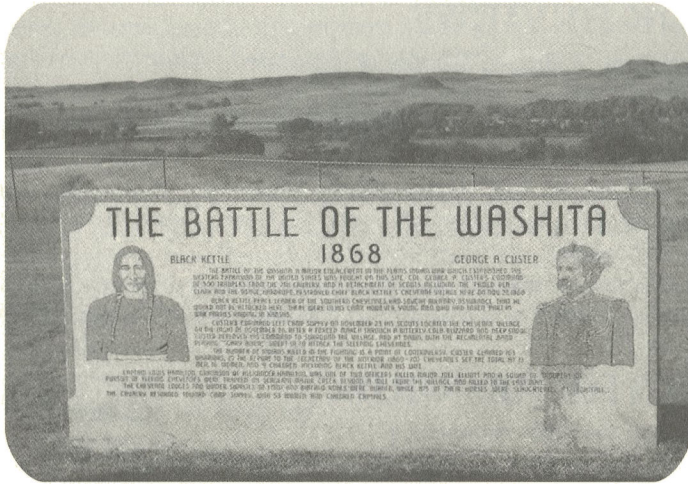


# *The Washita Trail*



## *The Seventh U.S. Cavalry's Route of March to and from the Battle of the Washita*

*By Bob Rea*

In the fall of 1868 the federal government through the United States Army determined to punish Southern Plains tribes, especially the Cheyennes, for depredations in Kansas during the summer months. A military success in the usually quiet months of winter would demonstrate to the tribes that there was no safe haven in any season. The military completed preparations for the winter campaign of 1868–1869 by early November, and columns of troops and supplies, including the Seventh United

States Cavalry under Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer, set out from Fort Dodge, Kansas, south into the Indian Territory.

On November 18 the command established a "base of supply" near the confluence of the Beaver River and Wolf Creek. The collection of huts and tents surrounding the hastily built stockade would become Camp Supply and later (1878) Fort Supply. While the new post was being erected, Lieutenant General Phillip Sheridan and Custer implemented the first phase of the offensive. The Seventh Cavalry's role would involve a thrust south and west in an effort to cross the trail of Indians returning from raids in the north. They would then follow them to their winter encampments and strike a demoralizing blow. The Seventh moved out into a blinding snowstorm on the morning of November 23, 1868, and into the chronicles of history four days later when the regiment attacked Black Kettle's sleeping Cheyenne village in the Washita River valley during the early morning hours of November 27.

The event was devastating to Black Kettle's band and lives in infamy in Cheyenne history. But it and the following months of the winter campaign had the desired effect of demonstrating to the people of the Southern Plains the might and resolve of the federal government to enforce its will. Camp Supply served its initial purpose by living up to its name. Further challenges and responsibilities would keep the post open until late 1894.

The expedition's leaders located Camp Supply on the flood plain between the timbered banks of Wolf Creek and Beaver River approximately two and one-half miles from the confluence of the two streams that form the North Canadian River. It consisted of a stockade, corrals, and log quarters around which rose a small city of army canvas. A narrow line of sand hills stretch from the juncture of the streams to the post with flats to the south, north, and west. Surrounding the bottoms are the sand hills and divides forming the watersheds. Especially prominent is the long, sloping ridge to the southwest.

The Seventh Cavalry's camp probably stood west of the dunes within one-quarter mile of the main camp. It would not have been within the main camp area because of the large number of horses. Lieutenant Francis Gibson described the cavalry camp as "in the woods on the bank of Beaver Creek. . . . To the south the tall sand hills were clad in a snow garment."<sup>1</sup> However, the starting point of the campaign should be considered the main camp site believed to have been located at the northeast edge of the present Fort Supply Historic Site.

## THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

Using information from primary source materials such as participant accounts, regimental records, and period maps, it is possible to provide a close approximation of the Seventh Cavalry's route of travel to and from the Washita and the locales of the regiment's camps during the winter campaign. By analyzing those records and applying approximate map mileage to the present landscape as depicted on a United States Geological Survey (USGS) map, the line of Custer's march can be reconstructed, giving interested modern visitors a guide to travel the line of march.

The sources studied for this report include a daily journal, reminiscences, a period map, and the official record, all from army participants in the campaign. They range in time from the immediate to almost sixty years later. The sources often vary in content, making interpretation or analysis difficult at times. The recorders interpreted features of the terrain from different perspectives, and their descriptions are sketchy at best. As the troopers marched and searched for the winter villages, they were traversing a virtually uncharted region using Osage and white guides and a compass in a landscape cloaked in snow. They traveled a portion of the trail along the Washita River at night. Those factors limited the participants' ability to relate features accurately.

Given those differences, camp sites marked on the USGS map are approximations, and the line of march should be given a latitude of at least a mile on either side of the marked route. The general route of march, for the most part, can be seen from a vehicle traveling state and county roads. There are some sections that cannot be reached due to the terrain and lack of access. The site of trails and camps are located today primarily on private property. Modern travelers should respect the property rights of landowners by remaining on public roads and highways. Differences in the miles marched each day as recounted by the sources varied day by day from one to three miles. The official record of miles marched served as the guide for this report because of its consistency. A more accurate identification of the trails, crossings, and camp sites would entail field work that might include aerial photography, ground surveys, and archeology.

### **November 23, 1868**

The blizzard into which Custer and the Seventh Cavalry rode obscured the landmarks needed by his guides. The situation forced him to navigate by compass in hopes of reaching the planned first camp up Wolf Creek, twelve to fifteen miles from Camp Supply. He

## THE WASHITA TRAIL

chose a camp site in the timber along Wolf Creek after a march of fifteen miles.<sup>2</sup>

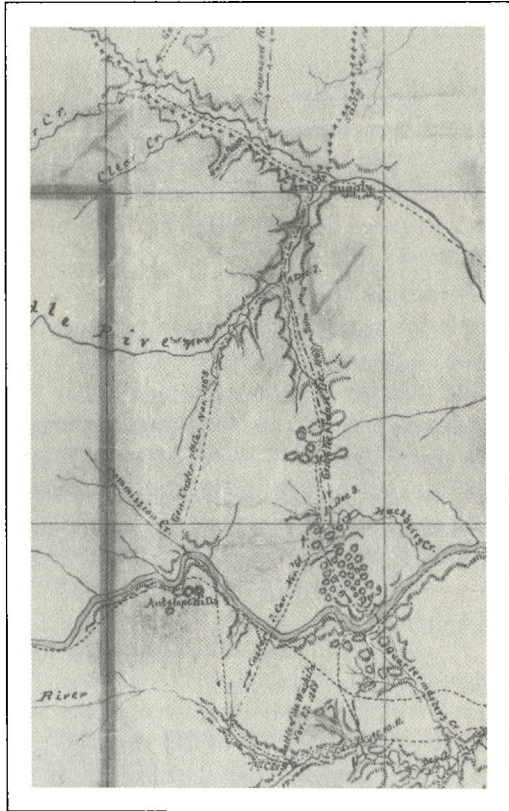
Captain Albert Barnitz ended the day with an entry in his journal that described the weather and terrain:

[We] marched through a blinding snow storm, with the wind in our faces, and through the soft snow a foot in depth. . . . During the march it was impossible to see more than a few hundred yards in any direction, on account of falling snow. Ravines ran off to our left, apparently. Distance marched today was 16 miles, direction S. 30 [degrees] W . . . Sand hills as we approach the stream . . . a very disagreeable day.<sup>3</sup>

Lieutenant E.S. Godfrey in his 1928 reminiscences wrote:

About 2:00 [o']clock we came to Wolf Creek, crossed to the right side of the valley and continued to march till we came to a clump of fallen timbers and there went into camp. Snow 18 inches on the level . . . distance marched about 15 miles.<sup>4</sup>

*A detail from Captain Henry Alvord's 1869 map (right) shows the Seventh Cavalry's approximate route to and from the site of Black Kettle's village on the Washita. On the following USGS maps, Custer's approximate route is marked with solid lines and the modern traveler's route with dotted lines ("Map of Parts of Kansas, Texas, Colorado, New Mexico and the Indian Territory, . . . during the winter of 1868-1869," RG 77, Chief of Engineers, Civil Works Map File, Q142, Cartographics and Architecture Branch, National Archives).*



## THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

The regimental record gave the direction and distance of march only as south, up stream, fourteen miles. Thus, the reported distance of the first day's march varied from fourteen to sixteen miles. Columns of troops often used a wheel-mounted odometer to record distances for record keeping and mapping purposes. Sometimes they gauged the mileage simply from experience. Barnitz noted that the order of march consisted of an advance company, the wagon train flanked by troops, and a troop as rear guard. Commanders usually rotated the order of march assignments each day of a march. A column of regimental size with a wagon train could be one mile long and 100 yards wide. That might account for the differences related by the sources.<sup>5</sup>

The 1869 military map depicts the course of march along the western side of the valley between Wolf Creek and the highlands to the west. It shows the crossing at or above the point at which the present Boggy Creek empties into Wolf Creek from the south.<sup>6</sup>

The line of march was in a southerly direction bearing west with the stream. The column moved over the snow-covered sand hills and ridges west of Wolf Creek and probably did not follow the wooded meanders of the stream close to its bed. The ravines running off to the left represent the drainage system from the west. Wolf Creek courses almost due south for ten miles before turning gradually in a southwesterly direction which would intersect Custer's route. The first camp site was a short distance upstream from the crossing.

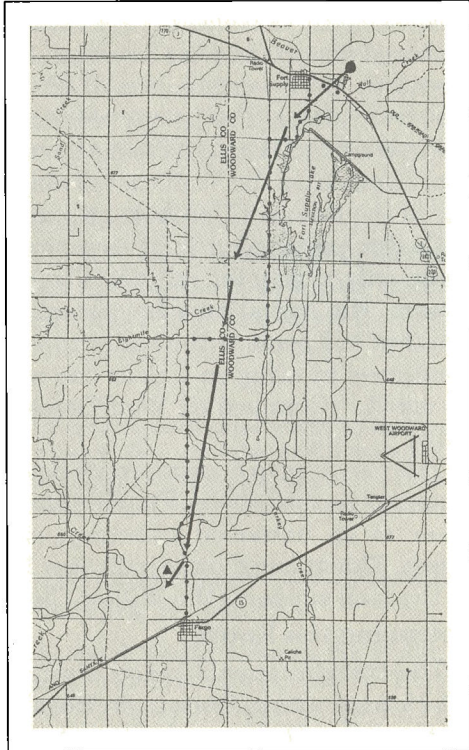
### **Retracing the Route**

Following Custer's line of march begins at old Camp Supply, now the Fort Supply Historic Site. The entrance is just west of the Wolf Creek bridge on United States Highway (US) 270/Oklahoma Highway (SH) 3, one mile east of the town of Fort Supply. There are five historic structures—Ordnance Sergeant's Quarters (1874); Commanding Officer's Quarters (1879); Officer's Quarters (1882); Civilian Employee's Quarters (1881); and Guard House (1892). A replica of the 1868 stockade and a visitor center provide a reminder of one of the most important frontier posts on the Southern Plains.

From the historic site, follow US 270/SH 3 about one mile to the edge of town. Two miles south of the intersection is the Fort Supply Lake, from which a good view of the Wolf Creek valley is provided. In the sand hills east of the reservoir is the site of the Second Battle of Wolf Creek on September 13, 1868. That marked the furthest

advance of the troops of the Seventh Cavalry and Third Infantry of Colonel Alfred Sully's Indian Territory Expedition, which was the prelude to the winter campaign and the battle on the Washita River.<sup>7</sup>

Below the U.S. Corps of Engineers office, turn right out of the lake area. One mile west, turn south on the secondary road that provides access to the west side of the valley. The blacktop and caliche road parallels the stream to the town of Fargo. The later wagon road and telegraph line between Fort Supply and Fort Elliott, Texas, roughly followed the same route.



November 23, 1868

Two miles north of Fargo, the pavement crosses Wolf Creek near the present mouth of Boggy Creek. The area is the location of the crossing of the Texas or Western Trail over which great herds of longhorns and horses went up to Dodge City, Kansas, in the late 1870s and 1880s. The site of Custer's first camp was in the general area of the bridge on the south side of the stream.

#### November 24, 1868

On the morning of November 24, the Seventh Cavalry regiment continued up the south side of Wolf Creek. Although it was a clear day, the deep snow and tributary crossings slowed the advance. The official record stated, "[C]ontinued the march up stream and encamped on the left bank, . . . 16 miles."<sup>8</sup>

Barnitz left the best description of the terrain in his journal:

[T]eams had to be doubled at sandy crossing. High peaks off on our right. Sand hills on our left, all along the stream. After marching 16 miles up right bank of Middle River (Wolf Creek) in southwesterly direction went into camp in woods.<sup>9</sup>

## THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

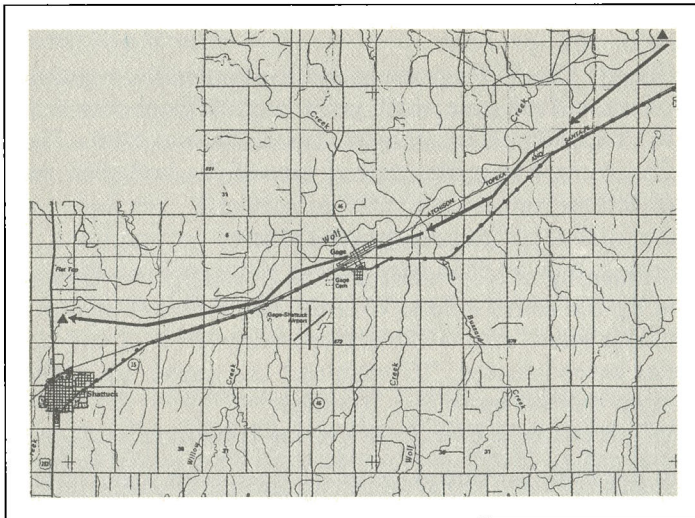
The column traveled up the south side of the valley between the timbered stream and the low sand hills to the south. The peaks to the north are a continuation of the range of highlands separating the river valleys. The “sandy crossing” was made in the area where Little Wolf and Buzzard creeks parallel each other less than a mile apart and enter the Wolf east of Gage. That area later became the site of the Buzzard Creek stage station on the road to Fort Elliott.

Custer provided a long commentary of the day’s events, but made only a general reference to marching up the valley of the stream. His narrative was concerned more with hunting the buffalo that had come to the valley to wait out the storm. Godfrey also mentioned hunting on a clear day with the weather warming, and he noted, “[C]amped on Wolf Creek. Distance marched, about 18 miles.”<sup>10</sup>

The period map shows a route down the south side of the stream crossing the two creeks. The line turns toward the South Canadian River at an unnamed tributary, either present Rock or Willow Creek. The mileage total indicates Rock Creek, while the position on the map supports the Willow Creek area.<sup>11</sup>

### Retracing the Route

The traveler should proceed west-southwest from Fargo along SH 15 from which the terrain Barnitz noted is visible—sand hills south of the Wolf over which the highway runs, the highlands



November 24, 1868

across the valley to the north, and the parallel creeks east of Gage. From the recorded mileage, the regiment's next camp site was still in the Wolf Creek valley near Shattuck. The recorded distances varied by two miles, which means the command had traveled only thirty to thirty-three miles in two days. That soon changed as Custer began to push his troopers harder.

**November 25, 1868**

Custer's scouts had not crossed the trail in the snow of any parties of the Southern Plains tribes moving south to winter haunts. He decided to turn south towards the South Canadian River and the Antelope Hills from which he could scout the upper Washita River:

[O]ur Indian guides, who had been directed to conduct us to a point on the Canadian River near the Antelope Hills . . . now bore off almost due south . . . ascending . . . the divide between the water sheds. . . [W]e pitched our tents about one mile from the river and near a small fresh water tributary.<sup>12</sup>

Barnitz wrote that the command moved out in a southerly direction and reached a camp site after dark. He noted:

[We] marched all day . . . over the great 'divide' between the Middle River [Wolf Creek] and the Canadian. About dusk we crossed a tributary of the Canadian, and after marching about two miles further we reached and encamped on the north bank of the Canadian.<sup>13</sup>

Godfrey remembered the march continued up Wolf Creek a short distance, then turned south. He agreed with Custer regarding the camp on a small stream about a mile from the Canadian River.

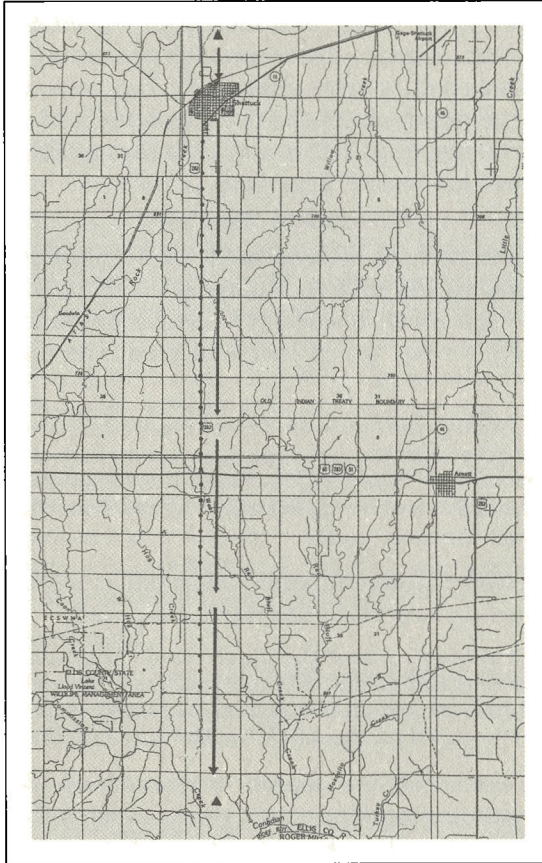
The official unit record noted the men "left Wolf Creek on our right, marched through to the Canadian River, 18 miles." The 1869 map shows a slight southwesterly direction of travel to the mouth of Commission Creek.<sup>14</sup>

**Retracing the Route**

The cumulative mileage indicates the column left Wolf Creek at or east of Shattuck with Rock Creek on the west flank. However, the 1869 map appears to show that the route may have been along the east side of Willow Creek five miles east of Shattuck. Either course ends at the same approximate location on the big bend in the Canadian. The tributary flowing into the Canadian from the north upon which camp was made is Commission Creek, the largest on that section of the river and north and west of the Antelope Hills.



## THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA



November 25, 1868

The area can be reached by traveling south of Shattuck on US 283 to the junction of US 283 and US 60/SH 51. South of this point is SH 46 leading to Lake Vincent fifteen miles south of Shattuck. The Antelope Hills and the valley of the South Canadian River appear in the distance. The watershed or breaks are scenic but rough in nature. The traveler can return to the junction and go east to Arnett, then continue south on US 283.

A side trip to follow Elliott's scout west would follow SH 46 past Lake Vincent to the Oklahoma-Texas border. This is probably as far west as Elliott went before turning southeast. In the area south of Little Robe Creek in 1858, a force of Texas Rangers engaged in a day-long battle with the Comanches. The only bridge across the

river is farther west at Canadian, Texas. The traveler should return to the route of the main column.

The more adventurous traveler, using a county or USGS map, can take the unmarked, unpaved county roads from the Lake Vincent area south and east to meet US 283 south of Arnett. This is a rugged, sandy rural country, and there is no public access to the Commission Creek area. There is no bridge across the Canadian except on US 283.

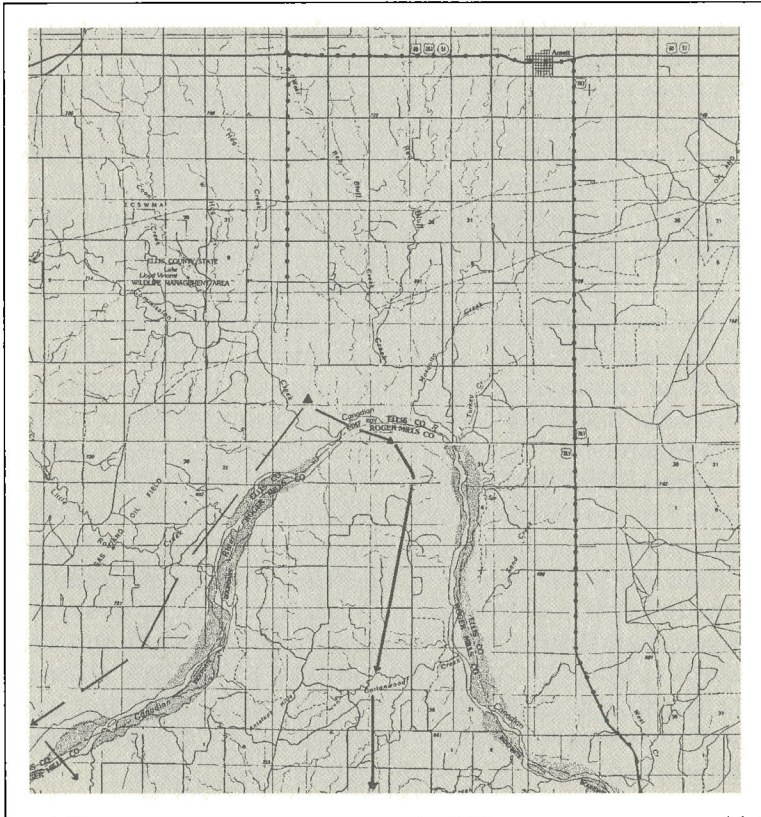
### November 26, 1868

On the morning of November 26, Custer sent Major Joel Elliott and three companies on a scout up the north bank of the Canadian in search of tracks in the snow. Meanwhile, Custer sought a suitable crossing in the big bend around the Antelope Hills. While the main command and wagon train forded the rising, ice-choked river, Custer climbed the highest hill in the group, "about 300 feet above the plain," to survey the country and await a report from Elliott.<sup>15</sup>

The downstream crossing completed, the command began the long climb out of the bottoms which brought the wagons and troops onto the level plain east of the hills. Custer received a report from the scout, Jack Corgin, that they had found a trail to the west on the north side of the Canadian and that Elliott was following it southeast. Custer decided to leave the wagons behind and attempted to intercept Elliott by striking off due south for the Washita River.<sup>16</sup>

Barnitz was with Elliott and his narrative provided an account of the scout. The detachment had traveled only about three miles before the scouts found a trail near a recently abandoned camp site. Returning to the Canadian, they found another fresher trail a mile farther up. The horsemen crossed the Canadian and rode up and across the divide between the Washita and the Canadian. The troops pressed on throughout the day. After dark, Custer's courier overtook them, and they halted on a tributary of the Washita. After being joined by the main column, the men resumed the trail as Custer pushed the troopers through the frigid night. Their march down river became more difficult by the crusted snow and many crossings of the winding stream.<sup>17</sup>

The regimental record stated only, "Nov. 26, marched to North fork of the Washita River, . . . 30 miles."<sup>18</sup> That distance is presumably only that of the main command to a point just above the site of Black Kettle's village. Elliott's column had an even greater number of hard, bold miles in the saddle.



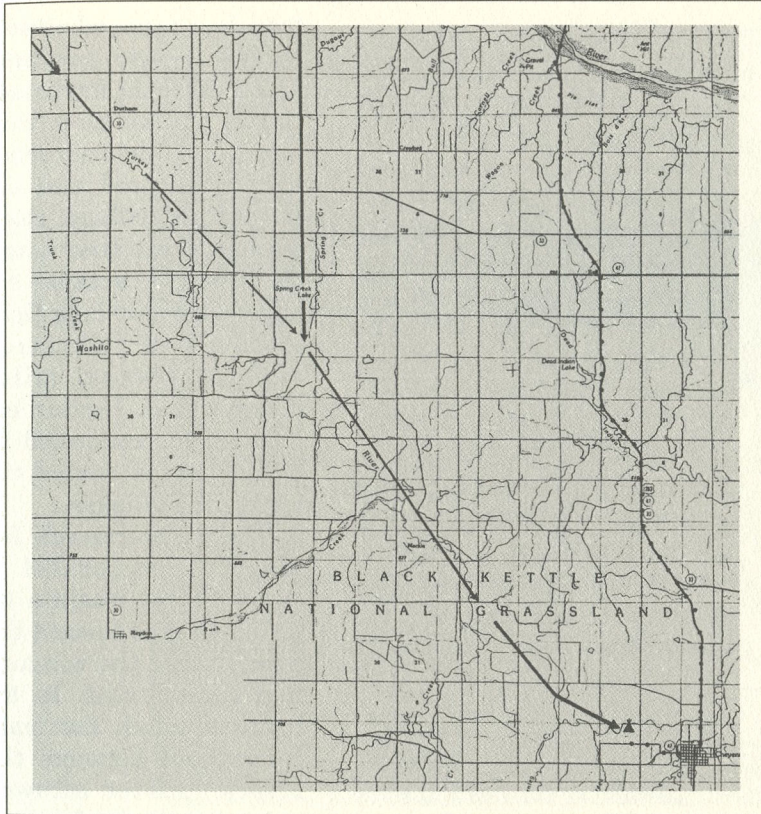
November 26, 1868 (Part 1)

The period map depicts a crossing near the mouth of Commission Creek. From there the line skirts the east side of the Antelope Hills and heads almost due south to the Washita River. Elliott's scout is not depicted.<sup>19</sup>

### **Retracing the Route**

Custer crossed the Washita River probably not more than two miles downstream from the mouth of Commission Creek. On the plateau east of the hills, the men parked the train, and the cavalry rode on. A high point just above the US 283 bridge over the Canadian provides a panoramic view of the river valley and hills. The easiest route for the traveler from that point to the battlefield west of Cheyenne is US 283 south.

The more adventurous might take a side trip to the Antelope Hills by leaving US 283 and taking SH 33 about four and one-half



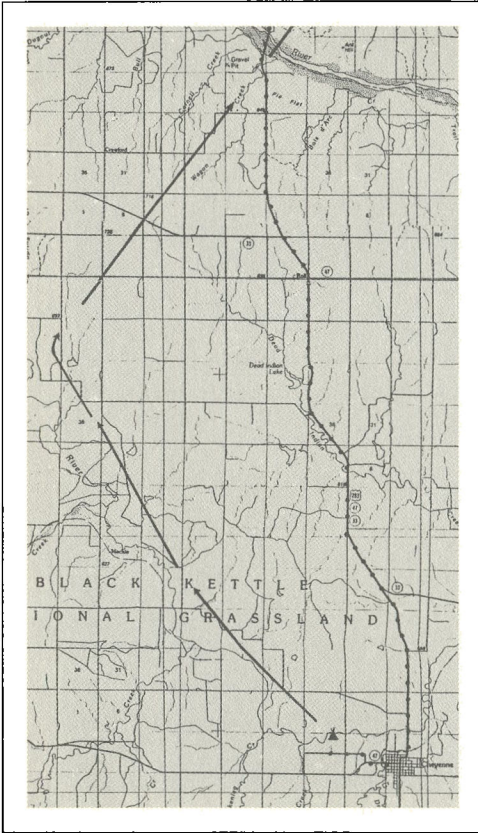
**November 26, 1868 (Part 2)**

miles west and one mile north to Crawford. One mile west of Crawford turn north on a paved road for a view of the east side of the hills. The area south of Crawford is remote and not well served with county roads. Retrace the route to continue on to Cheyenne.

Other points of interest in the area include the California Trail between Fort Smith, Arkansas, and Albuquerque, New Mexico, which was used by emigrant trains and traders in the years prior to the Civil War. It skirted the Antelope Hills following the Canadian west.

**November 27, 1868  
Battle of the Washita**

The saddle-weary troopers reached the vicinity of Black Kettle's camp near where the Washita makes a bend south of the Horse-shoe Hills. Under the cover of darkness, Custer assembled a force



November 27, 1868

for a four-pronged attack, moved it into position, and waited. At daybreak, Custer and his men, with almost complete surprise, easily captured and destroyed the village. However, a short time later, the troopers became engaged in a day-long fight with allied tribesmen camped several miles downstream. Custer extricated the command by a feint attack toward the remaining villages.

The countermarch followed a line parallel to the winding Washita on its north side toward the point where the columns had consolidated. In his haste to reach the train somewhere between the rivers, Custer allowed only a brief halt of several hours to rest men and horses.

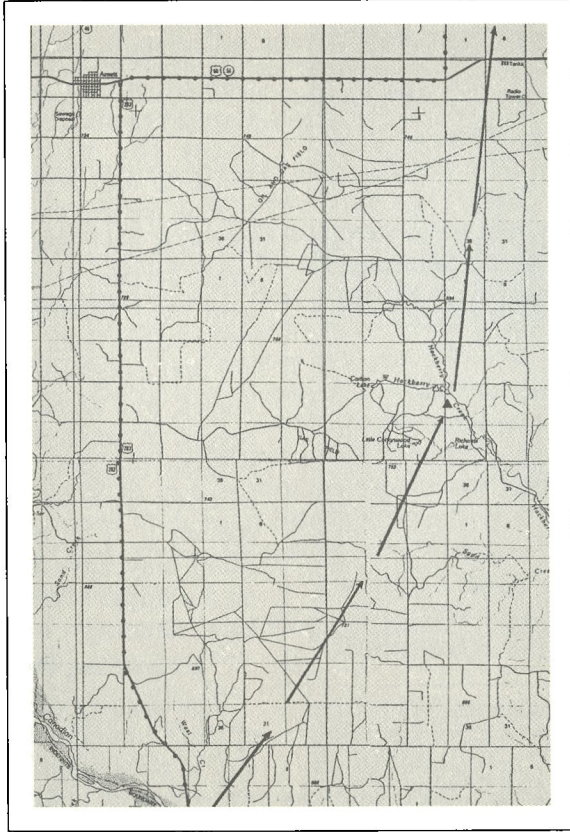
The official record read, "November 27th, left the Washita, returning northward and camped on the north fork of the Washita . . . 10 miles."<sup>20</sup> The reference to "north fork" is misleading as the 1869 map shows the return march left the Washita valley at the same point that the troops had first struck the Washita.

Godfrey's and Custer's accounts diminish to mere remarks about a brisk march until after midnight. Barnitz received a severe wound during the fighting and recalled the return as that of a jolting 100 miles in an army ambulance.<sup>21</sup>

### Retracing the Route

The Washita National Battlefield Historic Site is located approximately two miles west of Cheyenne on SH 47A. The traveler

## THE WASHITA TRAIL



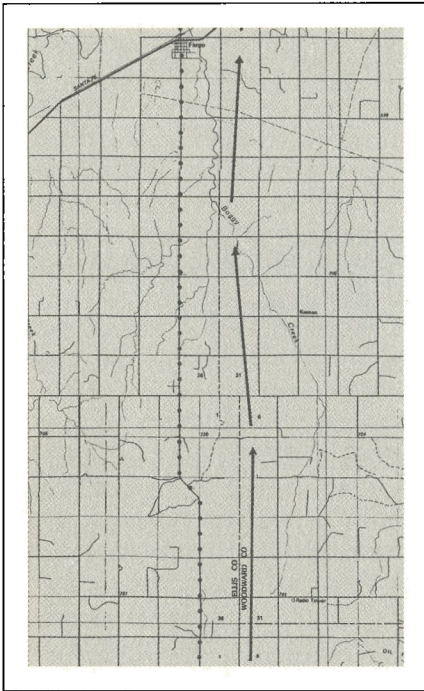
**November 27 & 28, 1868**

---

should visit the Black Kettle Museum on US 283 in Cheyenne. The museum can provide information about the site and tours. The modern traveler should retrace the line of march upstream by using US 283 north to the South Canadian.

### **November 28, 1868**

Back in the saddle, Custer's men pushed on to discover the camped wagon train about midmorning. The train had made slow progress on its trek south through the rough country. Godfrey's description of that leg of the journey noted, "At daylight . . . we were on the march to meet our supply train and encountered it some time that forenoon." Custer allowed only a brief halt, because he wanted to put more distance between himself and the Washita.<sup>22</sup>



November 29, 1868

After meeting the train, Custer began a more direct line of march northeast to Camp Supply. The map indicates the route left the Washita and crossed the Canadian at a point well below the first ford, probably in the area of the present bridge over the Canadian where the river turns back east coming out of the big bend. That day's march was recorded as "proceeded in northerly direction, crossed Canadian River, and camped on some unknown stream . . . 20 miles."<sup>23</sup> The camp may have been located on the upper reaches of Hackberry Creek.

**Retracing the Route**

The country north and east of the Canadian River crossing is very rugged and accessible only by a few dirt roads. The best course is to follow US 283 north to Arnett, then proceed east on US 60/SH 51. A paved county road nine miles east of the junction of US 283/SH 51 runs north sixteen and one-half miles to Fargo and the valley of Wolf Creek.

**November 29 and 30, 1868**

By November 29 and 30 all accounts of the return march became vague. The official record stated, "November 29, marched northward towards Wolf Creek . . . 22 miles. November 30, marched to Camp Supply . . . 10 miles."<sup>24</sup> However, that total of thirty-two miles is less than the actual mileage needed to cover the distance.

The 1869 map traces the route from the upper reaches of Hackberry Creek due north down Boggy Creek to the last camp south of a bend in the Wolf. The line is roughly parallel to the course set by Sheridan and Custer a week later when the campaign entered its second phase. At that time, they revisited the battlefield to recover the bodies of Elliott's detail.<sup>25</sup>

Custer penned the following account:

## THE WASHITA TRAIL

By easy marches we gradually neared Camp Supply, and had begun to descend the long slope leading down to the valley of Wolf Creek. . . . [W]e moved down to the timber and there encamped. . . . The last camp before we reached Camp Supply was on Wolf Creek, about ten miles from General Sheridan's headquarters.<sup>26</sup>

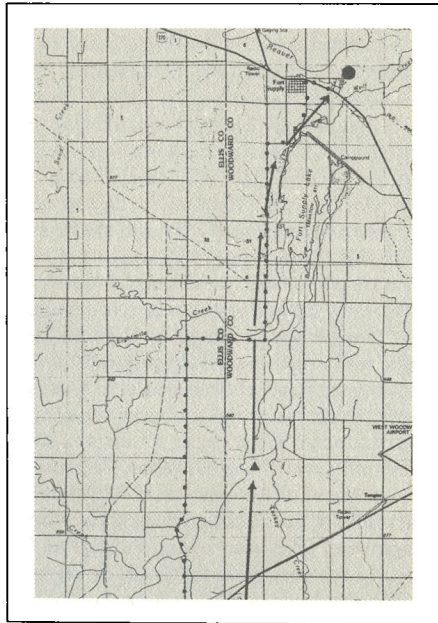
The last camp was on the east side of Wolf Creek south of one of its easterly meanders about ten miles from Camp Supply. The command crossed the creek and began the last leg of the march up the west bank. Custer wrote, "In approaching Camp Supply . . . a view of the camp and depot is first gained from the point where the high level plain begins to descend gradually to form the valley in the middle of which Camp Supply is located."<sup>27</sup>

The troopers crested the ridge or divide north of the present reservoir dam from which they saw the post in the valley below. In a triumphant procession, they made their way down the long slope to pass before Sheridan in a victory review. The weary troopers and their worn mounts then went into camp along the Beaver River about one-half mile above the post.<sup>28</sup>

### Retracing the Route

The return trip north from Fargo to Fort Supply should be the same as that taken on the first leg of the journey (November 23). East of the Fort Supply Lake entrance is a paved road leading to the dam stilling basin. From this ridge, over which the Seventh Cavalry returned, the Beaver River valley and old Camp Supply can be seen by looking north and east.

Linking the historic record of Custer's march to the Washita with the modern landscape can provide a useful guide for modern travelers to follow the route as closely as possible. Retracing those tracks is a history lesson in the outdoor classroom. The Washita trail is important because it was a signifi-



November 29 & 30, 1868



## THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

cant feat in the winter campaign that altered the destiny of the Cheyenne and other tribes of the Southern Plains. It should be remembered as a testimony to the fortitude of men who set out in a blinding blizzard, across virtually unknown country, in search of an uncertain fate.

### ENDNOTES

\* Bob Rea is Historic Properties Manager at the Fort Supply Historic Site, which is operated by the Oklahoma Historical Society. He has done extensive research on the Battle of the Washita and the winter campaign of 1868–1869.

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Francis Gibson's narrative was written after 1891 and may have been influenced by Custer's own early work. The account, along with the official record of distances marched appears in Melbourne Chandler, *Of Garry Owen in Glory: The History of the Seventh United States Cavalry Regiment* (Annadale, Virginia: Turnpike Press, 1960), 15.

<sup>2</sup> Lieutenant Colonel George Custer's account first appeared in print in 1874 and was a lengthy narrative with only brief mention of terrain. George A. Custer, *My Life on the Plains* (1874; reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 216.

<sup>3</sup> Captain Albert Barnitz's diary is in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, and has been reprinted in Robert Utley, ed., *Life in Custer's Cavalry: Diaries and Letters of Albert Barnitz and Jennie Barnitz, 1867–1868* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1977). The diary provides glimpses of the landscape along the route. Topography has not changed, but the view is sometimes altered by changes in the landscape, both natural and man-made. Utley, *Life in Custer's Cavalry*, 213.

<sup>4</sup> Lieutenant E.S. Godfrey's story was printed years later as a series concerning events in 1867 and 1868. E.S. Godfrey, "Some Reminiscences, Including the Battle of the Washita, November 27, 1868," *Cavalry Journal*, 37 (October, 1928): 488.

<sup>5</sup> Chandler, *Of Garry Owen*, 27. One study of the Little Big Horn experience stated that the distances covered were necessarily estimated and perhaps in excess of those actually marched, especially as applied to long and tiresome marches. Edward McClerman, *On Time for Disaster: The Rescue of Custer's Command, including An Account of the Sioux Expedition of 1876 and the Rescue of the Remnant of Custer's Command at the Little Big Horn* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 66. For a description of military odometers, see Edward Farrow, *Farrow's Military Encyclopedia: A Dictionary of Military Knowledge*, 3 vols. (New York: Privately published, 1885), 2: 432–433.

<sup>6</sup> The 1869 map drawn by Captain Henry Alvord is a compilation of reports, surveys, and other material prepared by the various units in the campaign including Lieutenant Samuel Robinson's for Custer's column. The map shows an approximate route which varies from modern topographical maps in the precision of features such as tributaries. With streams that was often due to course changes caused by flooding. "Map of Parts of Kansas, Texas, Colorado, New Mexico and the Indian Territory, with the routes of all columns of U.S. troops operating against hostile Indians in the Department of the Missouri during the winter of 1868–1869," Record Group 77, Chief of Engineers, Civil Works Map File, Q142, Cartographics and Architecture Branch, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as "1869 Map," NA).

<sup>7</sup> Several contemporary sources, including Barnitz and Godfrey, place the action on Wolf Creek on September 13, 1868, in the same several-square-mile area. Utley, *Life in Custer's Cavalry*, 186; Godfrey, "Some Reminiscences," 417–425.

<sup>8</sup> Chandler, *Of Garry Owen*, 27.

<sup>9</sup> Utley, *Life in Custer's Cavalry*, 220.

<sup>10</sup> The reader of Custer's narrative will find that he inexplicably added a day to the march up Wolf Creek which tends to confuse the time frame. Custer, *My Life*, 220–221; Godfrey, "Some Reminiscences," 488.

<sup>11</sup> "1869 Map," NA.

<sup>12</sup> Custer, *My Life*, 220–221.

<sup>13</sup> On January 7, 1869, Barnitz wrote from memory the journal entries beginning with November 25, 1869, as he recovered from the wound received during the fighting. Utley, *Life in Custer's Cavalry*, 214.

<sup>14</sup> Custer, *My Life*, 221; Chandler, *Of Garry Owen*, 27; "1869 Map," NA.

<sup>15</sup> Custer, *My Life*, 222.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Utley, *Life in Custer's Cavalry*, 215.

<sup>18</sup> Chandler, *Of Garry Owen*, 27.

<sup>19</sup> "1869 Map," NA.

<sup>20</sup> Chandler, *Of Garry Owen*, 27.

<sup>21</sup> Utley, *Life in Custer's Cavalry*, 218.

<sup>22</sup> The adventure of the search culminating in the battle probably diluted the interest in recording mundane aspects of the return march, or it is possible fatigue began to take its toll on all but the essentials. Godfrey, "Some Reminiscences," 498.

<sup>23</sup> Chandler, *Of Garry Owen*, 28.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>25</sup> "1869 Map," NA.

<sup>26</sup> Custer's and Sheridan's headquarters are assumed to be at or near Camp Supply. For a good description of the "parade," see Custer, *My Life*, 267–268, and Godfrey, "Some Reminiscences," 499–500.

<sup>27</sup> Custer, *My Life*, 268.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*