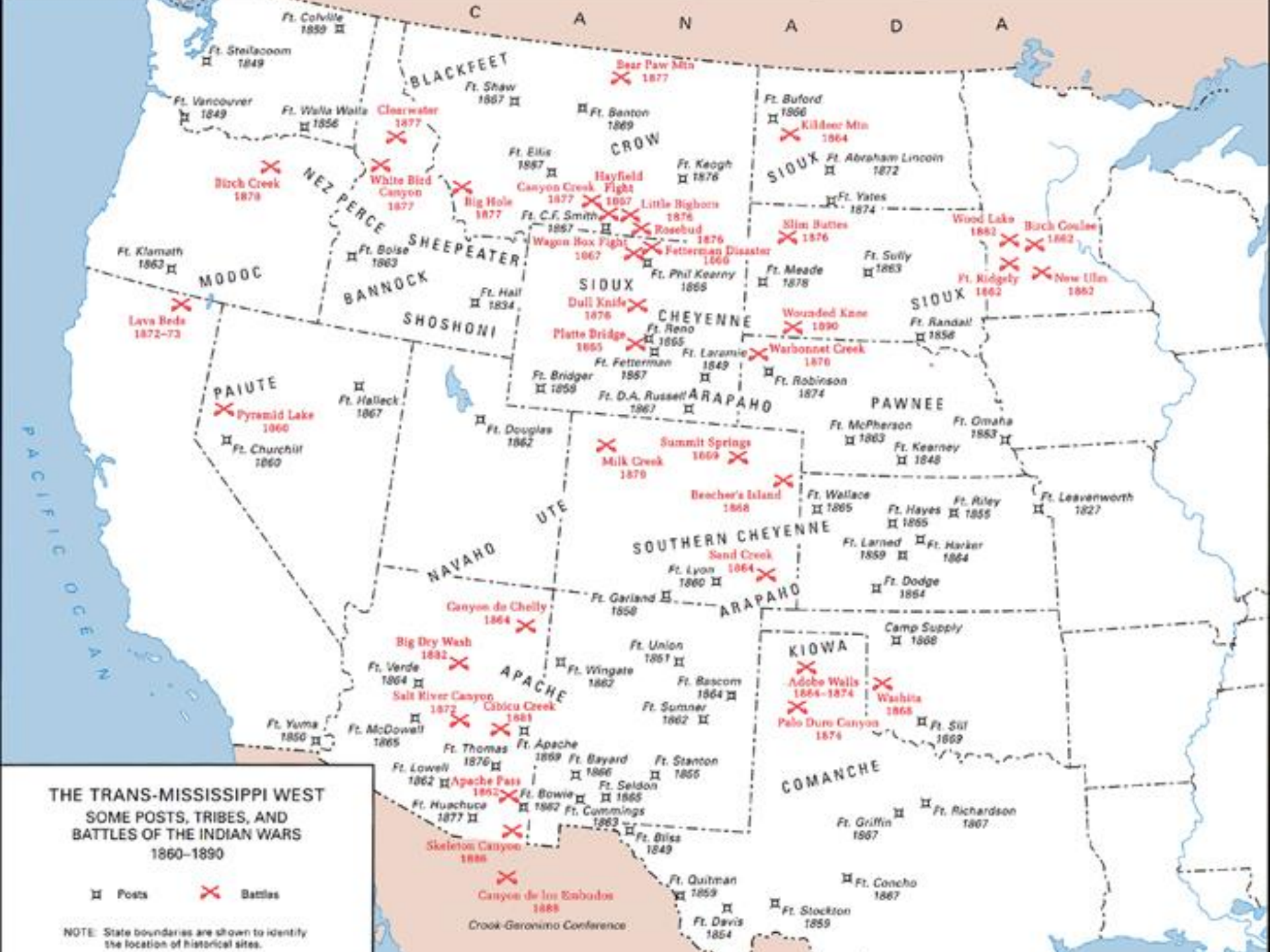
- **Indians**

- Fought as individuals
- Tied to forage and families
- No hierarchy
- Did not believe in decisive combat
- Small success was magnified

- **Army**

- Caught in a “no win” situation
- Want to fight a conventional fight
- Ability to sustain with rail and rivers
- Conduct of winter campaigns
- Must be everywhere; small forces piecemealed





THE TRANS-MISSISSIPPI WEST  
SOME POSTS, TRIBES, AND  
BATTLES OF THE INDIAN WARS  
1860-1890

■ Posts      ✕ Battles

NOTE: State boundaries are shown to identify  
the location of historical sites.



# Questions?

