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Fall 2003

Review of *Fort Robinson and the American Century, 1900- 1948*

By Thomas R. Buecker

Paul H. Carlson

Texas Tech University, paul.carlson@ttu.edu

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Carlson, Paul H., "Review of *Fort Robinson and the American Century, 1900- 1948* By Thomas R. Buecker" (2003). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 2357.

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Fort Robinson and the American Century, 1900-1948. By Thomas R. Buecker. Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 2002. xxviii + 214 pp. Maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$40.00.

Fort Robinson, located along the upper reaches of the White River in far northwest

Nebraska, enjoyed a long and eventful history. Founded in 1874 and not closed as a military base until 1948, the post played vital roles in the last wars with the Plains Indians: the so-called Sioux war of 1876-77 and the Ghost Dance "outbreak" of 1890-91. In the twentieth century it was a quartermaster remount depot for a time, and during World War II it served as a K-9 training base and a prisoner of war camp.

After 1948 the United States Department of Agriculture used the former military post as a research station, and then the place took on other uses. In 1972 the old fort became Nebraska state property and soon an historic and recreational park. Despite many changes, the well-preserved and carefully maintained site is a grand place to visit.

This study of Fort Robinson in the twentieth century is thorough, detailed, and encyclopedic. It contains chapters on the black regulars of the Tenth Cavalry, the post as a horse procurement and training center, the dog-training associated with World War II, the prisoners of war, and the evolution of the place as a park. It represents, in effect, volume two of the fort's history, for the nineteenth-century years are covered in an earlier study, *Fort Robinson and the American West, 1874-1899*.

Thomas R. Buecker, curator of the Fort Robinson Museum in Crawford, Nebraska, has provided a lot of information, perhaps more than most readers will want but scholars may find useful. The bibliography is likewise detailed and thorough. The maps are competently done, the photographs—all clear, sharp images—chosen well, and both add considerably to the quality of the book. The volume's great strength is its author's fine analysis of the connection and relationship between Fort Robinson and its soldiers and the nearby community of Crawford and its citizens and businesses.

The problems with the book relate to its composition and prose style. Heavy reliance on passive voice, for example, makes for a dull read, and poor transitions render the story

abrupt and jumpy. But, again, the book contains copious information.

PAUL H. CARLSON
Department of History
Texas Tech University