

Sappa Creek Massacre Site
Name of Property

Rawlins County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
		buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

**Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National
Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DEFENCE: Battle site

FUNERERY: Graves/burials

DOMESTIC: Camp

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: Agricultural field

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other/Not Applicable

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: N/A

walls: N/A

roof: N/A

other: N/A

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources, if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary

The Sappa Creek Massacre Site, Kansas archeological site number 14RW305, is a Southern Cheyenne campsite and the location of a massacre and the mass cremation of Cheyenne killed in an attack by the Sixth United States Cavalry under the direction of Second Lieutenant Austin Henely on April 23, 1875. [REDACTED]

While there is no evidence of intensive use of the Site in prehistoric times, people certainly would have used the resources of Sappa Creek on an intermittent basis. Archeological evidence of prehistoric people in the site area includes a chipped stone arrow point that is a type typically used during the Early Ceramic period, ca. 200-1100 CE (Bozell 2006). As early as the 1600s, and possibly earlier, highly nomadic forager tribes including the Plains Apache, Kiowa Apache, Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne, Arapaho used the area to hunt bison. Native territories were fluid and overlapped, alliances were made and broken frequently. Settled agricultural groups including the Kaw, Osage, and Pawnee also headed into western Kansas seasonally to hunt bison (Wedel 1959:34-82). These groups used dogs to drag their lodges and belongings on travois until the mid-nineteenth century, when most Native Tribal Nations had adopted horses and became highly mobile.

The Site is part of a property currently used for agricultural production, encompassing 21.8 ha (53.9 acres) including a creek valley, slopes, and uplands. It is relatively undisturbed but removal of period artifacts by collectors has been documented and is discussed further below.

Elaboration

This archeological Site was the scene of an engagement between a band of Southern Cheyenne and the U.S. Military. The Site (Figure 1) consists of the campsite and the surrounding battle-related locations, the battle positions taken by the Cheyenne and the U.S. Military, and the locations of Cheyenne horse herds.

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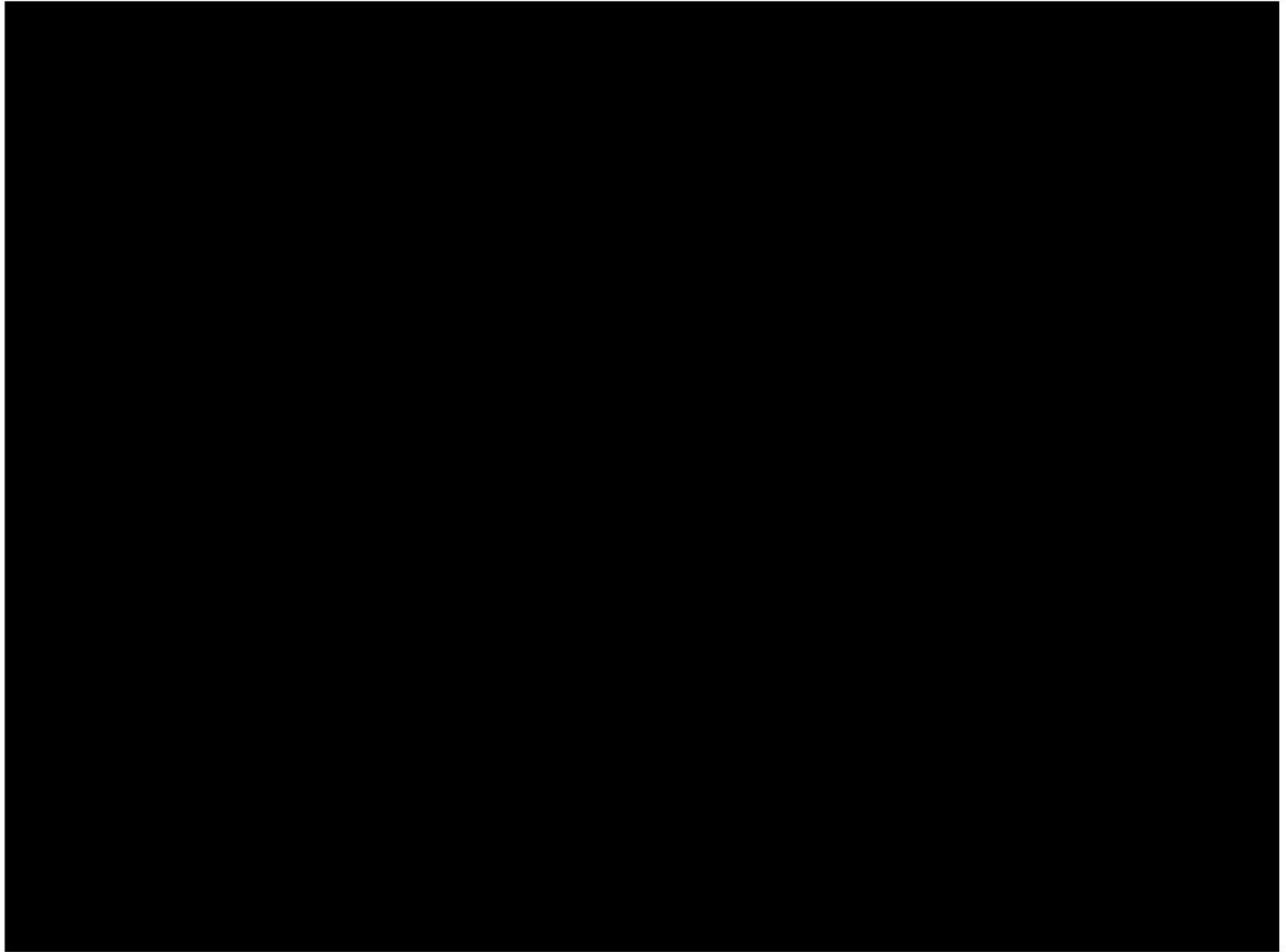


Figure 1. Location of 14RW305, the Sappa Creek massacre site.

The campsite was occupied by a group of Southern Cheyenne led by Sand Hill and Little Bull. Many Southern Cheyenne submitted to defeat in the aftermath of the Red River War and reluctantly resigned themselves to living on the newly established reservation in Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). Still, others were determined to continue to live their traditional nomadic bison hunting lifeway. The party led by Sand Hill and Little Bull was traveling north from the Cheyenne-Arapahoe agency from which they had fled to join their kin, the Omissis (Ohmesehese) and Northern Suhtai (So'taeo' o) of the Northern Cheyenne in Montana. However, they were pursued by the U.S. Military in an effort to return them to the reservation (Chalfant 1997:60).

The confrontation occurred at a place where the Cheyenne camped for the night. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This location provided shelter from the cold north winds and also is not readily visible on the High Plains into which the stream is incised. The creek valley produced areas of marsh that influenced the course of the engagement (Street 1908:370).

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Figure 2. Setting of the Cheyenne camp, view north-northwest. The camp was just beyond the trees on the north side of Middle Sappa Creek. The creek is visible on the right side of the image, behind the trees it turns west, or left in this image.

The Site has had no intensive professional investigation and has suffered some disturbance. Former site owner [REDACTED] reported finding piles of ashes where individual lodges were burned and abundant artifacts of the battle [REDACTED]. This indicates that material culture related to the battle is on or near the site surface, possibly covered by a thin veneer of overbank deposits from Sappa Creek. Human remains, reported to have been collected from the Site, were given to the Kansas Historical Society by R. K. Farrar in 1912, suggesting that other human remains may still be present [REDACTED] (Kansas Historical Society archeological site files, 14RW305). These remains were repatriated to the Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma in 1999. Also, the current landowner stated that collectors using metal detectors have recovered bullet casings that are consistent with military issue during the time of the attack.

Site deposits may be disturbed by root growth and animal burrows in the soft floodplain sediments. Despite this, it is highly likely that substantial remnants of the site remain. In the camp itself, the piles of possessions, including the lodges, that were burned would leave a profound signature in the soil and subsoil, extending to depths of 20 cm or more. While there is documentation that large items were removed, smaller items such as tinklers, glass beads, arrow points, buckles, lead balls, metal ornaments, all artifacts representing the period of occupation and which would survive the fires, undoubtedly are present. The area has not been cultivated and while metal artifacts have been collected by people using metal detectors from the surface and near-surface there are few reports that it has been systematically excavated by looters. No substantial professional archeological work is documented for the site, but controlled metal detector and geophysical surveys have significant potential to identify specific burned lodge locations, work areas, and mass graves if present. The ridge line surrounding the camp also is likely to produce archeological material, primarily bullet casings from the soldiers firing at the Cheyenne and bullets and arrow points fired at the soldiers by the Cheyenne.

In 1875 the camp probably had few trees but the cessation of prairie fires has led to the area being wooded today. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A high, rock-controlled ridge to the south is used for livestock grazing and remains relatively unchanged from the time of the battle. Portions of the areas north and

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east of the camp are significant because herds of horses were there and because the military took control and established positions in these areas. The land north and northeast of the camp is cultivated, and a machine shed lies north of the camp.

[REDACTED] This area also has been used to park and store farm machinery. While these all impede on the character and feeling of the Site, and disturb some portions of the Site, the significant portion of the Site—the camp—remains relatively undisturbed.

The camp is in a location that is surrounded on the east, north,

[REDACTED] an important consideration for a group of people that are fleeing the U.S. military. The tall cottonwood trees seen today probably did not exist during the camp's occupation, but some wood for fires would have been nearby, and there was ample grass for the many horses owned by the Cheyenne.

Overall, the Sappa Creek Massacre Site retains a high amount of its historic integrity. The site itself is the location of the battle and it is in the same open space setting with little to no changes in the surrounding landscape. Design, workmanship, and materials are not typically weighed regarding archaeological properties, but there is evidence that some material remains and artifacts are intact at the site. The site feels like it did during the historic battle and it is set in wide open lands. There is supporting evidence and a high potential of identifying the various elements of the camp and learning more about the Site and people there. The Site remains associated with the massacre and is well documented and preserved. Though some of the property has been used for grazing, the overall integrity of the Site remains. The potential to learn more about the battle, the Southern Cheyenne and the Indian wars is high on this relatively undisturbed Site.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)
Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

MILITARY

ETHNIC HERITAGE—NATIVE AMERICAN

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

ARCHEOLOGY—HISTORIC—ABORIGINAL

Period of Significance

1867-1875

Significant Dates

1875

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Southern Cheyenne

Architect/Builder

N/A

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Period of Significance (justification)

In the early nineteenth century members of many tribal nations, mounted on horseback, ranged freely throughout the Great Plains. They subsisted primarily on bison that were present in great quantities and lived a mobile lifestyle within territories that had fluid boundaries. They did not have permanent settlements but lived in tipis or lodges that were transported by horses. However, as the nineteenth century progressed, more people of Old World ancestry moved into and through the Great Plains. Kansas became a state in 1861 and was open to settlement and land ownership, a concept foreign to Tribal Nations. This led to violent clashes between Tribal Nations, settlers and travelers.

In October 1867, the United States government attempted to reduce conflict by establishing a reservation for the Cheyenne and Arapahoe with the Treaty of Medicine Lodge (Kapler 1904). This action ultimately increased violence. The Cheyenne believed, incorrectly, that the treaty would allow them to continue hunting in their traditional areas between the Arkansas and Platte Rivers (Chalfant 1997: xv-xvii). It was with great reluctance that some Cheyenne moved to the reservation, and others refused. The Treaty of Medicine Lodge led to increased bitterness of the Cheyenne toward the U.S. Government and also toward the increasing numbers of settlers, railroad workers, surveyors, and military personnel in the Cheyenne's traditional hunting area. Between 1868 and 1874, those Cheyenne not living on the reservation, along with Arapahoe and the Sioux, intensified their attacks on Whites. This led to retaliation by the U.S. Military, including attacks on Cheyenne villages, which often included the killing of horses and the burning of lodges and other possessions—items essential to survival for the Cheyenne (Chalfant 1967:17). Eventually many of the Cheyenne moved to the reservation. To make matters worse, the populations of the bison the Cheyenne relied on collapsed in 1872 due to intensive hunting by Whites. In the spring of 1875, as conditions on the reservation worsened, a faction of Cheyenne fled to join their Cheyenne relatives in Montana. [REDACTED]

Criteria Considerations (justification)

None

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Narrative Statement of Significance

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Summary

The Sappa Creek Massacre site, Kansas archeological site number 14RW305, is significant statewide under Criterion A for its specific association with the Red River War (1874-1875) and more generally with the American Indian Wars (1609-1924). It is also significant under Criterion D for its potential to yield significant information regarding both Native American (Southern Cheyenne) and Euro-American Central Plains cultures. The Site is mostly undisturbed and retains its historic integrity and character-defining features, which include the open space and association and feeling of the Massacre site to the events that occurred. It is an excellent example of this type of Site in Kansas and retains its important tie to the Southern Cheyenne.

This summary relies primarily on the work of Chalfant (1997), a historical summary; Bent (1968), which is an edited eyewitness account of the Cheyenne during the period of significance; and on a primary document—Letter of Austin Henely, Second Lieutenant, Sixth Cavalry, to The Post Adjutant, Fort Wallace, Kansas, April 26, 1875, which is a first-hand account and official report of a participant and eyewitness of the engagement.

Elaboration

Background

The Cheyenne originated in what is now Minnesota. They lived in villages, subsisting primarily on fish and wild rice and occasionally traveling into the Great Plains to hunt bison. Pressure from eastern tribes in the eighteenth century prompted the Cheyenne to move west, settling in the Black Hills. They established a hunting territory in the western reaches of the Platte River and, by doing so, became the enemies of, among others, the Pawnee. The separation of the north and south bands of the Cheyenne began in the 1830s, with the southern band trading at Bent's Fort in southeastern Colorado and the Northern Band trading at Fort Laramie. The intrusion of the Oregon Trail further separated the two bands (Moore, Liberty, and Strauss 2001:863-865). Although the two groups—the Northern and Southern Cheyenne—were separated, they always considered themselves to be one people—the Cheyenne.

Intertribal warfare and disease exacted a greater toll on the Cheyenne in the south than the subsequent battles with the United States. However, the overland trails and the newly emerging rail lines brought increasing contact with traders and settlers who encroached on the traditional hunting grounds and areas designated for the tribe (Thornton 1987:105). The Cheyenne responded by harassing settlers and stealing their livestock. During the Civil War, military support of the trails and the settlers diminished, but state authorities in Colorado sanctioned the attack that led to the Sand Creek Massacre November 29, 1864, with the scalping and mutilation of 137 Cheyenne by Colonel John M. Chivington's Colorado militia (Hoig, 1977). Sand Creek triggered revenge attacks by the Cheyenne and other plains tribes (Bent, 1968: 137-163).

In an effort to resolve the conflicts, the United States government established a reservation for the Cheyenne and Arapahoe south of the Arkansas River through the Treaty of Medicine Lodge in October 1867. The reservation was south of the Kansas state line but allowed hunting south of the Arkansas River with the Comanche, Apache, and Kiowa. While the Cheyenne were led to understand they could hunt their traditional lands further north, between the Platte and Arkansas rivers, until the buffalo were gone, this was not in the final treaty and led to great anger among the Cheyenne. During the winter of 1867-1868, after the Medicine Lodge

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treaty, the Southern Cheyenne lived between the Platte and Arkansas rivers instead of on the reservation (Bent 1968:281-285, Chalfant 1997:27-28).

By 1868 the Cheyenne, Arapahoe, and Sioux had intensified their attacks on settlers encroaching on their traditional hunting grounds (Bent 1968:295-312). Major George Forsyth was directed to take action against the tribes. However, his camp was attacked, and he and his troops were held under siege in rifle pits they excavated on a sand bar for nine days in Yuma County, Colorado. This was the Battle of Beecher Island (Bent 1968:300-306, Monnett 1992).

In the autumn of 1868, General Phillip Sheridan was planning a winter offensive against the raiding tribes. This involved deploying two columns of soldiers to channel the hostile bands toward the reservation only to be intercepted and attacked by a third column—the Seventh Cavalry—led by George Armstrong Custer. This led to the battle of the Washita that resulted in the death of Black Kettle, a peace chief, and his wife, along with at least 50¹ warriors, women, and children. Custer took 53 women and children as prisoners. The Army lost two officers and 19 enlisted men, with others wounded. Custer burned the village and retreated (Bent 1968:316-322, Hoig 1979).

The winter and spring of 1868-1869 saw the Cheyenne Dog Soldier raids, which were in retaliation for the Cheyenne villages burned by the U.S. military. Settlers, bison hunters, railroad workers, and travelers on the Santa Fe trail were killed. The Cheyenne tore up railroad tracks and seized supplies and livestock until June 1869, at which time Major Eugene Carr with 500 men, including Pawnee scouts, set out to clear the Dog Soldiers and their allies from north-central Kansas. The Dog Soldiers and their Sioux allies headed north to the Sand Hills of Nebraska. The Cheyenne under Tall Bull and some Sioux moved to the South Platte, with the Sioux camping north of the river and the Cheyenne settling south of the river at Summit Spring. Soldiers discovered and attacked the Summit Spring camp and killed 52 Cheyenne men, women, and children, and took 17 women and children prisoners. They looted and burned the village along with 1.5 tons of bison meat (Bent 1968:328-35, Chalfant 1997:23-24). After this, continually threatened by an attack from U.S. soldiers, Bull Bear and his followers headed south toward the reservation while White Horse and Tangle Hair headed north to join the Northern Cheyenne. (Chalfant 1997:19-24).

The Darlington agency on the reservation was finally opened after a long delay in 1870. During this year, Stone Forehead and Bull Bear went to visit their northern kin to conduct religious ceremonies. Though Whites feared the journey north presaged war, Stone Forehead and Bull Bear returned in May 1871 without incident. Still, the reservation was uneasy. Two factions emerged—a peaceful faction that included Black Kettle, Stone Calf, Little Robe, Old Little Wolf, and the hunter-warriors, who wanted their independence, their traditional mobile hunting way of life, and to wage war with the Utes and Pawnee. There were sufficient bison until 1872, but after that was a sharp decline caused by White hide hunters who came on the reservation and stole horses, sold whiskey, and illegally killed huge numbers of bison. The Army did not interfere and supported the extinction of bison as a means of forcing the Indians into settled farming life (Bent 1968:353-Chalfant 1999:35). This sentiment is summarized in a statement by Secretary of the Interior Columbus Delano in 1873: "I would not seriously regret the total disappearance of the buffalo from our western prairies, in its effect upon the Indians. I would regard it rather as a means of hastening their sense of dependence upon the products of the soil and their own labors." (Delano 1873:688).

¹ Accounts vary but range as high as 103 (Bent 1968:318, footnote).

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Setting the Stage: The Red River War

In May 1874, White horse thieves stole the best of Little Robe's horses (Bent 1968:335). His son, Sitting Medicine, struck out to retrieve them, failed, but then ran off horses, mules, and cattle from White ranches near Sun City, Kansas. The Sixth Cavalry attacked, wounding Sitting Medicine. This led to widespread warfare, referred to as the Red River War (Chalfant 1999:36-37). In 1874, factions of the Cheyenne, Comanches, and Kiowa that refused to live on a newly created reservation in Oklahoma set out on a series of attacks in the Southern Plains (West 1968:150-178). The first was a raid on buffalo hunters at Adobe Walls in the Texas Panhandle,² which was not successful. A series of attacks on Whites from Kansas and eastern Colorado to Texas and New Mexico ensued. Later, in September 1874, the German family traveling through Kansas was attacked by Cheyenne. The parents, one son, and two daughters were killed; four other daughters were taken as captives (Bent 1968:363, Chalfant 1999:43).

This led to unfettered action on the part of the U.S. Military, attacking Indians even into reservations, where Indians that did not want to fight were to register and settle close to an agency for their protection. Most Arapaho, Kiowa Apaches, and Comanches, along with 280 Cheyenne, reluctantly gave up their freedom and came in. But over 1700 Cheyenne refused to come in or enroll at the reservation agency, along with around 100 Kiowa. The military doggedly pursued these people, including a disastrous raid on about 100 lodges of Kiowa, Comanche, and Cheyenne in Palo Duro Canyon in Texas. The Indian lodges were burned, and hundreds of ponies were taken; many of these were later killed (Chalfant 1999:48-49). After this, the U.S. Military had the upper hand, locating and destroying hundreds of lodges during the autumn of 1874. This effectively defeated the Cheyenne, who straggled into the reservation in February and March 1875, marking the end of their traditional way of life (Chalfant 1999:40-51).

Incidents Leading to the Battle at Sappa Creek

The battle on Sappa Creek began with a minor incident on the reservation. In April 1875, Black Horse, a Cheyenne, escaped while being shackled and ran toward a Cheyenne camp. The soldiers fired at and killed Black Horse but also wounded people in the camp. The Cheyenne, thinking they were being attacked by soldiers, fled to the sandhills north of the agency. A small group of Dog Soldiers, armed only with bows and arrows used for hunting, stayed behind to serve as a rear guard. After successfully impeding the progress of the soldiers, they, too, eventually fled, joining the others. The first group of Cheyenne that fled reached the sandhills dug in, and retrieved weapons they had hidden there. The military responded by firing on them with a Gatling gun, but the Cheyenne maintained their position (Chalfant 1997:54-55). That night the Cheyenne escaped led by White Horse and headed north under cover of a violent storm (Bent 1968:365, Chalfant 1997:56; Monnett 1999:67; West 1968:153-154, Williams 1875:94). However, lacking adequate provisions, many of these Cheyenne ultimately returned to the reservation where an amnesty had been declared (Chalfant 1997:59).

Months before, Stone Forehead, Keeper of the Sacred Arrows, had left the agency and moved north to start the journey to join the Northern bands along the Powder River. He left behind his son Black Hairy Dog, Black Hairy Dog's wife, and White Bear, his stepson. They all wanted to follow Stone Forehead north, as did several other groups of Cheyenne that were camped north of the reservation, but the journey would be difficult because their supplies were depleted, making the decision difficult. Among these were the camps of Little Bull and Sand Hill. Little Bull's camp had reluctantly started traveling south to come into the reservation but, upon hearing of

² This was the second Battle of Adobe Walls. The first was a battle between the United States Army and the American Indians, the Kiowa, Comanche, and Plains Apache on November 25, 1864 (Pettis 1908).

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the pursuit of the Dog Soldiers by the Cavalry, they decided instead to make the trek north, despite the poor condition of their horses and general lack of supplies (Bent 1968:367).

The Cheyenne did not have time to hunt as they fled, so when Little Bull's band encountered a herd of cattle near the Smoky Hill River, they managed to stampede off several animals after a brief engagement with the cowboys herding the animals. This action got them sorely needed food but also gave away their location. After a brief rest, they headed north.

they found a white buffalo hunter's camp and took needed supplies from it (Chalfant 1997:64-66).

The cowboys that had been herding the cattle taken by Little Bull's band eventually reached a railroad station and telegraphed their employer, Homer W. Wheeler, about the Cheyenne theft. Wheeler, the Fort Wallace post trader, took this information to the fort commander, which led to the dispatch of a command of 40 men from Fort Lyon, Colorado, under the command of Second Lieutenant Austin Henely to begin the pursuit of the Cheyenne (Chalfant 1997:94). On April 18, Lieutenant Henely received orders to intercept the Cheyenne and convince them to surrender. If they refused, he had orders to use force. Henely set out with 46 men to find the attacking Indians on April 19, 1875 (Chalfant 1997:95; Street 1908 368-369).

Second Lieutenant Austin Henely left Fort Wallace for Punished Women's Fork³, complaining about the inadequate transportation available to him at Fort Wallace. On the second day out, he left his wagons behind to scout for a trail near Hackberry Creek and found a trail indicating twelve lodges. He abandoned a wagon and half his forage to follow the trail. Overnight rain made following the trail challenging, and it eventually was lost (Henely 1875).

Henely proceeded to the headwaters of the Solomon River to consult with post trader Homer Wheeler, Lieutenant C. C. Hewitt, Dr. F. H. Atkins, and others. Wheeler knew the country and served as a guide. They agreed to head northeast to the North Beaver River. They soon discovered a trail, meeting the party of hunters—Henry Campbell, Charles Schroeder, and Samuel B. Srack—that had been robbed by Indians. They indicated that the Indians

The hunters guided Henely to the vicinity of the Indian camp (West 1968:158).

The three hunters and Wheeler set out to find the camp, and in the early morning of the next day they succeeded.

The Battle

Ponies were grazing outside the Cheyenne camp. Henely sent Sergeant George K. Kitchen and ten other men to surround the ponies and kill the herders. He then intended to move in between the captured herd and the camp and either accept surrender from the Cheyenne or fight. Henely was on the high ground south and west of the camp. The way down to the camp terminates in the marshy bottom of Sappa Creek. Henely charged toward the camp. The Cheyenne saw their approach. Some hurried to control their herds of horses and flee the oncoming soldiers while others prepared to defend the camp. With great difficulty, Henely and Wheeler managed to get through the marshy Sappa Creek bottom on horseback and ordered the soldiers to dismount and take positions for battle (Monnett 1999:68-69). The battle had begun.

³ Punished Women's fork also is known as Battle Canyon and Kansas archeological site 14SC306. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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[REDACTED] The Cheyenne were north and east of the creek, the soldiers, advanced from the south and west (Figure 3). Along the arc of the creek channel were several holes in the ground; some of the Cheyenne took positions there. In one account (Bent 1968:368), Little Bull and Dirty Water approached the soldiers to discuss a truce. As Sergeant Papier approached to talk, White Bear rose from a hidden position in one of the holes and killed him, so the soldiers shot Little Bull, Dirty Water, and White Bear, and the fighting ensued. Private Robert Theims also was killed in this area of the camp when he rushed Cheyenne defenses.

After this, the troops took positions along the arcing ridge east and north of the camp (Figure 3). Firing was at close range—15 to 20 feet. After 20 minutes of fighting, the Cheyenne ceased firing. While Henely prepared to redirect his troops to pursue escaped Cheyenne, two Cheyenne approached the two dead soldiers on the slope, Papier, and Theims, and Henely sent men to charge them. The Cheyenne retreated from the bodies, but then a Cheyenne in full regalia emerged from one of the holes in the ground, moving in a peculiar manner, presumably in an attempt to escape, but was shot (Monnett 1999:74). Thinking that the battle was finished, Henely sent troops after the escaped Cheyenne. However, these troops drew fire from the camp.

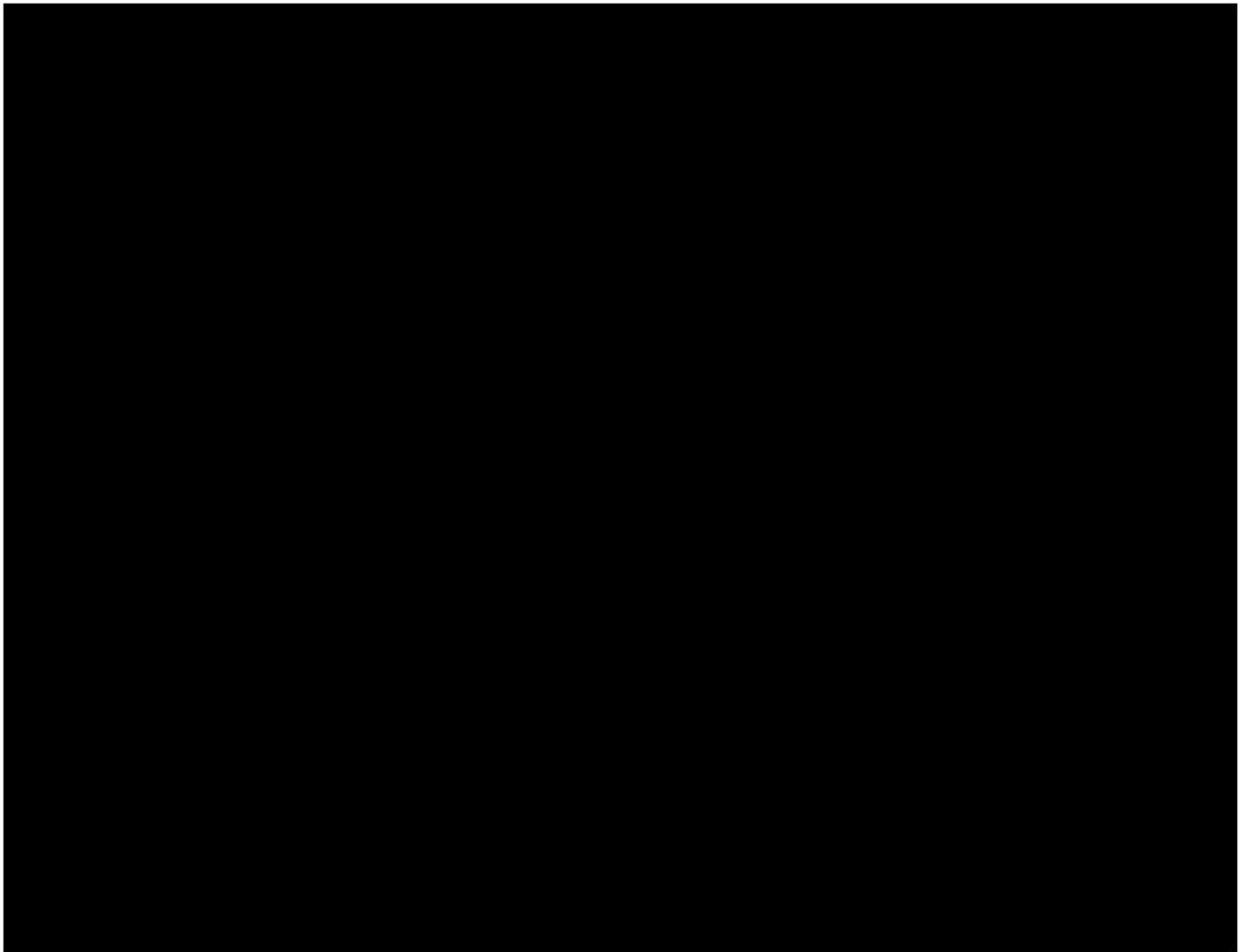


Figure 3. Aerial image showing the Site's setting, the location of the Cheyenne camp and their herds of ponies, and the firing positions of the soldiers above the camp.

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Figure 4. Positions of the soldiers on the ridge above the Cheyenne camp. View to the north-northwest.

In an effort to be certain that all combatants in the camp had been killed, Henely reorganized the soldiers to positions on the arcing landform above the Cheyenne camp. He resumed firing until he believed all fighters to be dead. Henely sent soldiers to retrieve a herd of Cheyenne horses when several Cheyenne moved to cut them off, but Henely rode out and forced them to retreat.

The fight lasted about three hours. Henely reported twenty-seven Cheyenne dead—nineteen warriors and eight women and children who were "unavoidably killed," but the number of Cheyenne killed varies substantially to as many as 70 (Kinbacher 2016:309; Street 1908:371; West 1968:172-173). Blind Bull escaped and eventually recounted the battle to George Bent. He stated that seven warriors and twenty women and children were killed, a near mirror opposite of Henely's account. The Cheyenne leader Little Bull was among the dead, along with Tangle Hair, Dirty Water, The Rat, White Bear, Young Bear, Stone Teeth, and a woman named Yellow Body. The Cheyenne that escaped include Blind Bull, Black Hairy Dog—son of Stone Forehead, and Black Hairy Dog's wife (unnamed), Council Chief Sand Hill, and his son Yellow Horse (Bent 1968:369).

Henely noted that nearly all of the Cheyenne were armed with rifles or carbines, the latter mostly Spencers, along with several muzzleloading rifles and a .50 caliber Springfield breech-loading rifle. He reports seeing two war bonnets, one having two horns, the other reportedly taken by Sergeant Platten (West 1968:163). Also found was a ledger book with what Henely interpreted as depictions of the battles of Red River and the Adobe Walls, the killing of Private Pettyjohn—a cavalry soldier killed on McClellan Creek, Texas; and the attack on the German family (West 1968:163). This ledger book has never been located.

The soldiers burned the camp that consisted of twelve lodges, half of them covered with skins, the rest being only frames of new hackberry poles. The strategic burning of camps was common at the time, the intent being to deprive Native People of supplies necessary for survival (Monnett 1999:78, 81). Henely then left with one-hundred thirty-four Cheyenne horses. En route, they were overtaken by a fierce storm. The soldiers nearly froze in the improvised camp under a bluff and the herd dispersed. While gathering the herd the next day, many

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soldiers suffered from freezing and snow-blindness, and only ninety-eight head of stock were recovered. Eight rifles and carbines were turned in at Fort Wallace; the rest of the arms and ammunition were burned at the Cheyenne camp. In his May 7, 1875 report to the Secretary of War of the battle, R. Williams, Assistant Adjutant-General, Fort Leavenworth stated, "It is believed that the punishment inflicted upon this band of Cheyennes will go far to deter the tribe from the commission of such atrocities in the future as have characterized it in the past." (Williams 1875). The same year as the attack, the Southern Cheyenne surrendered to the U.S. government (Thornton 1978:120) and moved to the reservation in Oklahoma.

The Site remains important to the Cheyenne. Street (1908:372), writing in the early twentieth century, noted that tokens of respect were frequently left at the Site, presumably by visiting Cheyenne. Father Peter John Powell, writing the foreword to Chalfant's *Cheyennes at Dark Water Creek* (1997) notes that the Cheyenne elders that he knows express sorrow, anger, and bitterness in recalling the Sappa Creek massacre, with the intensity of their feelings eclipsed only by those toward recollections of the Sand Creek massacre (Chalfant 1997:xiii). Sandoz (1953:273) stated her informants, with one exception, asked to remain anonymous when discussing the battle because to do so was taboo. West (1968:168) also noted that when writing his account of the battle in the 1960s, he could not get Cheyenne informants to discuss the battle and assumed that the topic was considered taboo. Assistant Adjutant-General Robert Williams, in his letter to General Pope at Fort Leavenworth, praised Henely's efforts as a successful attack on hostile Cheyenne Indians (Williams 1875).

The conflict at Sappa Creek is referred to both as a battle and a massacre. Sandoz (1953), Street (1908), and others see it as a massacre (Kinbacher 2016:309). West (1968:168-169) refers to those accounts as being based on "...gossip and hearsay." Chalfant (1997:147-159) discusses both sides of the issue, leaving it to the reader to determine. However, Lieutenant Henely's report (1875:3) indicates his intent as they approached that camp:

My plan for the attack had been arranged as follows: Sergeant Kitchen was detailed with ten men to surround the herd, kill the herders, round it up as near to the main command as possible, stay in charge of it with half his men, and send the rest to join me. ... I intended to intrude myself between the Indians and their herd and attack them if they did not surrender.

Referring to the mission as an attack and beginning the approach to the camp by killing the herders shows little intent for negotiation, so reference to the conflict as the Sappa Creek Massacre is appropriate.

Conclusion

The Sappa Creek Massacre Site, archeological site number 14RW305, is significant under Criterion A for its association with the American Indian Wars (1609-1924) and with the Red River War (1874-1875). It serves as an example of one of a number of encounters where the U.S. Military and a Tribal Nation clash with lopsided losses for the Tribal Nation, not only of combatants but also women, children, and essential property. It is emblematic of the U.S. government's attempts to contain Tribal Nations, to reserve the most productive western lands for White settlers as envisioned by belief in the Manifest destiny of the United States, and the U.S. policy of Indian Removal. It also highlights the cultural gulf between the government of the United States and Tribal Nations, as seen in the misunderstanding of the 1867 treaty signed by the Cheyenne without full knowledge of its implications. Areas of significance include Military, Native American ethnic heritage, Exploration/Settlement, and Contact period archeology during the period of significance of 1867-1875.

The main focus of the Site—the camp—where most people died, where the possessions of the Cheyenne were burned, and where, possibly, the remains of Cheyenne killed are, has been left undisturbed and thus is likely

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preserved. Evidence of human remains and piles of burned materials indicating the locations of individual lodges by former site owner [REDACTED], and the protection of the Site by current landowner [REDACTED] strongly suggests the presence of intact deposits. Thus the Site also is significant under Criterion D for its potential to yield significant information regarding both Native American and Euro-American Central Plains Cultures.

This Site possesses significance not only for its potential to yield information about the historic event that unfolded here on April 23, 1875, but also for its potential as a comparative data set for other sites associated with the American Indian Wars, in general, and the Red River War, in particular. A small sample of the kinds of important questions to which the Sappa Creek Massacre Site can be expected to provide answers are: (1) Can the number and arrangement of the lodges at the site be verified? Metal detector and geophysical surveys have potential to designate lodge numbers and positions in the identified camp location based on thermal features like hearths as well as metal artifacts that may have been lost or abandoned before and during the attack. (2) Can evidence of the burn pile of the village possessions be located and defined? Again, geophysical and metal detector surveys, as well as minimally invasive soil core probes have potential to identify and verify this location. Further evaluation of this area, if agreed upon by the Cheyenne, also has potential to confirm the presence of human remains. Any human remains encountered would be left in place and subsequently treated in a manner recommended by the Cheyenne. (3) Are there artifacts that mark the approach of the US soldiers and the buffalo hunters to the site and their reported positions on the ridge around the site, and are there artifacts left from the Cheyenne escaping to the north? Systematic evaluations of areas surrounding the camp have potential to verify or refute offensive and defensive positions including what may have been a running battle between the US Soldiers and the Cheyenne fleeing the attack to the north. These recommendations are not definitive, but would serve to bolster the Site's National Register eligibility under Criterion D and could be conducted with minimal disturbance to the site.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

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Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 21.8 ha (53.9 acres)

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.
(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

UTM References

____ NAD 1927 or X ____ NAD 1983

1 Zone Easting Northing

3 Zone Easting Northing

2 Zone Easting Northing

4 Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

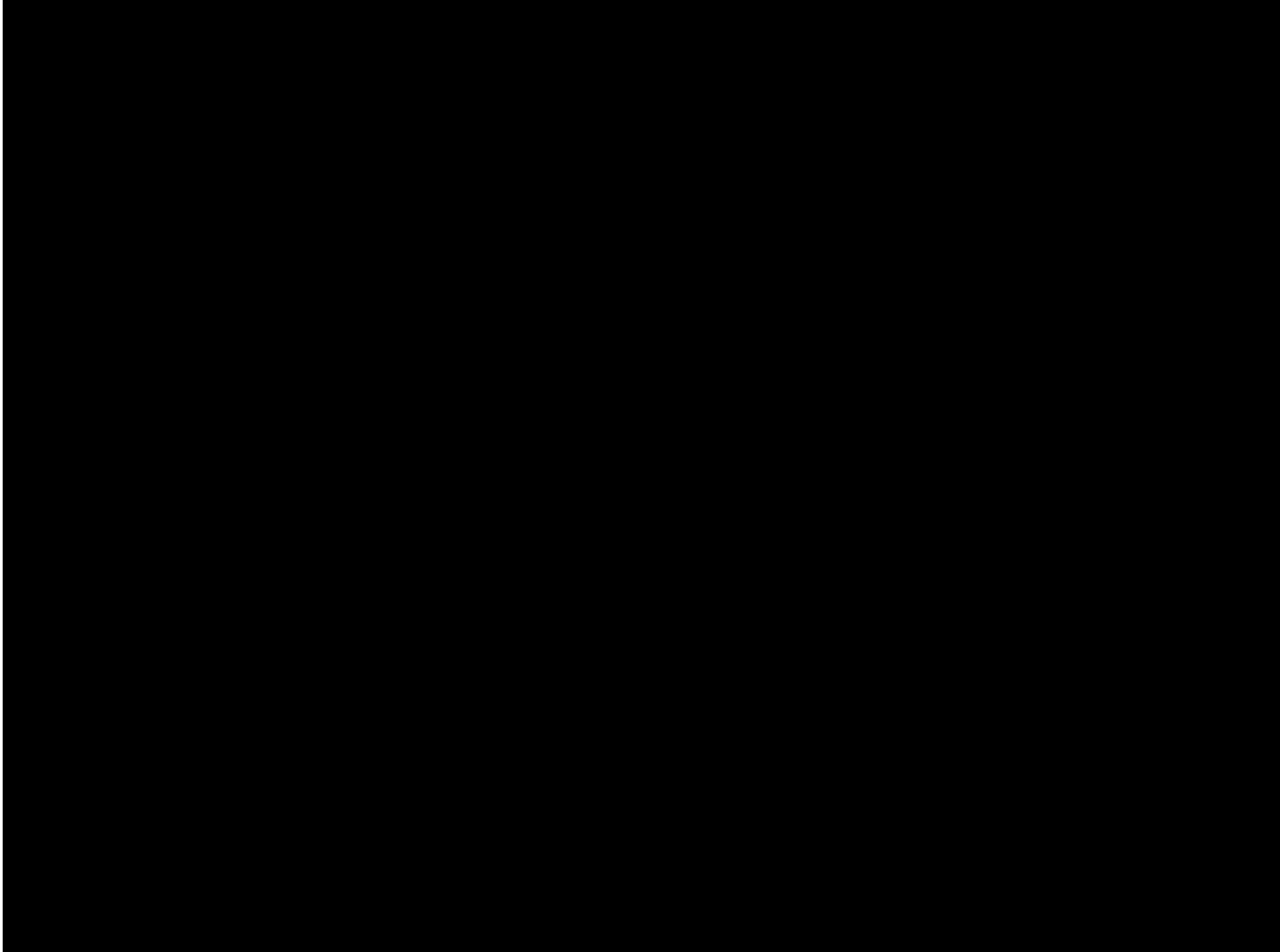
[REDACTED]

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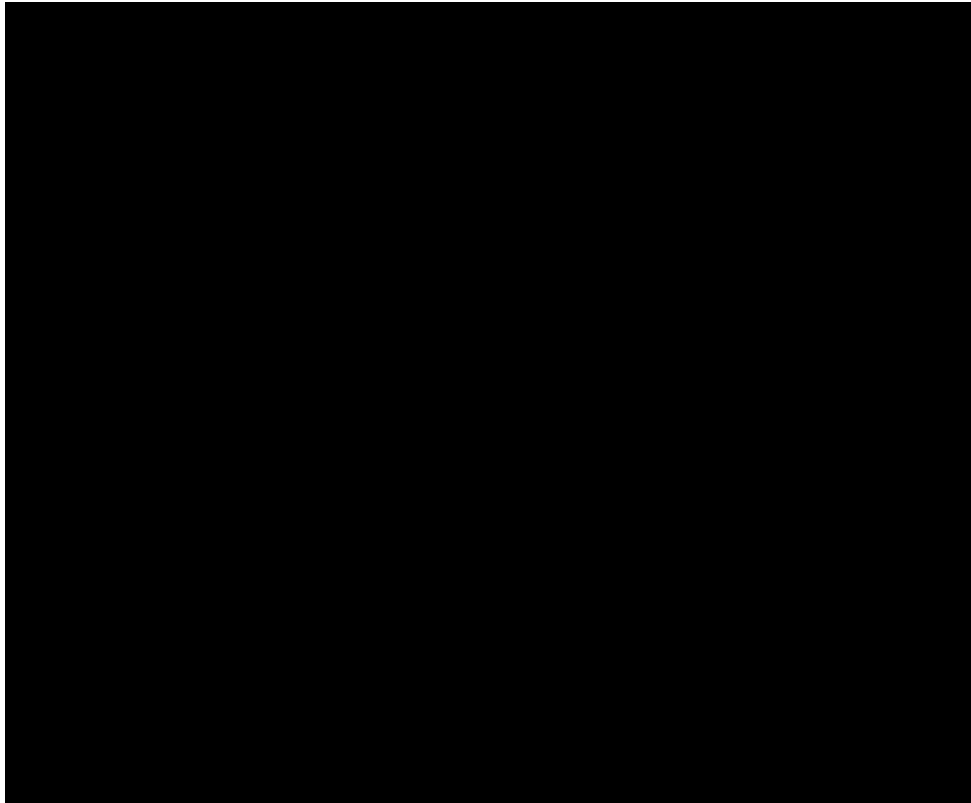


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Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary encompasses the Cheyenne camp, the ridge around the camp from which the soldiers fired into the camp, the marshy bottomland of the Middle Sappa creek through which the soldiers approached, and the areas where herds of Cheyenne ponies were kept.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert J. Hoard
organization Kansas Historical Society Date+ October 6, 2020
street & number 6425 SW 6th Avenue telephone 785.272.8681 x269
city or town Topeka state Kansas zip code 66615
e-mail Robert.Hoard@ks.gov

Property Owner: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name [REDACTED]
street & number [REDACTED] telephone [REDACTED]
city or town [REDACTED] state K.S. zip code [REDACTED]

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photograph Log

Name of Property: **Sappa Creek Massacre Site**

City or Vicinity: 

County: **Rawlins** State: **Kansas**

Photographer: **Robert J. Hoard**

Date Photographed: **February 6, 2020**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 2: View of the campsite, view north-northwest

2 of 2: Panoramic image showing the positions of the soldiers on the ridge above the Cheyenne camp. View to the north northwest.

Figures

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.

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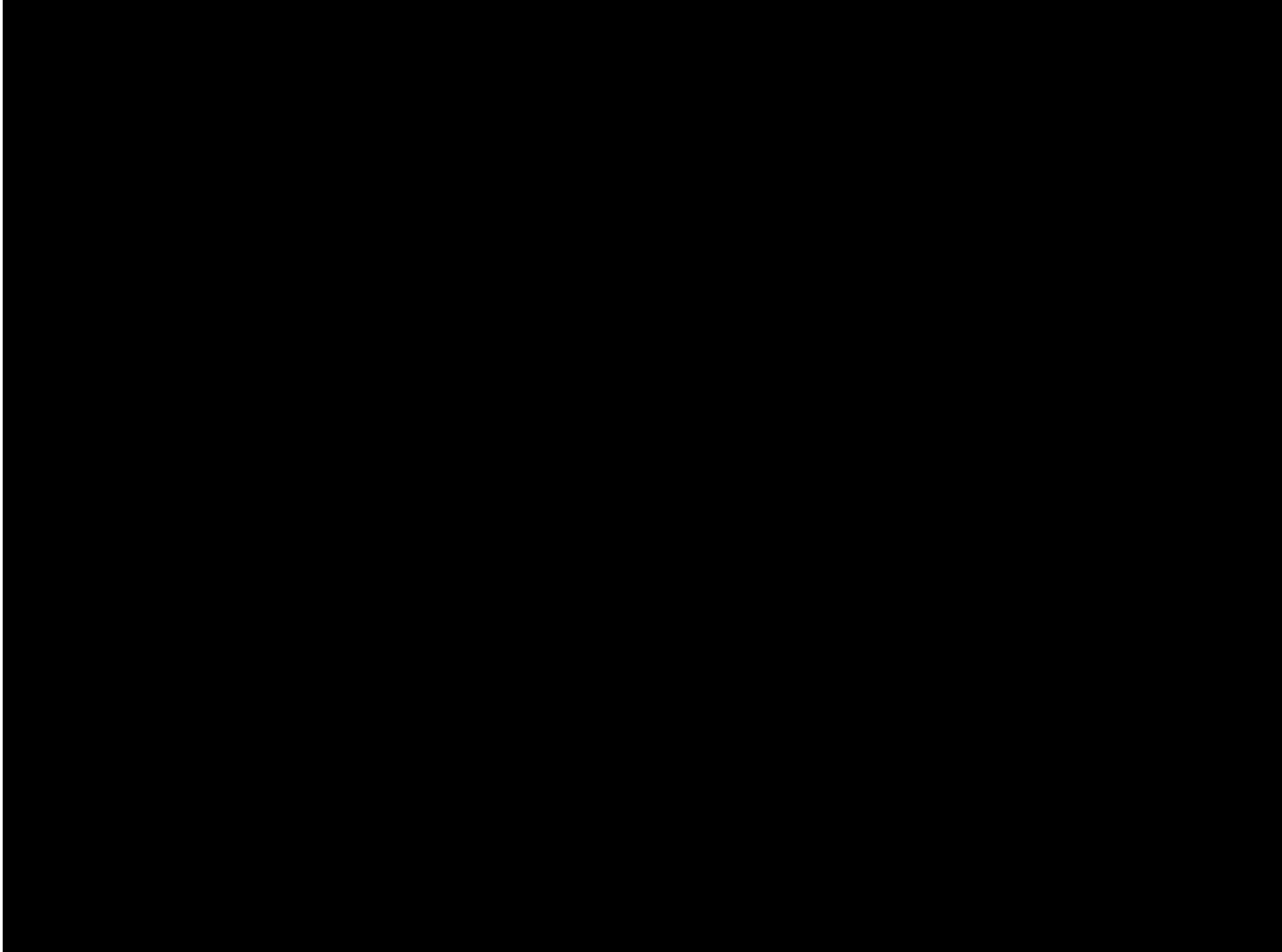


Figure 1. Topographic map figure showing the proposed National Register of Historic Places boundaries for the Sappa Creek Massacre Site and the surrounding terrain.

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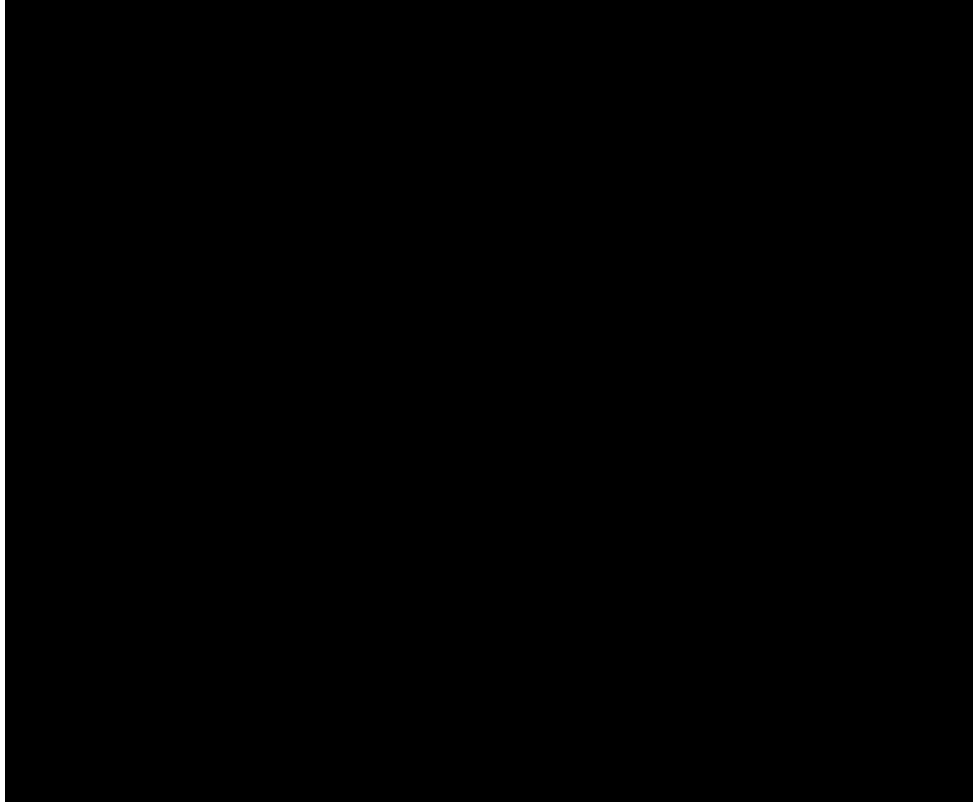


Figure 2. Topographic map figure showing the proposed National Register of Historic Places boundaries for the Sappa Creek Massacre Site.

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Name of Property

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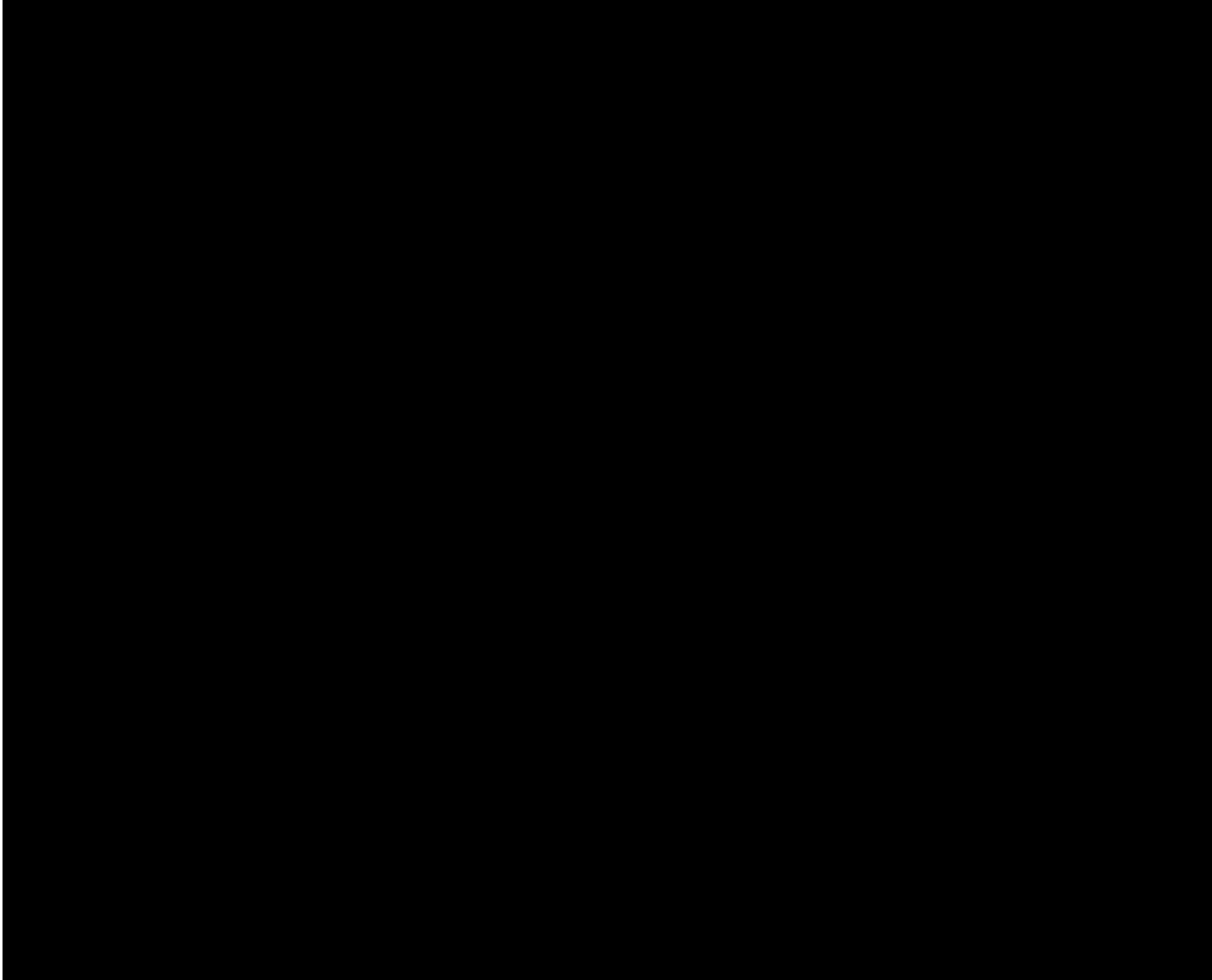


Figure 3. Aerial image showing the proposed National Register of Historic Places boundaries for the Sappa Creek Massacre Site.

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Name of Property

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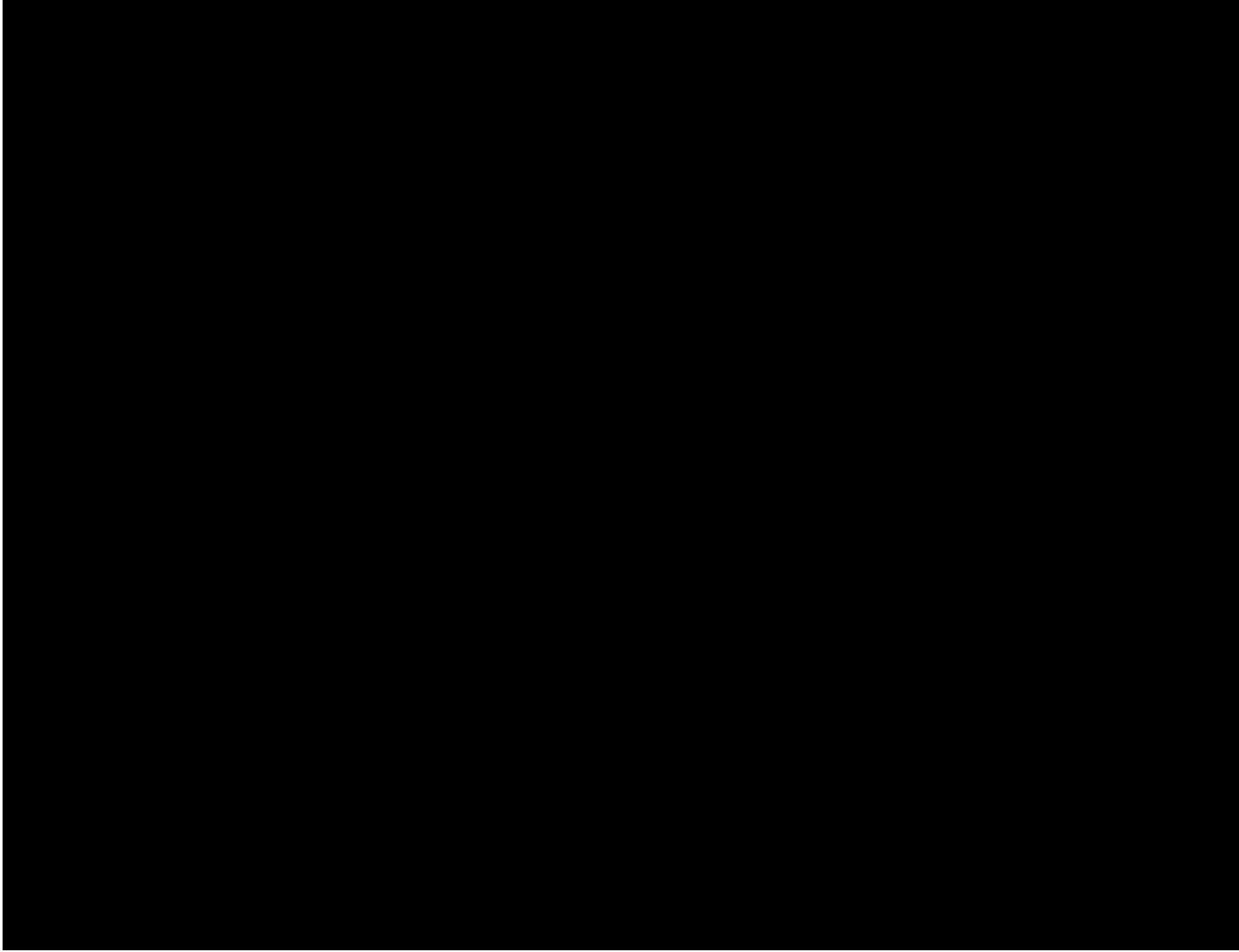


Figure 4. Aerial image of the Sappa Creek massacre site highlighting the location of the Cheyenne camp, terrain features, the approach of the U.S. soldiers and their firing positions, and modern disturbances to the Site.

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Figure 5. Setting of the Cheyenne camp, view north-northwest.



Figure 6. Panoramic image showing the positions of the soldiers on the ridge above the Cheyenne camp. View is to the north-northwest. The creek is visible on the right side of the image, behind the trees it turns west, or left in this image.

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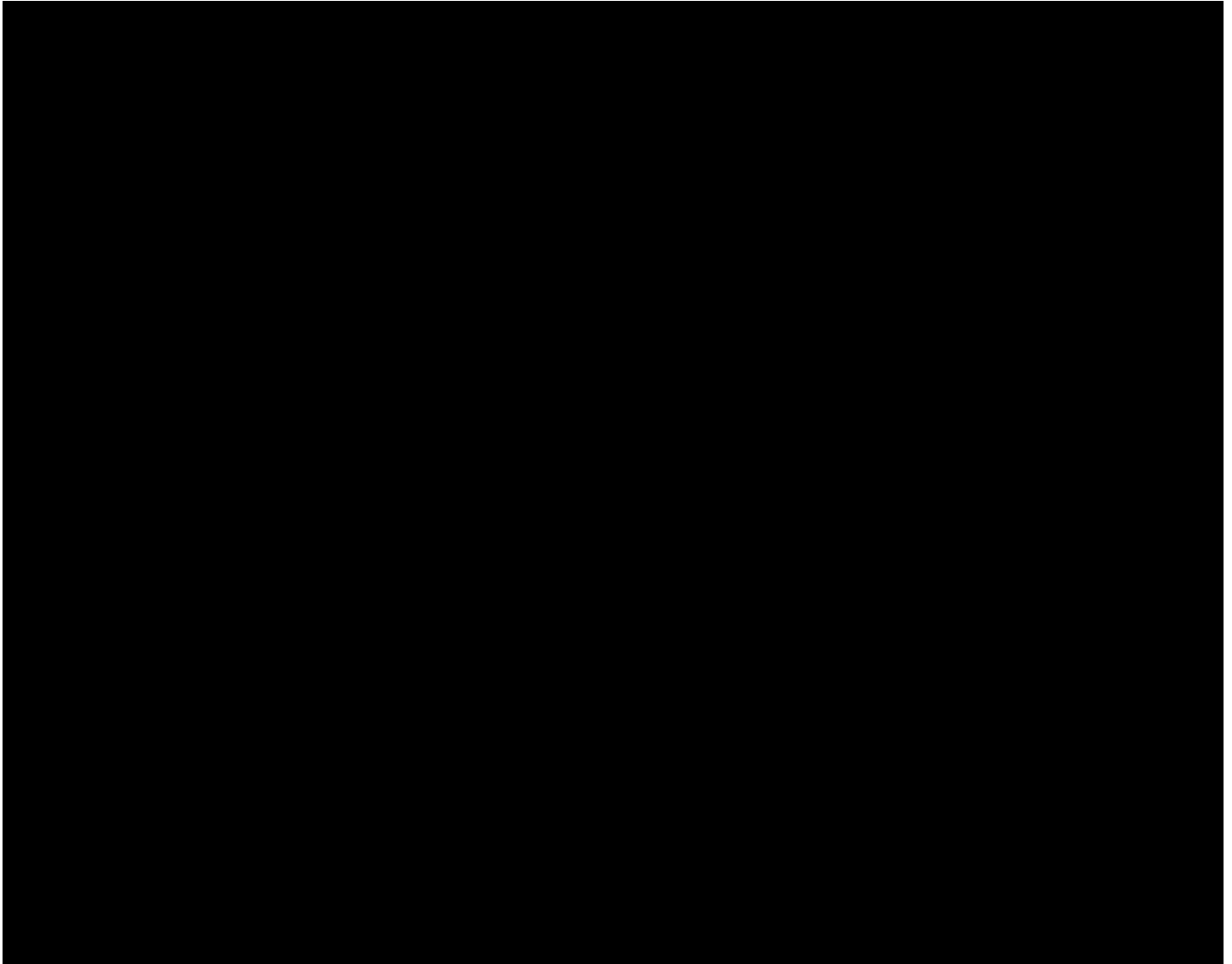


Figure 7. Location of photographs of the Sappa Creek massacre site, Rawlins County, Kansas. Photograph 1 is a view north-northwest toward the camp. Photograph 2 also is a panoramic photograph of the camp location but also shows the ridge from which the soldiers fired into the camp.