

Sheridan. It was the 13th of July when he selected the site and began active operations in the construction of Fort Phil Kearney. The post was about four miles from the foot of the Big Horn Mountains and upon a little prairie knoll, sufficiently free from timber to render it easily defensible from skulking Indians. He began operations by building a strong stockade and then, more at leisure, undertook the erection of the fort proper. The most convenient timber was about seven miles distant, on an island, in the Big Piney Creek, directly west of the fort, and without any intervening hills, rendering the road for hauling timber and wood convenient and easy. He set up his sawmills at Piney Island. There were several foothills near to the fort site, one of which was named Sullivant /³⁵⁸ hill, another Lodge Trail hill, upon the summits of which lookout sentinels were established. Sullivant was almost directly west of the fort and just to the right of the road to the wood island. Pilot hill was east of the fort and just across the Little Piney Creek. Lake DeSmet, about seven miles to the southeast. From the very first location at Fort Phil Kearney, Red Cloud and Man Afraid, at the head of the bands of the Oglalas, and Medicine Man, with a large party of Cheyennes, began to hang about the post to intimidate and tantalize the soldiers, attacking every train that appeared on the Montana road, and generally rendering life burdensome to all of the whites in that section. Within a few days they grew bolder and it was found unsafe for any white person to be outside of the stockade unless protected by a large detachment of military. A team could not be sent to the wood yard, nor a load of hay brought in from the meadows without it was accompanied with a strong guard. The first hunters sent out came in themselves hunted and though there was an abundance of game in the vicinity no hunter was brave enough to stalk it. A reign of terror grew up among the civilians so that no one ventured alone outside of the stockade. An attack might be looked for at any moment and when conditions seemed most propitious and the danger the least to be expected it was usually the most imminent. Old Jim Bridger, the well known frontiersman, was in the fort and he described the situation when he said,