



By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

A busload of people from Chase County and the surrounding area learned a lot about Native American/Army/settler conflict around the Republican River in Southwest Nebraska and further during a trip Saturday, sponsored by Mid-Plains Community College (MPCC).

The class was led by Vance Nelson of Ogallala, former curator at Fort Robinson State Park.

The 20-plus people participating learned about conflict between various tribes such as the Sioux and Pawnee. At Massacre Canyon near Trenton, the Lakota Sioux trapped and killed most of a Pawnee tribe harvesting buffalo in 1873.

General George Armstrong Custer spent time in the area, both ensuring the safety of pioneers and trying to defeat Native Americans.

He camped in several locations in Kansas and Colorado, and fought Indians along the way.

A group of his soldiers were massacred near Beaver Creek, Kans. in 1867.

The Battle of Beecher Island near Fort Hayes, Kan., in 1868 involved 50 civilian scouts and several Army officers to subdue what was left of the Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians, who had been attacking settlers.

The scouts were trapped on a sandbar and attacked by the Indians, led by a great warrior, Roman Nose. They were rescued 10 days later by a cavalry of Buffalo soldiers.

In addition, the group viewed remnants of the Great Western Cattle Trail, which was the route taken to transport cattle from Texas to Ogallala and beyond to Indian Reservations between 1874-1886.

The day concluded with a tour of the Champion Mill in Champion, where settlers built a mill and began grinding wheat for flour, as well as feed for animals.

The tour took a loop from Imperial to Trenton, then into Kansas and over to Wray, Colo., during the day.

MPCC has a number of history classes scheduled for this fall, as well as many other community education and for-credit classes.

For more information contact Imperial Campus Director Brenda Ledall at (308) 882-5972 or at ledallb@mpcc.edu.