

A Time for Peace – Fort Lewis, Colorado, 1878-1891, by Duane A. Smith. Boulder, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 2006. 212 pages, illustrations, maps, photos, preface, prologue, notes, bibliographic essay, index. Hardcover \$25.00

A Time for Peace gives the reader a comprehensive history of Fort Lewis in southwest Colorado (present-day Durango), from its origination in 1878 until its closure in 1891. The post was established for the protection of settlers and miners in the area, but the fort in reality had little to do with protection and everything to do with the local economy. The result was economic stability as well as lucrative contractual work covered by locals. Special events such as organized dances, regimental concerts and other social outings resulted in an important social link between settlers and the post family. Chapter Six—The Army Loved to Dance—highlights the significance of the post's active social life and the intermingling between locals and post activities.

Chapter One covers earlier military camps at and near Pagosa Springs, until the decision was made to establish a permanent post, which is today's Fort Lewis College. Chapter Two covers the 1879 Ute War which took place north of the fort. It was the only time that Indians were a focus of the post commander.

The book has many interesting pictures taken at the post and the people who lived there, found in two parts of the book, pp 61-70 and 137-153. During the existence of the fort there was only one Indian outbreak that resulted in civilian deaths near the post.

A house had been set on fire, killing the owner and wounding the wife; rumors swirled that other attacks had occurred, but they had not. An investigation revealed that this attack had come about because cowboys, after threatening to "shoot the Utes on sight," had murdered six Utes, including two women and a child in their tepees. And, despite clear evidence of wrongdoing, these cowboys escaped punishment.

The family is unnamed, but their full story can be found in *Wild West*, Vol. 33, #5, February 2021. John and Margaret Genthner were the victims. John was killed as he stepped out of his burning house late at night, and Margaret was critically wounded, eventually losing her arm. Her youngest child did not survive the ordeal. Margaret lived another thirteen years. Her obituary said her Indian wound eventually caused her death.

As more and more settlers came into the area, it proved to be the end of the historic fort. "As such, Fort Lewis's days were numbered." Duane Smith has produced an important book, as he has done with all his publications on Western history. *A Time for Peace* is an enjoyable read and will add much to one's knowledge of the history in and around Fort Lewis during its short existence. It deserves a place on the shelves of all people interested in Western history, especially regarding the role of military forts in the settling of the West.

— Jeff Broome, PhD

