



The United States Army

Fort Sill

The site of Fort Sill was staked out on 8 January 1869, by Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, who led a campaign into Indian Territory to stop hostile tribes from raiding border settlements in Texas and Kansas.

Military Corner

Sheridan's massive winter campaign involved six cavalry regiments accompanied by frontier scouts such as Buffalo Bill Cody, Wild Bill Hickok, Ben Clark and Jack Stilwell. Troops camped at the location of the new fort included the 7th Cavalry, the 19th Kansas Volunteers and the 10th Cavalry, a distinguished group of black "buffalo soldiers" who constructed many of the stone buildings still surrounding the old post quadrangle.

At first, the garrison was called "Camp Wichita" and was referred to by the Indians as "the Soldier House at Medicine Bluffs." Sheridan later named it in honor of his West Point classmate and friend, Brigadier General Joshua W. Sill, who was killed during the American Civil War. The first post commander was Brevet Maj. Gen. Benjamin Grierson and the first Indian agent was Colonel Albert Gallatin Boone, grandson of Daniel Boone.

In 1942, Fort Sill held approximately 700 Japanese Americans interned by the Department of Justice — mostly non-citizen Issei who had been arrested as spies and fifth columnists, despite a lack of evidence supporting the charges against them. 350 of these internees were transfers from Fort Missoula, Montana. One of them, Kanesaburo Oshima, was killed by a guard when he suffered a mental break and attempted to escape on May 12. In addition to the Japanese American inmates, Fort Sill held German prisoners of war.

