



Nearly sixteen months after the end of the Civil War, Section 3 of an Act of Congress entitled "*An Act to increase and fix the Military Peace Establishment of the United States*" authorized the formation of two regiments of cavalry composed of "colored" men. The act was approved on 28 July 1866. On 21 September 1866, the 9th Cavalry Regiment was activated at Greenville, Louisiana, and the 10th Cavalry Regiment was activated at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Under the competent leadership of Colonels Edward Hatch and Benjamin Grierson, first Regimental Commanders of the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments, respectively, both regiments were trained and equipped and began a long and proud history.

For over two decades, the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments conducted campaigns against American Indian tribes on a Western Frontier that extended from Montana in the Northwest to Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona in the Southwest. They engaged in several skirmishes against such great Indian Chiefs as Victorio, Geronimo, and Nana. "Buffalo Soldiers" was the name given the black cavalrymen by the Plains Indians. Reason for the name is uncertain. One view is that the Indians saw a resemblance between the black man's hair and the mane of a buffalo. Another view is that when a buffalo was wounded or cornered, it fought ferociously, displaying unusual stamina and courage. This was the same fighting spirit Indians saw in combat with black cavalrymen. Since Indians held the buffalo in such high regard, it was felt that the name was not given in contempt.

When not engaged in combat with Indians, both regiments built forts and roads, installed telegraph lines, located water holes, escorted wagon trains and cattle drives, rode "shotgun" on stagecoach and mail runs, and protected settlers from renegade Indians, outlaws, and Mexican revolutionaries. Elements of both regiments fought in Cuba during the War with Spain and participated in the famous charge on San Juan Hill. Troopers of the 10th Cavalry Regiment rode with General John J. Pershing during the Punitive Expedition in Mexico in search of Pancho Villa. In 1941, the two regiments formed the 4th Cavalry Brigade, commanded by General Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., at Camp Funston, Kansas. In 1944, the end came to the horse cavalry regiments and the curtain was lowered on the long and glorious past of "The Buffalo Soldiers".