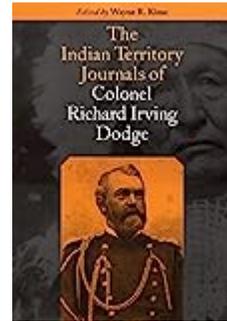


H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Wayne R. Kime, ed. *The Indian Territory Journals of Colonel Richard Irving Dodge.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000. xviii + 485 pp. \$55.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8061-3257-0.



Reviewed by Daniel Barr (Department of History, Kent State University)

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The Indian Territory Journals of Colonel Richard Irving Dodge is the third published installment of Dodge's personal journals, edited by Fairmont State University English professor Wayne R. Kime. The journals, housed in manuscript form at the Newberry Library in Chicago, trace Dodge's career as an army officer during and after the Plains Indian Wars of the latter nineteenth-century. Previous volumes of Dodge's journals, also published by the University of Oklahoma Press, include *The Black Hills Journals of Colonel Richard Irving Dodge* (1996) and *The Powder River Expedition Journals of Colonel Richard Irving Dodge* (1997).

While the previous volumes primarily chronicled Dodge's activities in army explorations and the military suppression of the Indian nations of the northern Great Plains, the eight journals included in the present installment (ranging from September 18, 1878 to December 18, 1880) transcend the battlefield and bring the reader into the world of the reservation system. The scene for much of Dodge's observations during these years was the Oklahoma Indian territory and, more specifically, the Cheyenne-Arapaho reservation located in the western portion of the territory. Dodge's writings bear witness to the plight of the conquered Plains Indians as they struggled to adapt to their new environment during a period of rapid transformation in their lives. His journals

poignantly illustrate the hunger, desolation, and despair that plagued the tribes during their initial years on the reservation, conditions that played an intricate role in the decision of 353 Northern Cheyenne to bolt their reservation in September 1878. Dodge, a participant in the army's pursuit of the refugee Cheyenne, readily details the unpreparedness of the army to meet the unexpected challenge, as well as the lack of cooperation between unit commanders that facilitated the ability of the Cheyenne to avoid capture for nearly two months. Dodge was a fairly prolific writer, and the personal observations contained within his Indian territory journals formed the foundation for his latter publication of *Our Wild Indians* (1882), a classic if stereotypical view of Plains Indian culture.

Nonetheless, the bulk of Dodge's journals, and the present edition's true value for scholars and interested parties alike, is grounded in his observations of the day-to-day function of the army on the post-war western frontier, a still underdeveloped and largely misunderstood field of study. As commander of Cantonment North Fork Canadian River, a six-company post founded by Dodge and the last military installation erected in the Oklahoma Indian territory prior to it achieving statehood, Dodge occupied a unique position from which to offer commentary on both the civil and military admin-

istration of the Indian territory. Although there are frequent gaps in the linear prosecution of the journals, ranging from a few weeks to several months, Dodge's writings reveal not only the inefficiency and corruption inherent in the Indian Bureau's supply and provisional system, but also the almost total lack of cooperation between the civilian agents of the Bureau and the army high command. In this regard, Dodge offers first-person testimony supporting contentions made by Robert Wooster, *The Military and United States Indian Policy* (Yale University Press, 1988), that the federal government and its institutions had little or no idea how to administer the conquered western Indian peoples, and that the army's lack of inclusion in these decisions produced a high degree of tension between soldiers and bureaucrats along the western frontier.

Throughout the volume, the annotation and editorial

work of Kime is superb. He skillfully unites a thoroughly appropriate level of editorial intervention with a desire to allow Dodge's words to stand on their own. Introductions to each journal offer background information to Dodge's writings and place the journals in the necessary historical and literary context. Five maps and a wide assortment of period photographs, in addition to a superb artistic rendering of the post at Cantonment North Fork Canadian River, enrich the volume and add valuable depth to Dodge's rendering of events.

As a primer and firsthand account, *The Indian Territory Journals of Colonel Richard Irving Dodge* will provide the enterprising scholar with an additional piece of evidentiary literature with which to conduct further research and investigation into the transitional period of the western frontier.

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