

**STAR; THE STORY
OF AN
INDIAN PONY**

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Star; the story of an Indian pony by Forrestine C. Hooker

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FORRESTINE C. HOOKER

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STAR

The Story of an Indian Pony

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STAR

The Story of an Indian Pony

BY
FORRESTINE C. HOOKER

WITH A FOREWORD BY
LIEUT.-GENERAL NELSON A. MILES, U.S.A.

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TO
YOU, THE ONE



Like a ray of light in a stormy
sky your love has encouraged and
guided me through years when the
dim, rough trail was hard to follow.

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FOREWORD

THE recording of historic facts and events in the romance of a story must be interesting and instructive to the readers; especially when the scenes occurred in a vast country, formerly occupied by an ancient and departed race and later by one now rapidly disappearing.

In vain might we search history for the record of a people who contended as valiantly against a superior race, overwhelming numbers, and who defended their country until finally driven toward the setting sun, a practically subjugated nation and race. The art of war among the white people is called strategy, or tactics; when practised by the Indians it is called treachery.

Their wealth consisted of their herds of horses—which the Western Indians obtained from the Mexicans after the Spanish had invaded Mexico—their lodges and the few appliances for camp-life. They worshipped the God of nature, and the Great Spirit was their omnipotent Jehovah.

They believed that death was a long journey to the Happy Hunting Grounds. They were grateful for the abundance of the earth—the sunshine, air, water, and all the blessings of nature—and believed that all should share them alike. For one to wish to monopolize any part of the earth was to them the manifestation of a grasping disposition. Often the men of the most influence and greatest popularity in the tribe were the poorest, or those who gave most to others.

They believed that the Great Spirit had given them this beautiful country with its natural resources, advantages, and blessings for their home.

One great cause of disaffection among the Indians was the destruction of their vast herds of buffalo, which seemed like ruthless sacrifice. Within a few years millions of buffalo were killed for their hides, and thousands of white men, the best rifle-shots in the world, were engaged in the business.

Among their own tribe and people they had a code of honour which all respected. An Indian could leave his horse, blanket, saddle, or rifle at any place by day or night and it would not be disturbed, though the whole tribe might pass

near. This could not be done in any community of white people.

These conditions existed in 1874, when the Southwest Indians assembled at Medicine Lodge and decided to drive out the buffalo hunters.

In August, 1874, I was directed to organize a command at Fort Dodge, on the Arkansas River in southwestern Kansas, and move south against the hostile Indians. Other commands were ordered to move: one east from New Mexico, under Major Price; one north from Texas, under General Mackenzie; one west from Indian Territory, under Colonel Davidson, Tenth Cavalry.

My command consisted of two battalions of eight troops of cavalry, commanded by Majors Compton and Biddle; one battalion of four companies of infantry, commanded by Major Bristol; a company of friendly Indians, a detachment of artillery, and a company of civilian scouts and guides. These latter were mostly hunters and expert riflemen, familiar with the country.

In one of the many engagements with the hostile Indians Captain Frank D. Baldwin (now