

in 1869, but left town the next year after a brawl with some troopers. Summing up her impressions while her husband was stationed at Fort Hays, Elizabeth Custer commented that "there was enough desperate history in that little town in one summer to make a whole library of dime novels."

Conflicts between Indians and whites continued into the 1870s. As the white population increased, however, the great buffalo herds grew smaller, slaughtered by hide hunters and sportsmen and driven away as grazing lands were fenced, and the Plains Indians, deprived of their major food source, were forced to move to other areas. With less need for the post, commanders were recommending by the mid-1870s that Fort Hays be abandoned, and finally, on November 8, 1889, the last garrison moved out.

In 1897 Congress gave the land to the state of Kansas to be used for a college, an agricultural experiment station, and a park. The college, now Fort Hays State University, evolved from the Western Branch of the Kansas State Normal School, while the Fort Hays Experiment Station, part of the agricultural program of Kansas State University in Manhattan, became the largest dryland experiment station in the world.

The public park, officially called Frontier Historical Park, was platted to include the remaining buildings at Fort Hays. Three of the original structures, the stone blockhouse and guardhouse and two frame officer's quarters, survive today. Along with a modern visitors' center, they are administered by the Kansas State Historical Society.

You can join us...

Kansans have a past to be proud of, and the Kansas State Historical Society invites you to join in preserving and promoting that fascinating and exciting history. What's more, your membership in the Society will be a good investment in the future insuring that our proud heritage will be shared by Kansans in the years ahead.

Join the Kansas State Historical Society. There's an exciting past ahead of us!

For membership information or additional material on the Historical Society write or call

Kansas State Historical Society

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FORT HAYS

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913-625-6812

Glenn Roberts

HCR-1

Shields, KS

67974

Captain

of Co. G

5th Inf.

Museum Hours:

Tues.-Sat.—9:00-5:00

Sun.-Mon.—1:00-5:00

Fort Hays

