

(Lights up, Col. GRIERSON, a white officer.)

GRIERSON

When Colonel Hatch took the Ninth Cavalry and I took the Tenth. We knew we had many difficulties before us. Like the negroes in my regiment, I was an unlikely candidate for success in the cavalry. I had studied music. When I was eight a pony kicked me in the face..I have never cared for horses since. My admiration of President Lincoln brought me in the war, my successful raids through Mississippi made me a Colonel. I considered leaving the army after the south's defeat but took this charge instead. We recruited from the upper south in the beginning but I was dissatisfied with the results and soon had recruiters concentrate on the northern cities, Philadelphia, Boston, New York, Pittsburgh. I told the recruiters, "Enlist all the superior men you can who will be a credit to the regiment." Prejudice was always a problem. General William Hoffman, Third Infantry, commander of Fort Leavenworth, disliked negroes and the officers that served with them. He tried to make our stay there as uncomfortable as possible. He quartered the men on low ground which soon became a swamp causing several of the men to fall ill with pneumonia. He ignored my pleas to at least create walk ways so the men could keep their feet dry. Hoffman was very petty issuing dozens of complaints against my men for minor trumped up infractions. During inspection my company commanders were ordered to keep the negro troops at least ten to fifteen yards from the white troops and we were not allowed to march in review. Other times he told us simply to stay out of sight! I fought back, protested mainly to no avail. I instructed our company commanders to strike the work "colored" from our reports. We are simply the Tenth Regiment of Cavalry, United States Army! There are Old Fogies in this army that still see no place for the negro, they would love to disband the colored regiments. But I SAY, Colored troops will hold their place in the Army of the United States as long as the government lasts.

(SHARPE stepping from the darkness into the light.)

SHARPE

They called us Moacs, brunettes, niggers, africans, everything but a child of God. When they called us buffalo soldiers we figured out that the indians worshipped the buffalo, treated him with the upmost respect...we took that name, kept it for our own. We got orders to force the indians south of the Kansas line, we had been up and down Smoky Hill, Saline and Solomon rivers scoutin'.

MILLER

Major George A. Forsyth with his second in command Lieutenant Frederick Beecher had just left Fort Wallace and was thirteen miles east investigating an indian attack on a freight train.